Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

NINTH ASSEMBLY

10 APRIL 2018

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Tuesday, 10 April 2018

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

Petitions

The following petition was lodged for presentation:

Community facilities in Page—petition 10-18

By **Mrs Kikkert**, *from 157 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 increase active living options for senior citizens in Page, thereby improving their health and wellbeing and encouraging cross-generational interactions. About 27% of Page residents are aged 65 or over, and many of these live in three retirement villages in Burkitt St.
>
> Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to urge the ACT Government to (a) mark a designated pedestrian crossing across Burkitt St, Page, near its intersection with Birrell St; (b) develop a walking path along Birrell St between Burkitt St and the park bounded by Knaggs Cr and Birrell St; (c) install in this park: benches and outdoor fitness equipment for older users, including shade structures for some of the benches; a swing set for preschool age children; and a water bubbler.

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.

Ministerial response

The following response to a petition has been lodged:

Greenway playground shade—petition 4-18

By **Ms Fitzharris**, Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 27 March 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Lawder on 20 February 2018 concerning the provision of a sunshade at the playground on Mortimer Lewis Drive, Greenway.

The response read as follows:

> Dear Mr Duncan
>
> Thank you for your letter of 20 February 2018 regarding petition No 4-18, lodged by Ms Nicole Lawder MLA on behalf of Tuggeranong residents

regarding a request for a shade sail at the playground at Lake Tuggeranong near the Learn to Ride Park, Mortimer Lewis Drive, Greenway.

Although there is no current plan to install a shade structure at this playground, there are a number of trees adjacent to the playground area, that provide shade over the playground. Two shaded picnic facilities are also available adjacent to the Learn to Ride facility and car park and an additional seat will be installed under the shade of the trees at the Learn to Ride facility by the end of April 2018.

In deciding which locations are the highest priority for shade structures, consideration is given to visitation rates and the length of visit to ensure the investment will benefit the greatest number of people in the local community. As a result, shade structures are usually installed over district park play spaces and some large centrally-located play spaces.

While it is not possible to provide shade structures at all 504 public playgrounds in the ACT, in hot weather families may choose to utilise one of the playgrounds where shade sails are installed. In the Lake Tuggeranong area, the playground at De Little Circuit off Mortimer Lewis Drive, Greenway has a shade structure and there is a large shaded playground located off Bartley Place on the opposite side of Lake Tuggeranong, adjacent to the skate park.

Thank you for raising this matter. I trust the information provided is of assistance.

Community facilities in Page—petition 10-18

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.02), by leave: I have presented a petition, signed by more than 150 Canberra residents in the Page area, calling on the Assembly to urge the ACT government to implement the following improvements: firstly, marking a designated pedestrian crossing across Burkitt Street, Page, near its intersection with Birrell Street; secondly, developing a walking path along Birrell Street between Burkitt Street and the park bounded by Knaggs Crescent and Birrell Street; and, thirdly, installing in this park benches and outdoor fitness equipment for older users, including shade structures for some of the benches, a swing set for preschool-age children, and a water bubbler.

According to the latest census, nearly 27 per cent of residents in the suburb of Page, which is located in my electorate of Ginninderra, are 65 years of age or older. This is more than double the average for the territory. Importantly, 8.5 per cent of residents are 85 years or older. Significantly, this is more than five times the territory's average.

Many of these older residents live in three retirement villages, all located next to each other in Burkitt Street—Ridgecrest Retirement Village, Villagio Sant' Antonio and Bill McKenzie Gardens. It is essential that public infrastructure in Page meets the needs of these seniors, who make up more than one-quarter of the suburb's population.

I remind the Assembly that the ACT government has already committed itself on paper to the very principles that have informed and guided the community-minded Page residents who generated this petition and oversaw its circulation. The current ACT active ageing action plan specifically emphasises improving seniors' "access

and mobility around the community" as well as developing an "age-friendly physical environment that promotes independence and safety". Likewise, it commits the government to implementing design features and recreational facilities that encourage seniors to remain physically active, to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to be socially engaged.

In a similar vein, the Heart Foundation also recommends that healthy, active neighbourhoods include facilities like footpaths and road crossings as well as spaces that help people to feel happier, such as green areas, parks, places to relax and recreation facilities.

The closest public park to the three retirement villages is the Birrell Street playground, bounded by Birrell Street on one side and by Knaggs Crescent on the other. Both of these streets intersect Burkitt Street, but Birrell Street is much closer to all three retirement villages. Neither of these streets, however, includes a footpath of any kind.

Despite this lack, I have been told that seniors frequently use these streets for exercise in order to avoid the busyness of Burkitt Street. In fact, the current street-view image of the intersection of Birrell Street and Knaggs Crescent on Google Maps shows an older Canberran using a walking frame to make her way down what is a rather narrow street.

Clearly, this situation does not satisfy the stated outcomes in the government's active ageing action plan. Expecting seniors of any ability to share the street with cars and other motorised traffic neither improves their mobility nor promotes their safety. Without question, better enabling Page's many older residents to feel confident enough to take much-needed and much-desired walks to the neighbourhood park requires a designated footpath to be added to Birrell Street. This is true whether people are walking unaided, walking with the assistance of walking sticks or walking frames, or travelling with wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Because the three retirement villages and the only footpath in Burkitt Street are located along the north side of the street, residents of the retirement villages, as well as other pedestrians, also need a marked pedestrian crossing to connect the existing footpath with the new footpath in Birrell Street. This is necessary because Burkitt is a very busy street, with a relatively large volume of traffic.

This petition also seeks the installation of certain equipment in the Birrell Street park. I should note here that the ACT government made an upgrade to playground equipment in this park in May last year. This has certainly been a welcome addition, but the signers of this petition are suggesting additional equipment that would make this park even more appealing across all generations. Specifically, they are asking for benches where tired residents could rest from their exercise, some with shade, as there are currently only two benches in the park and one of them needs repairing. They are also asking for a swing set for very young children for whom the new equipment is too advanced.

Making the Birrell Street park attractive for families with very young children, for seniors and for everyone in between would go far in fulfilling the ACT government's

stated commitment to supporting initiatives that bring the generations together, reinforce respect for seniors and reduce social isolation. The government could also fulfil its commitment to support seniors to develop healthy lifestyles by granting the request of these petitioners for outdoor fitness equipment similar to that recently installed in John Knight park.

Local community members have already demonstrated strong initiative in utilising this park in a way that brings all ages together. A community Christmas party was held there in 2016, with more than 100 people in attendance, and another one is planned for this Christmas. In addition, a community barbecue was held in May last year to celebrate the opening of the new playground. A bubbler in the park would help to make future events even more attractive and would encourage more daily use of the facilities as well, especially during hot weather.

In conclusion, I note that in preparing this petition members of the Page community consulted with and sought input from residents in both Knaggs Crescent and Birrell Street. They also received support for their proposals from the general managers and activities coordinators at all three retirement villages. Moreover, they made these suggestions to government representatives in December last year and again in early January this year, but three months later they have received no response.

This petition contains careful, reasonable and well-thought-out proposals. If members of this government are serious about their stated commitment to make Page an age-friendly suburb, they will take note of these proposals and respond in a timely fashion. I commend this petition, with its 157 signatures, to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.09), by leave: Today we have seen presented a petition from 157 residents of Page who have given us a list of three great ideas to make their suburb age friendly. They are three good ideas that will make Page a better place for older people. The question, and what we will wait to hear from the minister, is: when will these works be done?

There is a current website entry for the age-friendly project. For example, in relation to Ainslie and Weston, it says:

> In late 2015 a community consultation was held to identify improvements to active travel infrastructure and facilities in Ainslie and Weston to make it easier for older residents to get around.
>
> During the six week consultation period over 220 surveys were completed. Overall, responses were very positive and supportive of the project.
>
> Following the community consultation and site analysis, the construction of priority improvements in Ainslie and Weston has been completed.

That survey was done 2½ years ago, before the last election. How long after asking for a footpath upgrade does it actually take to get a footpath upgrade? The people of Page were surveyed for their views in December 2017 and January 2018, but as yet residents have not even had a report back about the results of that consultation.

Page and Hughes are meant to be the next ACT age-friendly suburbs. Local residents have been invited to help identify path and road safety improvements. They are the fifth and sixth ACT suburbs in the age-friendly suburbs program. With this petition that has been presented by my colleague Mrs Kikkert today, the people of Page have identified their priority list of improvements. What they want to see is a result coming back from the consultation, a result coming back from the petition, and they want the actual work done in Page.

When you think that Ainslie and Weston were the third and fourth age-friendly suburbs, and Page and Hughes are the fifth and sixth in 2017 and 2018, given the number of suburbs in the ACT, we will finish the age-friendly program, if we continue at the current rate, in 108 years time, in 2125. Mr Barr, for example, will be over 150 years old. What does this mean with respect to taking seniors seriously and making sure that our suburbs are age friendly?

I commend the petition to the Assembly and I look forward to the minister's response. I say well done to the residents of Page for providing the government with this excellent resource regarding what they would like to see in their suburb.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee
Scrutiny report 16

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (10.12): I present the following report:

> Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 16, dated 3 April 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MS LEE: Scrutiny report 16 contains the committee's comments on four bills, 27 pieces of subordinate legislation, five national regulations and four government responses. I draw to the attention of the Assembly the tight turnaround time in which the committee is required to consider scrutiny reports, this one in particular, taking into account the Easter break. Members may recall that the committee last year raised a concern about the constraint on our ability to provide thorough scrutiny of bills with such tight time frames, which puts additional pressure on the legal advisers to the committee and the committee secretariat. Noting that in August this year we will face a single-week break between sitting weeks, the committee once again asks that when the Assembly sets the annual sitting pattern, single sitting week breaks be avoided and longer public holiday periods be taken into account.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the legal advisers to the committee, Stephen Argument and Daniel Stewart, and the committee secretariat for their extra efforts in the preparation of this report, which was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee
Report 3

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (10.14): I present the following report:

> Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 3—*Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2017-2018 (No 2) and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2017-2018 (No 2)*, dated 10 April 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

> That the report be noted.

Today I wish to speak about the Standing Committee on Public Accounts report into Appropriation Bill 2017-2018 (No 2) and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2017-2018 (No 2). At the outset I would say that the report notes the referral of the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2017-2018 (No 2) but makes no further comment. There is no other reference to this bill in the report.

The substantive part of the report deals with Appropriation Bill 2017-2018 (No 2). The report makes two recommendations regarding this bill. The first recommendation is that ACT government agencies, including the Education Directorate, develop criteria for review and criteria for the success of major projects prior to procurement and implementation. The recommendation concerns the provision of laptops to year 7 to 11 students in ACT schools. The simple message is that it would be a good idea to formulate what you are trying to achieve when you set out to do something, and this allows you to see whether you have achieved the intended outcome or whether the program needs adjusting.

In its second recommendation, the committee recommends that if procurement documents on service providers on a panel for elective surgery waiting list programs are not published on the ACT procurement website, these documents be published in the future. The recommendation seeks to support transparency in the procurement of medical services for the ACT public health system, consistent with reporting on procurement in other areas.

There are other areas in which the committee made comment but does not provide recommendations. One area notes the profile of funding provided to the ACT Ombudsman's Office so that it can meet the requirements placed upon it by the reportable conduct scheme. Here, the committee states that it expects additional funding on top of that already provided and that more funding is likely to be necessary if the scheme is to function effectively in the outyears.

A second line of comment concerns the timing of demolition works at Campbell Primary School in relation to the appropriation made under this bill. In brief, the committee found that the demolition work had already been done, and the money

needed to fund it spent, before the appropriation had been made. At this point the report notes that it is central to our system of government that the Assembly considers the appropriation in the shape of an appropriation bill before expenditure is incurred and money is expended.

A third line of comment concerns the replacement of aluminium cladding at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. In this instance, answers provided to the committee were not clear, and the committee states that it would welcome clearer answers in future.

These are the substantive matters raised in the report. The committee would like to thank the Chief Minister and Treasurer, the minister for education, the minister for health and their officers for making themselves available at short notice for an inquiry with a short time line. I thank all those associated with the inquiry, my colleagues and the committee secretariat for the work involved in turning this around. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Berry**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Ministerial delegation to Wellington
Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (10.18): Last month I led a four-day mission to Wellington to further develop the Canberra-Wellington sister city relationship and also to hold ministerial and stakeholder meetings across my portfolios. It is fair to say that there is a strong fondness for Canberra in Wellington.

I was able to meet with four city councillors, including Mayor Justin Lester and Deputy Mayor Jill Day, as well leading city officials and administrators across a number of fields. All were incredibly complimentary of our work and spoke of the connections flourishing in their areas of work. Importantly, we spoke of the connections yet to be made, and during a number of meetings and site visits I was able to do some early work in this regard.

The Canberra-Wellington sister city agreement makes specific mention of opportunities to collaborate in our work on affordable housing and in sport. Accordingly, I made housing a strong focus of the mission, and I was joined by the Deputy Director-General of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Executive Director of Housing ACT for housing-focused meetings and site visits. These officials were also able to meet with Wellington's chief planner as part of the mission.

Members may know that the New Zealand government elected last year has set out with a housing affordability agenda front and centre in its policy platform. In this regard, I was able to meet with the national Minister for Housing and Urban Development, the Hon Phil Twyford, to share experiences and points of overlap. He

outlined an ambitious program of work across all fronts: tax reform, a reorientation of the public housing authority and a major building program to boost the social and affordable housing supply and to cross-subsidise the government's social housing priorities.

At the city level, Wellington City Council have committed to their own ambitious housing plan, albeit as primarily an affordable housing provider. In undertaking a renewal program comparable to that here in the ACT, they are seeking to change the way social housing developments happen and the way that they are seen in the community. With the benefit of these discussions and a few site visits, it was a pleasing reference point and confirmation of the extremely high quality housing being delivered under the ACT program and the success of our tenant relocations.

I spoke with Mayor Justin Lester about Wellington city's program and its goal of improving housing affordability for those on low incomes. As with Canberra, the affordability measures are defined not simply by supply and demand but also by broader tax, planning and industry policy. We agreed that the two cities should continue to exchange information about our respective housing strategies and our shared commitment to growing social housing.

There were similar outcomes in the sport and recreation portfolio. I was able to meet the national minister, the Hon Grant Robertson, and to share both with him and with Wellington councillors the many shared interests in our sport and recreation agendas. They share the ACT government's determination to achieve gender equity in sport and explained to us that New Zealand will soon take on the chairing of the International Working Group on Women and Sport. Having this forum based in our sister city is likely to present further opportunities for the ACT to showcase its achievements in the area. Minister Robertson made it clear that Canberran representatives would be particularly welcome as part of the events that they will hold.

Wellington is also home to a successful initiative based on female wellbeing through sport and active recreation, focusing on women and girls experiencing disadvantage or isolation. Again, there is an obvious point of collaboration here. I have been able to bring back a good amount of program information to inform future actions here in the ACT.

Finally, in education, this mission allowed me to connect with the New Zealand school system. It is coming full circle on a similar reform journey to Australia. The national Ministry of Education is in the process of implementing the new government's significant commitments in education, including the removal of national standards. While New Zealand has never had a compulsory national test in the way Australia has NAPLAN, the government came to the view that its equivalent system is detrimental to equity and overall school improvement. This policy has been informed by an evidence-based methodology which holds clear relevance to work the ACT is leading through the education ministerial council.

As we are doing here through the future of education process, I made a point of getting a school-level perspective through a visit to the Karori Normal School, a primary school. As with the teachers and school leaders I meet in Canberra, the staff

there are keen to engage with system-level issues. They see the way national policy settings play out in schools day to day, and they were generous in sharing their thoughts. As the country moves away from the national standards and the behavioural change they have instigated in the community, those teachers are as keen as ours are to embrace world's best practice: the best opportunities for professional learning throughout their careers; school communities where everybody gets the chance to be their best; and support for clearer public recognition of the value of their profession, its demands and its importance.

One thing that Wellington schools have unquestionably done well is embrace Maori culture and build strong cultural integrity across their school communities. In my discussions with Deputy Mayor Jill Day, the first Maori woman to hold that position, we agreed that it would be extremely professional and beneficial for our respective schools to share experiences of cultural integrity, as we have sought to empower each country's Indigenous students and their cultures. This is one opportunity I am particularly keen to pursue, and I have asked ACT education officials to follow up with their counterparts in this regard.

I would like to thank those officials who made the mission a successful and productive one: the ACT Commissioner for International Engagement; the Australian High Commission in Wellington; Kaine Thompson and all at the Wellington City Council who went to great efforts to accommodate my visit; and those who shared generously their work as it relates to Canberra and took the time to get to know parts of our city and the government that they might not have known before. I look forward to hosting some of those Wellingtonians in Canberra before long and building on the sister agreement into the future.

I present the following paper:

> New Zealand Mission—March 2018—Ministerial statement, 10 April 2018.

I move:

> That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Detention exit community outreach (DECO) program
Ministerial statement

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (10.26): Today I rise to update the Assembly on some of the positive work in relation to mental health support and efforts to reduce recidivism amongst one of Canberra's most vulnerable and at-risk cohorts in the Alexander Maconochie Centre. We know that there is a higher incidence of mental health issues in the prison population than in the general population. This is a trend that we see across all jurisdictions and internationally.

A 2006 study looking at mental disorders in Australian prisons found that in the prison population the incidence of some level of mental illness was approximately 80 per cent, which compared with 31 per cent in the general community. In the ACT the latest detainee health and wellbeing survey found that 54 per cent of respondents reported that they had received one or more mental health diagnoses in their lifetime and 35 per cent self-reported attempting suicide at some time in their lives.

These are confronting statistics and they remind us about the complexity and vulnerability in our detainee population. With the vast majority of detainees in the AMC returning to live in the Canberra community upon their release, investment in good prison health services equates to good public health outcomes in the longer term. This investment benefits not only the individual but the wider Canberra community as well.

We also know that individuals with untreated mental health conditions are at a higher risk of recidivism on their release from detention. International research has estimated that detainees who have received a professional diagnosis of a mental health condition are 70 per cent more likely to return to prison at least once, compared with those that have not been diagnosed with a mental illness.

In the ACT recidivism is defined as a detainee returning to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years. The latest figures indicate that 38.6 per cent of detainees have reoffended within that time period. While the ACT consistently has the lowest imprisonment rate in Australia per head of population, recidivism remains a concern. In 2016 figures showed that the overall rate of detainees in the ACT who had had prior adult imprisonment was 74 per cent. That is why the ACT government has such a strong focus on justice reinvestment in order to reduce recidivism and prevent the cycle of incarceration.

Madam Speaker, we, just like every other jurisdiction in Australia, have a large proportion of detainees with some level of mental illness in our corrections system. The likelihood of reoffending for these people is greater than for the general detainee cohort and is significantly higher than for people in the general community. At the same time the needs of these people can be more complex and require intensive supports to assist them to reintegrate into the community upon release.

In order to provide this level of intensive support, the ACT government has invested in the detention exit community outreach program, otherwise known as DECO. DECO provides transitional support for individuals with a diagnosed mental illness who are exiting detention and transitioning back into the community. DECO is a joint initiative between ACT Health and the community sector mental health provider Wellways Australia. Wellways works with ACT forensic mental health services to provide the treatment and support services required to assist people leaving detention and to re-establish them in the community.

Where appropriate, Wellways assists the person to connect with alcohol and other drugs services, longer term mental health support providers, employment, housing,

education and other social connections. Wellways can also provide living and self-management skills training. The services that DECO provides are an effective way to manage the risks of recidivism and poor mental health outcomes for detainees. DECO is an example of a program that can provide significant cost savings to the territory and also produce better health outcomes for former detainees.

DECO was originally funded in the 2013-14 ACT budget to provide support to up to 10 individuals for up to three months after their release from custody. In 2016-17 the program was expanded to allow for more places and to extend the support time to up to 18 months. I am pleased to be able to report to the Assembly today on the preliminary results that have come out of the extended program.

According to a 2017 analysis, out of the 81 people who have participated in DECO, as of June 2017 only six people, or seven per cent, had re-offended. While DECO is a relatively young program, and we will continue to monitor its outcomes, these results show a promising reduction compared to the overall recidivism rate. We have also received positive feedback on the extension of the support period, from three months to 18 months, with this extended time frame allowing case managers to engage more extensively with participants across a wider number of domains, including employment, living skills, self-esteem and socialisation.

The increased program time also provides a greater opportunity to build higher rapport and trust among the participants and create more effective engagement. DECO exists as part of a package of measures that seek to prevent reoffending and to achieve the government's goal of reducing recidivism by 25 per cent by 2025, a key Labor-Greens parliamentary agreement item.

Work is underway to develop a recidivism plan to help achieve this ambitious target, which will work to effectively change the life trajectories of some of Canberra's most complex and vulnerable citizens. Reducing recidivism in the ACT is a shared responsibility across the justice and human services system. The government is continuing to work with a range of stakeholders to map out a path to achieve this goal.

Another example of the government's investment in justice reinvestment programs is the extended through-care program which, as members know, has been running since June 2013. Through-care is a model that works to support detainees beyond the end of the offender's custodial sentence to improve their transition into the community. It aims to reduce the risk of reoffending and thereby improve community safety.

An independent evaluation of the program found that the program had been effective in terms of outcomes for clients, with a significant reduction in return to custody episodes as a result. While there are many similarities between the support models offered in through-care and DECO, DECO is distinct as it is only available to people with a formally diagnosed mental illness. While DECO is not available for all people exiting the AMC, ACT Health and Wellways work closely with through-care clients, particularly those who have some level of mental illness.

Madam Speaker, in the absence of these kinds of programs, research shows that post-release difficulties, such as poor connections with health services and supports,

can lead to increased rates of recidivism. This is because the period immediately after being released from prison is a critical transition point for individuals and the time when support needs are greatest.

People leaving detention are also at an increased risk of suicide in the period immediately following release. A study of prisoners released from New South Wales facilities found that the risk of suicide, particularly for men, was four times higher in the first two weeks after release than in the period beyond six months after release. Having the right supports in place during that critical period can make all the difference to improve a person's health and wellbeing and set them on a path to reintegrate successfully into the community.

DECO has been delivering services for just over three years and the data demonstrates that the program provides an overall positive improvement for participants. This is particularly true in the work and social networks domains, which are significant for reducing recidivism and supporting participants to rejoin and participate in their wider community. The program has also supported the majority of participants to achieve positive outcomes in their personal lives, including reconciliation with family, employment, establishing a family and study. We know that these can be significant protective factors for people's mental health.

From July to December last year, DECO maintained an average of 21 participants in the community and seven participants pre-release in the AMC. The average length of participation was 177 days, equating to around six months, though noting that some people with more complex needs required a longer period of support, which the program provides for. The program delivered 2,220 hours of face-to-face direct service delivery over that period.

In recent years there has been a move away from behavioural rehabilitation methods adopted within corrections programs. A growing body of evidence suggests that peer mentoring and social support models are more effective in a community setting. The results to date show that DECO has been effective in reducing recidivism rates and improving health outcomes for former detainees.

As Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health, I am committed to continuing to invest in prevention and early intervention initiatives like this that can help to improve outcomes for individuals and our community as a whole. We simply cannot afford, as a social or an economic measure, to keep expanding our acute services to respond to people in crisis.

Whether it is the AMC, the adult mental health unit or Dhulwa, people will always face the challenge of transitioning out of an institutional setting back into the community. For people experiencing mental illness, this transition can be all the more difficult, and without the right supports we can set people up to fail. Programs like DECO require an up-front investment of time and resources to provide that intensive support in that most vulnerable period, but the long-term benefits of that investment are now becoming apparent.

Often it is the acute aspects of our mental health services which can occupy a lot of our time and attention, while early intervention and prevention programs are working away quietly in the background. This work is occurring alongside the establishment of the Office for Mental Health, and we are already starting to see some preliminary results.

I look forward to providing further updates to the Assembly on how we are developing smarter, more cost-effective approaches to improving criminal justice and health outcomes in the Canberra community.

I present the following paper:

> Detention Exit Community Outreach Program—Ministerial statement, 10 April 2018.

I move:

> That the Assembly take note of the paper.

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) (10.37): Madam Speaker, this government has proudly and firmly committed to find ways to reduce the impact of problem gambling in Canberra. In August last year, I made a statement to this Assembly about the government's progress to implement that commitment, and at that time I outlined a series of reforms that had already been introduced. I also outlined the government's plans to deliver even stronger and more robust measures, including reducing the number of gaming machine authorisations in the territory to 4,000. Today I can proudly say that the government is hard at work and will be delivering on those commitments.

The fundamental goal of these changes is to help ensure that people, families, and the whole community are better protected and supported to overcome the impacts of problem gambling. The impact of problem gambling on individuals and their families has been highlighted over the past year. 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.

Reducing the number of gaming machine authorisations to 4,000 is a key component of this government's harm reduction strategy. It will lay the foundation for helping to build a clubs sector that is diverse, sustainable and community-focused and, at the same time, less reliant on gaming revenue. Our aim is to develop a partnership with clubs to achieve this important reform.

Last week, I announced the engagement of Mr Neville Stevens AO to report on options to help clubs reduce their reliance on gaming machine revenue. The independent review follows a year of delivering stronger gambling harm prevention laws while supporting clubs to move away from gaming machine revenue. Mr Stevens is an experienced former senior public servant, serving as secretary and deputy secretary of a number of departments, including the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

During Mr Stevens' tenure in the communications portfolio he was closely involved with extensive reform in the telecommunications sector and the development of the Australian information technology industry. He brings a wealth of experience and understanding in progressing significant changes within a regulated industry.

Under his terms of reference, Mr Stevens will meet with clubs, peak bodies and with workers in the clubs industry. The terms of reference for this review have been informed by detailed consultation with the clubs sector. Throughout the past year officials of my directorate circulated a discussion paper about options to reach 4,000 gaming machine authorisations. JACS officials and my staff also met with club industry representatives to further explore their issues.

During this process clubs expressed a diversity of views about the best pathways to reduce the number of gaming machine authorisations. One thing that became clear is that a one-size-fits-all approach to diversification will not work. We have a diverse clubs sector that offers a wide range of community services including sport, entertainment and multicultural events. The framework that we will use to make decisions about support for clubs to move away from gaming needs to take account of that diversity. That is why the terms of reference call for options to provide financial and non-financial incentives to encourage clubs to reduce their number of authorisations. Land use, regulatory measures and tax incentives are examples of the range of options that can be considered.

The terms of reference also call for a framework for entering agreements with clubs that do participate, and this is to ensure that any support measures offered, financial or non-financial, come with a way of ensuring that clubs maintain a focus on diversification and community benefits. The review will help us make decisions about how to implement the shift to 4,000 gaming machine authorisations in a way that is transparent and promotes a sustainable, diverse and community-focused clubs sector.

In announcing the review the government set a definite timetable for achieving the reduction in gaming machine authorisations. The club industry diversification support analysis will be completed and a report provided to me by 31 May this year. Following that the government will begin a phased process of reducing machines by 1 April 2019. The full commitment of 4,000 authorisations will be reached by no later than 1 May 2020.

This industry landscape is clearly changing and many in the clubs sector are already looking at ways to move away from gaming revenue, and I commend them for this

action. 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 government has already taken steps to support small and medium clubs to diversify their revenue streams. Last year we provided a 50 per cent gaming machine tax rebate and a $10,000 community club grant for those clubs with under $4 million in gaming machine revenue. The results have been promising. The Burns Club recently announced that they used gaming tax rebate funds to install solar panels, reducing the ongoing energy costs to the club. The grant program is assisting many small clubs in diversifying their income streams through things like upgraded dance floors, new performance spaces and other ways to support live music and events.

Diversification is important, but it is one component of a comprehensive strategy to minimise the impacts of problem gambling. This government is committed to promoting a culture of harm minimisation through consultation and engagement. Engagement with people in the gaming industry, with academic experts and with the community is necessary to ensure that our robust harm minimisation framework remains effective.

Our engagement has yielded a series of new harm minimisation measures over the past year. These include: limiting cash withdrawals from EFTPOS machines in clubs to $200 per transaction and requiring interaction with a trained staff member for all withdrawals; increasing the problem gambling assistance fund levy to provide more funding to help people affected by problem gambling; and creating a framework for electronic gaming machines at the Canberra Casino that will come with nation-leading harm minimisation rules, including mandatory pre-commitments and a maximum per-spin bet limit of $2.

The government is hard at work evaluating and building on these existing measures to limit the harms that we recognise can be caused to our community through gambling. The rules we apply to gaming are as important as our policy of diversifying away from gaming revenue. We will keep working on our evidence base about how to prevent gambling harm across the industry in Canberra.

Last year I foreshadowed to the Assembly that I would be holding a roundtable discussion to look at how gambling harm can be minimised in clubs. Representatives of gaming machine venues, gambling reform advocacy organisations, academic experts and regulators attended a roundtable with me in September. The roundtable was the first time a group of stakeholders of this nature had been brought together to share views and work collaboratively to address problem gambling in the ACT.

There was a shared vision of preserving and enhancing the community benefits offered by clubs while at the same time effectively minimising the risks of problem gambling posed by electronic gaming machines. The roundtable discussed how to better develop a better evidence base about minimising the harm of problem gambling. We considered a broad range of options for improved harm minimisation, including

sharing of best practice between venues and ensuring the appropriate staff training and self-exclusion rules.

The roundtable recognised the unique opportunity in Canberra to be a national leader in developing innovative harm minimisation measures. It is clear that a comprehensive approach to reform of the sector is necessary so that the impacts of problem gambling are not simply shifted to another mode or another place of gambling. Everyone at the roundtable recognised that we have the momentum to develop, implement and evaluate stronger interventions to reduce harm caused by gambling. We will do so with the input of everyone in the sector including clubs, academic experts, community organisations and people with lived experience of problem gambling, and we can move forward knowing that we share a common goal in achieving stronger harm minimisation.

This government has recognised the importance of workers in this process, and for that reason I also convened a roundtable of club workers and their union representatives last year to seek their views on harm minimisation. The club industry employs around 1,745 Canberrans. As clubs transition away from gaming machine revenue into new opportunities and revenue streams this will impact on the services clubs provide and, as a result, the types of work available in clubs.

In addition, club workers are well positioned to provide insights about the types of diversification activities that would be successful within each club community. Club workers are integral to reducing gambling harm and developing diverse, sustainable clubs. That is why the terms of reference for Mr Stevens's review include a direction to consult with workers in the industry as well as individual clubs and peak bodies.

The roundtables are yet another example of the government's engaging closely with clubs, with experts and with the broader community to achieve our shared goals. Our forward agenda includes a commitment to review the community contribution scheme and to implement new harm minimisation measures based on evidence. We will continue to consult, to engage and to listen as we have throughout this term.

At the beginning of this term of government I identified harm minimisation as one of my key portfolio priorities. The government is delivering on its commitment and it is doing so with a clear vision of having both strong protections against gambling harm and a strong, diverse and community-focused clubs sector. The independent review process will give the government and our clubs a foundation for a shared vision of the industry in Canberra. Together we can achieve a reduction in the number of gaming machines and better protections against gambling harm and we can foster a stronger and more sustainable clubs sector.

This community has made its expectations about gambling harm minimisation clear: more and stronger measures are needed. Our work to reach 4,000 gaming machine authorisations is just one more step in a broad, community-wide approach to minimising the impacts of problem gambling. This government has delivered stronger measures to meet our community's expectations about the gaming industry, and we will keep working to deliver more.

I present a copy of the paper:

> Electronic gaming machines in the Territory—Reducing the number—Ministerial statement, 10 April 2018.

I move:

> That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.50): I am pleased to see further progress on the government's commitment to reduce the number of poker machines in the ACT down to 4,000 in this term of the Assembly. This is a key parliamentary agreement item which seeks to reduce harm from poker machines here in the territory. As we have said before, Canberra has some of the highest rates of poker machines per capita across all the states and territories. These machines are addictive and they are manipulative, and they are designed that way so that people lose money.

At the last election the Greens committed to reducing the total number of gaming machines in the ACT by 30 per cent over 10 years, and an organised transition down to 4,000 machines is an important part of this process. According to the Gambling and Racing Commission, at 31 January this year there were 4,984 poker machine authorisations in the ACT. So the reduction to 4,000 represents nearly a 20 per cent reduction in the four years of this Assembly term.

Over the past year I and my colleagues in the Greens have been engaging in an important community conversation about the damage that pokies can cause. It is clear that the social licence to profit from gambling harm has expired. We also know that fewer people are choosing to play poker machines as a form of entertainment even though those people who are at risk of problem gambling still make up a disproportionate share of poker machine losses. It is clear that continuing to rely on poker machines for revenue is neither socially nor economically viable for clubs moving forward, and that is why this process is being put in place to support clubs to diversify their revenue streams into other areas.

I welcome the appointment of Mr Neville Stevens by the Attorney-General to undertake an analysis of the current landscape and map out a clear pathway that will get us down to the 4,000 machine benchmark that the government has determined. It will be important that Mr Stevens works in partnership with clubs and with community organisations on the transition. We need to find a solution that will support a strong, sustainable and diverse clubs sector while also reducing the reliance on pokies revenue. There are many people in the community with some great ideas on this, and I look forward to Mr Stevens having those conversations and bringing those ideas back in his report.

At the last election the Greens put forward a transition plan to help clubs diversify into other income streams. There are a number of ways we can support clubs in this transition including by reducing red tape, removing unnecessary fees and costs and incentivising other investments. The Greens want to support clubs with this transition

process, but any support must come with a clear commitment to move away from gaming revenue.

We do not support a simple payout to clubs in exchange for forfeiting their gaming machine licences; the Greens want to see a clear benefit to the community and a commitment to harm minimisation as part of the transition process. From my conversations with a number of different clubs I believe that they share this commitment. Many clubs have already started looking at alternative business models and areas of investment to ensure that they are sustainable into the future and to continue to provide the valuable services they provide to their members and to the broader community.

I certainly encourage all clubs and community organisations with an interest in this issue to engage constructively in the process, and I look forward to seeing the findings of Mr Stevens's report which will, I hope, map out a clear path to the benchmark of 4,000 machines, help to limit gambling harm in our community, and provide a clear pathway for our clubs to remain a vibrant part of our community into the future.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Disability recommendations
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) (10.54): Thank you to the Assembly for the opportunity to provide the Assembly with a response to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2015-2016, recommendations 11 and 12.

I thank the committee for its consideration of these issues and its understanding in the deferment in reporting to the Assembly. The deferment was to enable consideration of reports instrumental in addressing the recommendations but which were not finalised prior to the previously agreed reporting date.

As the first jurisdiction to fully implement the national disability insurance scheme, the ACT continues to grow productive, sustainable and meaningful relationships with the disability sector whilst, most importantly, ensuring positive outcomes for people with disability living in the ACT.

As members will be aware, during implementation of the NDIS in the ACT there have been many achievements. We now have 6,459 people in the ACT who have had a plan since the scheme commenced in 2014. There are 762 people with psychosocial disability in the scheme who have a plan compared with the estimated 350 who were receiving disability-type services before the scheme commenced. There are now 1,071 registered service providers in the ACT providing a range of services from therapy to cleaning.

We know that providing opportunities for people with disability to participate in the ACT adds to the social and economic vibrancy of our city. In 2018, the ACT government has a broad spectrum of activities planned which aim to achieve better outcomes for people with disability living in the ACT, including work that has commenced on the development of a disability justice strategy, which will be developed in partnership with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to improve access to justice for people with disability.

A new ACT disability commitment, which is currently in development, will be finalised in 2018 to meet our Council of Australian Governments commitment to implementing the national disability strategy 2010-2020, and to continue to create an inclusive and welcoming community for all people. The NDIS was supported by the community and governments, including the ACT government, as an agent of change empowering people with disability to have greater choice and control to live the lives they choose. But this is a major national reform and we know that there have been many challenges. The ACT government continues to listen and learn from people with disability, their families and carers, and to advocate on their behalf with the NDIA and the commonwealth.

The Office for Disability plays a central role in the ongoing implementation of the NDIS in the ACT. This includes providing high level policy advice right through to advocating on behalf of individual NDIS participants and providers. The Office for Disability works across the ACT government via an inter-directorate committee, particularly with directorates that are impacted by the implementation of the NDIS. The office has a strong working relationship with the NDIA at both a national and local level with strong governance mechanisms in place which allow for issues to be raised.

For example, there has been significant work undertaken with the ACT NDIA following concerns expressed by the mental health sector and participants with psychosocial disability. This work resulted in a forum on 21 March 2018, which was attended by participants and providers. The outcomes from this workshop will be used to inform a specific ACT work plan, which will be delivered by a joint NDIA and ACT working group set up to specifically look at the issues around mental health and the NDIS.

The NDIA is now also developing a tailored pathway for people with psychosocial disability. The ACT intends to be an active player in its implementation. Recommendation 11 of the committee's report relates to issues raised by the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian about funding for the NDIS transport hub, particularly for Public Trustee and clients with disability.

As we know, transport is integral for people with disability to connect to family, friends, education, services, supports and recreational activities. A lack of access to transport due to accessibility or financial issues can be one of the biggest barriers to social inclusion and participation in community life. Like many other areas of life, transport arrangements may have changed for eligible participants as they transition to the NDIS.

As members may be aware, once a person with disability is deemed eligible for an NDIS plan, their plan may include funding for transport supports. Therefore, if a person with a disability was previously receiving a mobility allowance via Centrelink, once they have transitioned to the NDIS, Centrelink is notified and their mobility allowance ceases.

Australian public trustees are appointed as financial administrators or attorneys for a large number of people with disability, including many who are eligible to receive assistance under the NDIS. Many people supported by the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian have received the mobility allowance, which could be used flexibly by the individual, with the support of their financial manager, to meet their individual needs. However, clients who are NDIS participants must use their NDIS transport funds for transport purposes only.

Recommendation 11 of the report stems from the impacts of this issue, because the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian's office is not designed to allow for transport funding payments to be received and held to be acquitted for transport purposes only. Staff from the Office for Disability have met with the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian to work through the specific matters raised in the report and to discuss what support the Office for Disability could provide the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian to raise these issues at a commonwealth level.

I am pleased to report that the Office for Disability is raising this matter with the commonwealth to seek a practical solution to the issues raised by the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian. I thank the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian's office for bringing the issue to our attention. This is just one of the issues that the ACT has raised with the commonwealth government and the NDIA at both ministerial and officer level.

As I mentioned previously, the Office for Disability has developed a strong working relationship with the NDIA and continues to advocate on local issues, provide advice and highlight the improvements that must be made. In September last year, in my six-month report to this place on the role of the ACT government under the national disability insurance scheme, I noted that:

> Some people with disability have been frustrated by the complexity of the transition to the NDIS and their individual outcomes. I have welcomed their advice and their forbearance.

We continue to hear people's frustrations and will continue to work with the commonwealth to ensure that the development and implementation of the NDIS is successful, not only as a service system but also on an individual level for participants, their families and carers.

I would like to note in particular the individuals and families who have shared their NDIS stories, including at a number of recent public forums and through the current health, ageing and community services inquiry into the implementation, performance and governance of the national disability insurance scheme in the ACT. This feedback

is critical to ensuring that ongoing and necessary improvements are made to the NDIS.

The ACT government is committed to a strong partnership with the commonwealth and the other jurisdictions to ensure that the development and implementation of the NDIS is successful. To realise this success and the benefits of the NDIS, we must be willing to raise the concerns of the ACT community and work towards solutions.

This is why, for example, I previously wrote to and spoke with both the Honourable Christian Porter MP, then commonwealth Minister for Social Services, and Dr Helen Nugent, chair of the NDIA board, to highlight the emerging market issues in the ACT, and in particular to express the ACT government's concerns about the pricing levels for short-term accommodation. The ACT government will continue to advocate to the NDIA to ensure that there is an adequate and reasonable pricing schedule for the provision of short-term accommodation.

As I have also previously noted, the ACT government has also raised concerns about market failure in supports for participants with high and complex needs in its submission to the Productivity Commission and in bilateral conversations with the commonwealth government.

We are able to identify these issues and advocate to the NDIA because people are willing to come forward and share their NDIS stories and frustrations. They are not only seeking a better outcome for just themselves, their children or family member but are also wanting to see the system work for everybody. They are people like those who participated in a recent forum on the NDIS, which was hosted by the member for Canberra, Gai Brodtmann MP, and the federal shadow Minister for Disability and Carers, Senator Carol Brown, or those community members who attended the forum on disability and multiculturalism hosted by People with Disabilities ACT last week.

Getting people together through forums such as these to identify the major issues is an important way of enabling people to be heard and is a first step towards the NDIA making necessary improvements. The ACT government will ensure that people's voices are heard and their frustrations acknowledged, and will continue to advocate to and work with the commonwealth to see that these issues are addressed and the NDIS is a success.

Recommendation 12 of the report requested an update on "outcomes of the supported decision-making trial as undertaken by the community advocacy group, ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Services, Supported Decision Making and link and learn pilot project". We know that decision-making is an important part of life. When we make decisions we ensure that we are living a life that includes the things we value. Through our decisions, we can explore our hopes, try new things and express our choices. Some people, however, find it challenging to make decisions. This may be due to, for example, an acquired brain injury, mental health issue or cognitive disability. Getting the right forms of support and information so that people can make their own decisions is important, and this type of assistance is referred to as supported decision making.

From 2015 through to December 2017, ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Services, known as ADACAS, was funded $270,000 by the ACT government to deliver the supported decision making, link and learn pilot project. An additional $33,845 was provided to Associate Professor Paul Ramcharan, from the global urban and social studies department at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to complete the evaluation report of the pilot project, which was completed on 23 February 2018.

This pilot was designed to embed supported decision-making across the ACT through the delivery of training, awareness raising and mentoring with stakeholders, which included people with impaired decision-making aged between 18 and 65, their families, friends and carers.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities indicates supported decision-making is the first resort and preferred alternative to substitute decision-making. The ACT government is committed to the national disability strategy. The strategy identifies the need to ensure that supported decision-making safeguards are in place for those individuals who need them, including accountability of guardianship and substitute decision-making.

Under section 2.12 of the national disability strategy 2010-2020, the ACT government has committed to "ensuring supported decision-making safeguards for those people who need them are in place, including accountability of guardianship and substitute decision-makers".

Associate Professor Paul Ramcharan's evaluation report for the link and learn pilot project provides a useful quote that highlights the distinction between supported decision-making and substitute decision-making, and I quote

> Supported decision-making refers to formal arrangements that go beyond the informal assistance of family and friends but stop short of substitute decision-making through guardianship, administration and Enduring Powers of Attorney.

The supported decision making link and learn pilot project evaluation by Associate Professor Ramcharan indicated that development of a culture of supported decision-making through awareness raising was innovative and highlighted the benefits of awareness raising activities in creating a culture of change.

The supported decision making link and learn pilot project delivered awareness raising activities to 300 people. It delivered 20 workshops in developing supported decision-making skills and 30 professional development sessions. I am pleased to report that there was an overwhelmingly positive response to the training of the supported decision making link and learn pilot project. Ninety-four per cent of participants felt that supported decision-making was an essential service.

In conclusion, the evaluation report concludes that there have been many positive outcomes for participants from the awareness raising, training and mentoring sessions

of the supported decision making link and learn pilot project delivered by ADACAS. I am pleased that ADACAS has been able to further develop this work in their recent supported decision-making project funded by the 2017-18 information, linkages and capacity building jurisdictional grants.

This project is aimed at creating systemic change to ensure that the ACT health care system is more inclusive of people with impaired decision-making ability. The project was designed by ADACAS and is now known as respect know act. The project aims to enable more people with impaired decision-making to participate actively in their health care decision-making. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of this important work.

In 2018, the ACT government has a broad spectrum of activities planned to achieve better outcomes for people with disability living in the ACT. I am pleased to report to members that work has commenced on the development of a disability justice strategy. This work is currently being progressed as a joint activity by the Community Services Directorate, through the Office for Disability and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

As Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, I look forward to delivering the disability justice strategy in collaboration with our agencies, the disability sector and people in our community to showcase the progress of equality for people with disability accessing justice in the ACT.

I congratulate ADACAS in its successful delivery of the supported decision making link and learn pilot project and acknowledge the tremendous work of Associate Professor Ramcharan in compiling the outcomes of the pilot in the evaluation report. The evaluation report will be made available on the CSD website. Finally, I thank all the participants in this innovative and successful pilot project. I thank members for the opportunity to report on the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2015-16 No 1.

I present the following paper:

> Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 1—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2015-2016—Update on Disability recommendations 11 and 12—Ministerial statement, 10 April 2018.

I move:

> That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Waste Management and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2018

Ms Fitzharris, by leave, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (11.10): I move:

> That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Amendment Bill 2018. The bill proposes a minor amendment to the commencement provisions in relation to the upcoming container deposit scheme. This amendment will ensure that the beverage industry has time to adjust its refund marking labels on beverage containers.

The framework for the container deposit scheme was established by the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Amendment Act 2017, which was passed in the Assembly in October 2017, and I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the government has made significant progress towards design and implementation of the scheme since then. The scheme will be launched on 30 June 2018. I am very pleased to see the ACT government move one step closer to commencing the container deposit scheme and achieve another ACT Labor election commitment in the coming months.

The container deposit scheme is a producer responsibility scheme to assist the beverage industry in reducing and dealing with waste generated by beverage product packaging and promote the recovery, reuse and recycling of empty beverage containers. It will help the community to reduce litter and promote a cleaner environment. In addition, local schools, charities, sporting and community groups can also benefit by collecting empty cans, bottles and other eligible containers and returning them to a designated collection point to obtain a 10-cent refund per container.

The container deposit scheme is an inclusive and accessible scheme, promoting and supporting social enterprises within the Canberra community. In addition to providing local schools, charities, sporting and community groups with fundraising opportunities, the scheme also provides a source of income to those most socially vulnerable within our community.

The container deposit scheme has been designed to align with existing schemes in New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. In particular, the scheme will enable the community to seamlessly access refunds for eligible containers across the ACT and surrounding New South Wales council areas.

The government has been consulting with not only other jurisdictions about the design of the scheme but also the beverage industry, advisory groups, retailers and the community, who will be significant participants in the scheme. As part of this consultation, the beverage industry has asked for a two-year transition to new product labelling requirements.

Each beverage container which is an eligible part of the scheme will be required to display a refund marking identifying the container as being eligible for a 10-cent refund. Members will probably be familiar with the current refund marking from the South Australian and Northern Territory schemes which reads:

> 10 cent refund at SA/NT collection depots in State/Territory of purchase.

In consultation with New South Wales, South Australia, and the Northern Territory, who already have similar schemes, and Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, who are developing schemes, a common refund marking has been agreed. It reads:

> 10 cent refund at collection points/depots in participating State/Territory of purchase.

The need for this bill has arisen from feedback received from the beverage industry and its key stakeholders. The industry has asked for a two-year transition period for the new common refund marking. This will allow manufacturers and retailers, large and small, to carefully plan and budget for a change to their container labels and allow them to use up existing stock, much of which has the existing South Australian and Northern Territory refund marking.

The government has listened to the beverage industry, and I present this bill to make a minor amendment to the commencement provisions of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Amendment Act 2017 to allow for this two-year transitional period. The bill will ensure that the beverage industry has certainty, and enough time, to adjust to the new container labelling requirements of the container deposit scheme.

This two-year transitional period has also been granted in New South Wales and I understand it is also proposed in Queensland. All the states and territories are aligned on this requirement ensuring that beverage manufacturers, retailers and all suppliers have a single refund marking printed on their containers, regardless of where they are sold in Australia.

I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 22 March 2018, on motion by **Ms Fitzharris**:

> That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (11.15): I say at the outset that we will be supporting The Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 today. The amendment bill amends the Domestic Animals Act 2000 and the Domestic Animals Regulation 2001 and makes amendments to the Domestic Animals (Racing Greyhounds) Amendment Act 2017 to align amendments made to the legislation with respect to

racing greyhounds and dangerous dogs and to allow issue of fines by stating or reframing offences as strict liability offences.

My colleague Mr Parton will talk to those issues about the management of greyhounds, but I note the complexities introduced by the government's need to include provisions for one class of dogs—that is, greyhounds—which unnecessarily complicates the proposed legislation.

We are pleased that the government still recognises the need for significant improvements in ACT dog legislation, given the relentless efforts made on this issue by my late colleague Steve Doszpot. Mr Doszpot, along with all of us on this side, recognised the urgent need for serious attention to be given to improvements in the legislation regarding the management of dogs. The legislation presented by the government and passed last year was clearly not quite adequate, resulting in the need for this amendment bill today, and the bill does not address our continued concern about the level of discretionary power in dealing with dangerous dogs.

The bill imposes greater restrictions on all dog owners for a variety of lesser matters including: keeping an unregistered dog; keeping a registered dog by a person who is not the registered keeper; the registered keeper failing to tell the registrar of a change of address; the registered keeper failing to tell the registrar of a change of address of where the registered dog is kept; keeping a dangerous dog except in accordance with a dangerous dog licence; having an unmuzzled dangerous dog in a public place; having an uncontrolled dangerous dog in a public place; taking a dog into a prohibited area; taking a dog into a prohibited place; not restraining a dog on someone else's private premises without permission; not removing faeces; and having a female dog on heat in a public place.

The bill introduces strict liability for a range of dangerous dog-related matters and a range of lesser issues. However, the bill only partially addresses the issues that we and many of the community feel are needed to address and deal with the menace of dangerous dogs.

On the issue of discretion, the scrutiny of bills committee called on the minister to respond to why it is considered appropriate for possible conditions to be set out in regulations or at the discretion of the registrar, and the bill attempts a difficult job of trying to patch together a whole lot of different amendments in what is already a structurally clumsy Domestic Animals Act. The act really requires a complete rewrite. We said this last year when my colleague Mr Doszpot was working on it, and we say it again today.

The government has been reluctant for years to address the serious and growing issue of dangerous dogs in Canberra. The government and we as a community have had to deal with the tragic results of this negligence. The government has been dragged kicking and screaming to make changes to dog legislation, and I again acknowledge the efforts of my late colleague Mr Doszpot in relentlessly holding the government to account on improved dog legislation.

Implementation of this new act will need to be monitored, and future changes are likely. Despite the comments made above, we are pleased to support this bill in the hope that it will bring further structure to the issue of dangerous dogs. I thank the minister for her work and that of her directorate in putting together this bill. As I have already said, it is a bit of a patchwork, but we are moving down the path of addressing the community's concerns about dangerous dogs. With that in mind, we are happy to support this bill today.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.20): I support the bill. The ACT Greens support all efforts to improve the welfare of animals in the territory—and, of course, anywhere—and this bill represents another step towards the elimination of abuse through greyhound racing here in Canberra. The bill includes a number of provisions the ACT Greens have been calling for for some time. The new definition of "breeding" continues the important work started by my colleague Shane Rattenbury when he was TAMS minister to tackle puppy farms and exploitative dog breeding practices.

The extension of control orders to carers and keepers of dogs, not merely owners, is long overdue. We have been approached by a number of concerned citizens, activists and animal rescuers over the past few years that animal hoarders and serial abusers have been escaping prosecution by claiming to be merely looking after an animal for someone else. I imagine Minister Fitzharris and her department have heard similar concerns, and I am very pleased that they have taken clear steps to address this issue. Likewise, allowing impounded animals to be housed in animal rescue facilities will ease the burden on our pound and provide, in many cases, much more humane living environments for vulnerable animals.

I thank the minister and the department for the work on this and note, of course, the contribution of the late Mr Doszpot in bringing forward the legislation that is now being amended.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.21): In the greyhound space, most of these amendments are unremarkable and, as Ms Lawder stated, the Canberra Liberals will not be opposing them. We oppose the basic premise of them and utterly and completely oppose the banning of greyhound racing in the ACT. We consider the additional red tape and duplicated bureaucracy around the keeping and training of greyhounds in the ACT is a waste of resources.

I note that in the public space there was a bit of confusion with this amendment bill in that quite a number considered that by rolling in dangerous dogs with greyhound amendments somehow the minister was suggesting that greyhounds were dangerous dogs. Far be it from me to be defending the minister's honour on this one, but I had quite a number of conversations out at the Greyhound Racing Club putting people straight that that was not the case.

Clause 18 removes the need for a stat dec from greyhound owners regarding whether their dog is a registered racing greyhound or not, and we certainly support that in line with the government's red tape reduction legislation amendment. But, again, I think it

is absurd that the question even has to be asked for a number of reasons. For starters, domestic animal services officers can very simply ascertain, by checking the microchip of a greyhound, its status as a racing greyhound or otherwise. But, more to the point, I do not think it is possible for the government to justify the ban. Greyhound racing is quite simply not out of step with community values and the ban should not be happening. I note the legislation to ban the sport in the ACT is still the subject of a number of legal proceedings, and I await the final results of those processes.

I also say while we are speaking to this matter that the government is going through a process of putting together a code of practice for keeping and breeding racing greyhounds in the ACT. When this process was undertaken in Victoria the government engaged with industry for a solid five months before producing a document. The ACT government gave the local industry just three days to respond to their draft code, which is unforgivable but so typical of the way that this Labor-Greens government has bullied its way to a reprehensible position.

I cannot help but note again that the ministers responsible for this policy space—Ms Fitzharris and Mr Ramsay—have never set foot on the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club premises and have consistently refused to speak to any stakeholders. ACT Labor has sold out to the Greens in this space in the most shameful way, and it will result in many long-term hard-core Labor voters turning their back on their traditional party come 2020.

We will not be opposing this amendment bill, but I look forward to overturning all of the anti-greyhound legislation when in government in late 2020.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.24): I rise today to speak in favour of the Domestic Animals Amendment Bill 2018. The government has moved these amendments today to strengthen the laws that manage our dogs and to make our community safer. No-one should be afraid to walk their neighbourhood. No-one should have to worry about their pets or children being attacked in their own yard. We are acting to make people responsible for the actions of their animals and to eliminate the threat of dog attacks, while educating the public about the importance of responsible dog ownership.

Dog attacks can be traumatic for all involved. Violence often is traumatic. All dogs can be unpredictable in their actions and they have the capacity to be aggressive. Unlike humans, they do not have the capacity to reason and can act on instinct to protect, attack, show dominance or defend what they perceive to be their territory. In short, dogs can be unpredictable, and even dogs we love can act out. This is precisely why we must manage our relationship with animals carefully. We put so much faith in our pets to love us, to protect us and to be there for us, and while dogs may be our best friend, they can also be our worst.

These amendments will make the Domestic Animals Act more robust and consistent. They will tighten up penalties and offences in the act and allow for fines to be issued in a greater range of circumstances to people who are clearly acting irresponsibly or unsafely in respect of their dogs. Managing animals requires managing their owners

and holding them responsible for their dogs' actions. Not to do so would risk public safety and animal welfare.

We are making sure that it is not just the owner of the dog who is now responsible for its actions. If you are caring for or keeping a dog for someone else, you will be responsible for its actions. This bill allows for control orders on people who are not the registered owner but who are in possession of the dog. This will allow for the dog to be controlled but also allow for the registered owner to keep the dog safe while working to ensure compliance with a control order.

Control orders are one of the most important tools in regulating dangerous dogs. They let us prescribe to the owner, or carer, the conditions the dog can be kept in and the conditions that must be met for it to interact with the surrounding environment. Control orders can require extra fencing to stop a dog jumping over, a muzzle when the dog is in public, or even a requirement for the dog to be contained on a property, as well as many other measures that dangerous dog owners must comply with.

Owners of dangerous dogs are required to hold a special licence that is granted by a request in writing to the registrar. This licence requires an annual fee to help maintain the system of dangerous dog management. This helps our rangers to proactively patrol our communities and to make compliance checks on dangerous dogs. People who are negligent owners of dangerous dogs and who breach control orders risk their dog being taken away for good. We cannot allow public safety to be jeopardized by lax ownership.

Also included in these changes are a definition of breeding, covering insemination of dogs and the weaning of pups, to close loopholes that may be exploited by unscrupulous breeders and illegal puppy farms. Puppy farms, or factories as they are also known, can be an incredibly cruel exercise: dogs used as breeding machines to create puppies for profit; dogs often kept in confined spaces restricted to breeding and not being able to play or go outside. This leads to poor social and behavioural outcomes for the dogs and their puppies. This can of course have flow-on effects later in life, contributing to dog attacks.

To help support better social outcomes for these dogs and their puppies, these amendments will also allow for dogs to be impounded in animal rescue facilities instead of just the pound. While the pound does great work, it can at times be full or not suitable. These animal rescue facilities can help improve the social and behavioural outcomes of puppies by giving them space to play and socialise with other animals while taking the burden off the pound.

I have had many constituents write to me or come to me at street stalls to talk about dog attacks. Many ask me, "What do I do if I witness a dog attack?" I say to them, and to anyone who is watching today, that if a dog attack is in progress, call ACT police. Dog attacks can be life threatening and emergency services are best placed to deal with life threatening situations. If, for whatever reason, it is no longer urgent, contact domestic animal services through Access Canberra. The best way for the government to manage dangerous dogs is through public reporting to get descriptions of dangerous dogs and to identify hotspots.

Canberrans are well aware of the dangers posed by dangerous dogs and are, in many cases, leading the debate in these areas. But while we can impose all the fines and penalties we want, education is our most important tool to change behaviour. Raising community awareness is critical to our success in stopping future dog attacks. I am pleased that the ACT government is making public education a priority in this issue.

The paws for thought program that has been rolled out by the ACT government promotes responsible pet ownership and a culture change through education. So far the campaign has held a number of community information stalls across Canberra with more to follow this year in conjunction with other education strategies.

Paws for thought deals with the essentials of dog ownership—getting your dog de-sexed, microchipped and registered—while informing people about the requirements of having a dog in public. There are many places where you can let your dog off leash in our city, including our great dog parks. For my constituents in Yerrabi, you can most definitely find one in Casey and another in Forde. But it is important to keep your dog restrained when required as well.

The Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 will also make minor changes to align the dangerous dog and racing greyhound amendments passed by the Legislative Assembly late last year. The bill will ensure that the principles of responsible pet ownership and public safety that were introduced through the dangerous dog amendments equally apply to the new greyhound provisions that are set to take effect on 30 April 2018.

The government committed to review the legislation in the recently released ACT animal welfare and management strategy to ensure that it is best practice and up to date. These amendments show that we have acted to strengthen the management of dangerous dogs to protect Canberra residents. I thank the minister for bringing forward these amendments and ask all members to support their introduction.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (11.31): I rise today to support this bill. Mr Assistant Speaker, a dog can be a man's, or indeed a woman's, best friend. They become part of our families and they enrich our lives, as you well know. It has now even been proven that dogs are able to read human emotions, and we know that they help our emotional and physical wellbeing, too. So there are plenty of reasons why dog owners feel such a special connection with their canine buddies.

Introducing a dog into your life is not a decision that should be taken lightly, however. It can be a resource-intensive step to take, as our pets need a lot of love and attention, and we need to be responsible in all of our dealings with them. Sadly, the story does not always end happily. Some dog breeds are known to exhibit more aggressive behaviour, but we know that some dogs in a certain environment might surprise us with their behaviour. We do know that irresponsible pet ownership can lead to any dog having a violent or aggressive disposition.

This government knows that dangerous dogs can pose a real risk to the safety of our community, and we are committed to ensuring that we have the necessary tools to

promote responsible pet ownership and to manage the risks associated with dangerous dogs. In November last year we introduced a number of reforms to our domestic animals legislation to provide even stronger protections for public safety and animal welfare. We understand the complexity around dog aggression, and we took a holistic approach to updating our dangerous dogs framework.

We now have a legislative scheme that addresses the many factors that can contribute to a dog's becoming dangerous, including illegal breeding, not desexing, and unfavourable behaviour resulting from irresponsible dog ownership. In instances where a dog does become dangerous, the registrar has more flexibility and powers in dealing with the situation and a greater emphasis has been placed on public safety.

One of the new tools to deal with dangerous dogs that we introduced last year was control orders. A control order sets out measures that a dog's keeper must comply with. The order may specify fencing requirements for a dog, it could mandate behavioural training for the keeper and their dog, or any other thing that the registrar considers might be appropriate in the circumstances.

At the moment a control order applies only to a dog and its keeper. With the amendments that are before the Assembly today, control orders will now also be able to be issued to a dog's carer. A dog's carer is someone who is over 14 years old and who is in charge of the dog for a period. This means that if a dog's keeper has, for example, gone on an overseas holiday and the dog is under the care of someone else, a control order can still be issued. This is a really important amendment to make.

If a control order has been issued to a dog's carer then the carer must also give it to the keeper, and vice versa. This means that if you are walking someone else's dog and that dog is subject to a control order, the keeper is now legally obliged to pass that information on, and you will also be subject to the terms of the control order because the dog is in your care.

This reflects a number of amendments in the bill whereby new public safety measures are now automatically applied to both keepers and carers. This approach is a common-sense improvement to our current system. It aligns with the public expectation that risk management measures attach to the dog rather than to the keeper. This means that a person in control of a dangerous dog cannot avoid responsibility by saying they are not the keeper of the dog. Regardless of whose care a dog is in at a given time, it must be managed in accordance with directions.

This legislation makes a series of other amendments to improve the operation of our Domestic Animals Act. Mr Assistant Speaker, as you know, the government showed great leadership last year in banning greyhound racing in the ACT, and introduced new requirements for breeding and raising greyhounds in our jurisdiction. The bill today will make sure that the greyhound legislation we pioneered last year is consistent with the requirements for dangerous dogs generally.

In particular, some numbering in the greyhounds legislation will be updated so that it reflects the Domestic Animals Act as amended last year. That makes pretty basic sense. The bill before us today will also ensure that the principles of responsible dog

ownership and public safety extend to greyhounds. For example, the registrar will have to consider public safety and whether an owner can demonstrate responsible dog management, care and control before granting a racing greyhound controller licence.

I am happy to clarify for Mr Parton and anyone else in this room that the legislation does set out that owning a greyhound is not an offence. An individual may register to own a racing greyhound. However, racing or trialling a greyhound in the ACT is an offence, regardless of whether or not the greyhound is registered. Those people who own retired greyhounds will be able to alert the registrar if their greyhound is retired, and it no longer needs to remain on the register.

The proposed amendments also clarify some definitions, including adding a new definition of the term "breeding". Under the act currently there are a number of provisions relating to breeding. Notably, it is an offence to breed dogs or cats without a licence. However, the term "breeding" is not explicitly defined. As you might imagine, this creates some grey areas around whether or not someone is indeed a breeder. Since there are multiple stages across the process of insemination and birth, it is helpful to be clear and precise on this issue.

The new definition of "breeding" incorporates all stages of pregnancy, birth and the first weeks of life. In particular, it defines breeding a litter from a cat or dog to include inseminating the animal or doing any other act intended to make the animal pregnant or assist the animal in becoming pregnant, assisting the birth of the litter, and whelping or weaning a kitten or pup in the litter. Animal welfare is paramount and we want to ensure that anyone involved at any stage of the breeding process is properly licensed.

In addition, amendments in this bill will now also mean that a breeding licence must comply with any relevant breeding standard or mandatory code of practice under the Animal Welfare Act 1992. By linking breeding licences directly to the Animal Welfare Act, we can ensure that the licences always keep pace with the latest standards in animal welfare.

We have made considerable changes to our domestic animals framework over the past 12 months to better serve the goals of animal welfare and public safety. We are clarifying our system so that it is easier to use by taking bold and important steps in animal safety, and we are ensuring that the ACT registrar and others in the domestic animal services team are equipped to appropriately handle dangerous situations.

The amendments before the Assembly today further clarify and strengthen the improved dangerous dogs framework that we introduced last year. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (11.40), in reply: I thank members for their support today. I would like to start by drawing members' attention to the revised explanatory statement, which simply corrects the numbering contained in the statement. The revised statement now correctly references clauses against the correct numbers. I understand that the

anomaly contained in the original version of the statement does not lead to any change, and I apologise for the confusion. I now table the revised explanatory statement, to correct the record.

As members have outlined, the objective of this bill is to bring consistency and best practice to the Domestic Animals Act 2000 following legislative changes that the government introduced last year to protect the community from dangerous dogs and to act on its commitment to end greyhound racing in the ACT.

Greyhound racing will end in our nation's capital from 30 April this year. This bill will ensure that anyone who keeps a racing greyhound in the ACT after this time for racing in another jurisdiction complies with the high standards of public safety and animal welfare that were introduced with the dangerous dog legislative amendments late last year.

This means that racing greyhound owners are treated equally to other dog owners when it comes to considering public safety and responsible dog management, care and control. For example, the registrar for domestic animals must consider if an owner is a responsible owner before allowing them to register a racing greyhound. I thank Mr Parton for his comments in relation to combining these two. I thank him for defending my honour. He is indeed correct, and I will reflect on how we can perhaps avoid that in future.

As I have said many times, the government is committed to best practice in how we manage pets in our community, and that also includes raising our expectations for responsible pet ownership. I have commissioned an independent expert review into dog management in the ACT and how domestic animal services exercises its functions, to make sure that Canberra is on track to be an Australian and world leader in dog management. I look forward to making the results of this work available shortly.

As part of being best practice, it is important to continuously review and improve our laws around dogs and make changes where they are needed. With respect to the important work last year between the government and the opposition, again, like my colleagues, I note the work of the late Steve Doszpot. It is important that we follow on from this work on dangerous dogs and also the greyhound work of last year. We have identified some small areas of change that are reflected in this bill.

These include, as members have noted, defining "breeding" in our legislation so that we can crack down on illegal breeders and backyard breeding in the territory, giving domestic animal services the ability to use animal rescue facilities for impounding dogs in a more suitable environment, for example, puppies seized as part of backyard breeding, and making sure carers of dogs as well as owners of dogs can have conditions and responsibilities placed on them where this is appropriate.

As I outlined in introducing this bill, there are circumstances when it is appropriate for a carer to look after a dog. For example, where a dog continuously escapes from its keeper's yard but can be appropriately housed with a carer, there should be an ability

to place conditions on carers in the same way that conditions can be placed on keepers. For example, the carer must have appropriate fencing and locks in place.

In reviewing our laws, it is also important to ensure that they are framed accurately and are easily understood by the community. All offences in the act have been reviewed to ensure that they are clear and enforceable, are in line with current policy and that it is clearly stated whether an offence is strict liability or not. As the act is over 15 years old, this is an important step in ensuring that offences are current and up to date.

Importantly, this bill does not introduce any new offences; rather, it ensures that existing offences are current and clear and that people can easily understand their responsibilities. A strong infringement notice framework with fines and penalties for people who do the wrong thing is vital in ensuring the highest standards of public safety and animal welfare when it comes to dogs.

This bill allows fines to be issued by domestic animal services rangers in a greater range of circumstances where offences are clearly set out and the community is informed of their obligations. For example, the bill is clear about the kinds of conditions that can be placed on a dog control order, dangerous dog licence, multiple dog licences or home impoundment direction. When these conditions are breached, a fine can be issued.

I note the work of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in its legislative scrutiny role and the comments provided on this bill in its scrutiny report 16. I thank the committee for its comments, which confirm the appropriate consideration of human rights issues. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that the committee's comment in relation to the range of conditions which can be imposed on licences will be addressed through a revised Magistrates Court regulation which will support the Domestic Animals Act.

This regulation will be made after these amendments have been enacted, and, consistent with the explanatory statement for this bill, will ensure that the infringements notice scheme will only apply to the prescribed conditions. That will ensure that the offence of failing to comply with a condition is limited in the ways supported by the committee's comments.

In summary, this bill makes technical and other minor amendments to align the dangerous dog and racing greyhound legislative amendments from last year and bring consistency to these provisions. It provides a definition of breeding in the legislation which includes the full process of breeding, from insemination to birth and weaning, in line with best practice. It allows for a dog control order and home impoundment direction to be placed on a carer for a dog as well as the keeper for a dog, recognising that there are times when it is appropriate to place responsibilities on a carer for a dog as well as a keeper.

The bill allows for a dog to be impounded on appropriate premises other than at just the territory pound to ensure the highest standard of animal welfare, for example, that seized puppies or mistreated dogs can be impounded in animal rescue facilities.

Finally, the bill redrafts offences to bring them in line with current policy and ensure that they are drafted clearly so that people understand their responsibilities, and fines can be issued when there is blatant disregard for our important dog laws that are targeted at protecting both people and animals.

This bill is the next step, combined with the other proactive steps the government is taking hand in hand with the community, to being the best we possibly can when it comes to managing dogs in our community. I commend the bill to the Assembly and thank members for their support.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 22 March 2018, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

> That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.47): The Canberra Liberals will support this bill. The amendments in it are described by the government as necessary "to improve the operation of each amended law without amounting to a major change in policy". However, the reality is that in many ways this bill is more a series of fix-ups to problems that have arisen. The Canberra Liberals accept that errors can and do occur, and we will not prevent errors from being corrected. However, we will note that there are too many errors and oversights coming up under this administration, too many fix-ups that, frankly, ought not to have occurred in the first place, and too many fix-ups that lead to undesirable and problematic lawmaking.

For example, the bill amends the Crimes Act 1900 to clarify the powers of a guardian for an accused who is unfit to plead. It seems procedural, and the profession have raised no concerns. And amendments to the Crimes (Restorative Justice) Act 2004 will extend the time frame for the restorative justice unit to report on progress for referred matters. This could be seen as just another example of the directorate changing their own deadlines after failing to meet them in the past. However, doing this function well is important, and the profession have raised no concerns.

Some of the other changes in the bill are not so straightforward. For example, the amendment to the Civil Laws (Wrongs) Act 2002 will allow the minister to extend the period for which a professional standards scheme is in force by making a notifiable instrument regardless of whether the instrument is made before or after the period that the scheme ends. This gives rise to retrospectivity in the operation of this law. As I am sure the Attorney-General would agree, retrospective laws are rarely good laws, often

create problems, and are always in need of significant justification. In this case, the potential problems are not fully explored, and the justification has not been properly provided. This is noted in the scrutiny report, which says that the amendment:

> … may potentially allow an extension to occur up to 12 months after the expiry of the scheme. There is also no requirement that any extension to a scheme be made immediately. In the committee's view, further justification for the possible retrospective extension of a scheme is required.

Perhaps the minister will go to that in his closing remarks. Another amendment which required further explanation was to the Family Violence Act 2016. This is a seemingly technical amendment that the explanatory statement states is to:

> … allow victims to register orders to be recognised interstate without having to travel interstate and bring the provision in line with the intent of the national model.

The wording of this amendment has caused confusion. It appears to state that family violence orders obtained under a repealed act do not apply. Upon questioning this point with the Attorney-General's office, the following response was received:

> This is a response to a drafting issue. Part 9 of the Family Violence Act contains a series of criteria that need to be satisfied for a Family Violence Order to be recognised nationally. FVOs made prior to the introduction of the national recognition legislation may not always comply with those criteria. Part 9.6 of the Family Violence Act explicitly recognises this, but existing section 199(3) purports to disapply all of Part 9 to FVOs made under repealed legislation. This change carves out Part 9.6 which deals with how family violence orders made under prior legislation continue in force and across jurisdictions.

Even with that explanation, it is easy to see why some people, even those working in this field, are confused by this amendment. Nevertheless, and despite the convoluted construction, the amendment is geared towards achieving a desirable outcome. Furthermore, some certainty can be had by the existence of section 199(5) of the FVA. With regard to the safeguard, this clause does appear to be an attempt to make family violence orders made interstate and under repealed acts more certain under the current act, and we will support it.

The last set of amendments I wish to talk about is also a fix-up, and is one of the poorest examples that I have seen in this Assembly. It is an amendment relating to the Heavy Vehicle National Law (ACT) Act 2013. These series of amendments are designed to keep the ACT laws consistent with the national law. However, there are two changes worth noting: it makes changes that are retrospective; and it extends time frames for notifying the Assembly of changes from six sitting days to 20 sitting days. Together, these mean that there could be lengthy periods where the laws are deemed to be in effect but the Assembly has not yet been notified or had the opportunity to reflect or object.

Following questions from the office of Miss Candice Burch and from my office on this, the Attorney-General's office replied:

> This is to ensure that they—

the regulations—

> can be adequately prepared with supporting materials to the Legislative Assembly.

Firstly, 20 sitting days is a surprisingly long time to prepare regulations that have been passed through other jurisdictions. More importantly, it appears that this is actually not the real reason for those changes. The real reason was uncovered and noted in the scrutiny report. The scrutiny report explains that the last set of amended regulations:

> … were not tabled in the Assembly within six sitting days of their publication on the NSW legislation website. They were therefore repealed from the sixth sitting day after their publication. They no longer had effect from the date of their repeal, and any amendments they made to the previous version of regulations were reversed.

In short, this is a fix-up for a mistake the directorate has already made that has left the ACT in a legal limbo. It appears that the advice that was then provided to my office when we questioned this did not explain that, did not go through the full details of why this fix-up was being made. That was uncovered in the scrutiny report. It is disappointing that that is the case, that the minister's office was not more up-front in an explanation of why this fix-up was being made. Well done to the scrutiny committee for picking this up. It seems that right now the ACT is not aligned with national regulations. This change, 20 sitting days, is required to fix an error made 20 sitting days ago. If we had waited till the next sitting day, the amendment would have no doubt read 23 sitting days.

This is poor administration whichever way you look at it and it is poor lawmaking. And for users of heavy vehicles in the territory, and indeed for this Assembly, to be kept in the dark for six months, is not good governance.

As I stated at the beginning of this speech, we are noticing more and more of these fix-ups coming into this place. We will not oppose them, obviously. We will not stand in the way of laws that have been poorly drafted or incorrectly drafted or where mistakes made by this government are being fixed up. But these continual changes for no other reason than laws not being complied with is at best sloppy and at worst negligent.

We will support this bill today. We will support the fix-ups. But I must say that this is not good. This does not reflect well upon this government or the ministers responsible. I call on this government and the ministers responsible to lift their game.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and

Minister for Mental Health) (11.56): I would like to speak in support of the Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The amendments to the Crimes (Restorative Justice) Act 2004 extend reporting time frames within that act. Restorative justice is an important process which responds to wrongdoing and seeks to repair harms suffered by actively involving the affected parties in respectful dialogue and decision-making. It is a voluntary process that gives victims an opportunity to have a say about what happened to them, to get answers to their questions and to have their losses acknowledged after experiencing crime. Offenders have an opportunity to accept responsibility for their actions and to actively contribute to repairing the harm caused by their offence.

The ACT's restorative justice unit is responsible for convening conferences between victims of crime, offenders and their respective communities of care. The unit receives complex referrals from a range of referring entities, including ACT Policing, ACT Corrective Services and the law courts. Since its establishment in 2005, the unit has received over a thousand referrals from ACT Policing alone. More than 15 face-to-face conferences have been held in the Alexander Maconochie Centre since adult offenders first became eligible for the scheme in 2016.

2018 will be a milestone year for restorative justice in the territory. The unit is actively preparing for the third phase of its scheme, which will provide access to restorative justice for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual offences. This development means that victims of all offences will have access to restorative justice, and reinforces the ACT's status as a national leader in the use of restorative justice practices.

The act currently requires the restorative justice unit to provide quarterly statistical reports within seven days to all referring entities on the progress of the matters they have referred. The number of referring entities to restorative justice increased in 2016 when referring entities specific to adult offenders began referring to the scheme.

With the increased workload associated with the restorative justice unit's recently expanded jurisdiction, and as it consults on expanding its jurisdiction further to include family violence and sexual offences, this is a good opportunity to adjust the quarterly reporting time frames so that they are more appropriate. For that reason, the bill increases the reporting time line in the act from seven days to 14 working days. This will better allow the restorative justice unit to fulfil its statutory reporting requirements and ensure that it can continue to effectively provide its core service of convening restorative justice conferences.

The bill also includes amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law, firstly to extend the time frame in which regulations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law are to be tabled in the Assembly, and secondly to apply two national amendment regulations.

The Legislation Act 2007 requires subordinate legislation to be presented within six sitting days of notification. However, as regulations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law are notified in New South Wales, and there is no automated system to advise the ACT of their notification, applying the standard time frame under the Legislation Act

raises practical difficulties. The amendment therefore increases the time frame for presenting Heavy Vehicle National Law regulations from six sitting days to 20 sitting days to ensure that there is sufficient time to apply these regulations in the ACT.

I hope that this offers some clarity for Mr Hanson as to the rationale behind this. The absence of an actual notification system means that our public service is required to find these things out. This longer time frame will ensure that in the future we do not see the gaps that he spoke about in his remarks.

The bill provides that the national regulations made under the Heavy Vehicle National Law are taken to be amended by the Heavy Vehicle (General) National Amendment Regulation 2016 (NSW) and the Heavy Vehicle National Amendment Regulation 2017 (NSW). In terms of leaving the ACT industry in limbo, I can again assure Mr Hanson that the changes that were created under the two regulations that I have just referred to are such that it has actually reduced regulation for the ACT industry. The consequence of the gap that has existed has not been a legally problematic one for the industry here in the ACT but of course it is important that those regulations are implemented with full effect in the ACT, which is what this bill will do.

National regulations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law apply automatically in the territory. The regulations being applied by this bill give effect to a number of minor and technical amendments that have no significant impact on heavy vehicle operators and that tidy up existing regulations.

These regulations will be applied retrospectively so that the ACT law remains consistent and in sync with the national law. This approach has been adopted where this issue has arisen in relation to other national laws applied in the ACT where the amendments are technical in nature.

These amendments make existing time frames more appropriate and ensure that national legislation is properly applied in the ACT. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (12.02), in reply: I thank members for their support of this important bill. This JACS bill makes amendments to justice and community safety legislation to help make our services and processes more accessible, transparent and timely. This bill is an example of how amendments that are minor and technical can nevertheless have an important effect on people's lives.

One such amendment in this JACS bill is an amendment to correct an inconsistency in the Crimes Act about the power of a guardian. Nearly 30 years ago the Australian Law Reform Commission published its report on guardianship and the management of property. This report was specifically aimed at reforming guardianship in the ACT. As a result, the Guardianship and Management of Property Act 1991 commenced shortly afterwards.

Our understanding of guardianship has changed a lot over the past 30 years. Issues around guardianship and capacity have recently been the subject of renewed attention, nationally and internationally, especially in the wake of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In his concept paper presented at the Harvard Law School project on disability in 2010, Professor of Law, Gerard Quinn stated:

> … the issue of legal capacity reform is probably the most important issue facing the international legal community at the moment. It potentially affects everyone in their own lives and everyone has a stake in the debate. This is because the issues at stake actually transcend disability and cut to the heart of what we mean to be human.

Many Canberrans may find themselves or their loved ones with a decision-making disability due to having an intellectual disability, a mental illness, dementia, an acquired brain injury or due to drug or alcohol-related illness. The government recognises the importance of guardianship issues to Canberrans and asked the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council to inquire into the terms and operation of the Guardianship and Management of Property Act.

The council published its final report on its inquiry in 2016. The government also committed to developing a disability justice strategy to ensure that people with disability are treated equally before the law. While those discussions are ongoing, this is an opportunity to make sure that our existing guardianship framework is operating properly.

The amendment to the Crimes Act is a technical amendment to ensure that the powers of a guardian with respect to an accused who is unfit to plead are consistent across the statute book. This amendment clarifies that the power of the guardian is to notify the Supreme Court that it would be in the best interests of the accused to have a special hearing rather than a power to make an election on behalf of the accused.

While this may appear to be a minor distinction, it is nevertheless an important one, as has been outlined in helpful detail by my colleague Minister Stephen-Smith in her ministerial statement earlier today. This amendment ensures that a guardian's powers in this instance are in line with the requirement under the Guardianship and Management of Property Act and are no more restrictive of the accused's freedom of decision-making and action than is necessary.

In his comments Mr Hanson referred to amendments in the Civil Law (Wrongs) Act and the scrutiny committee comments, which requested further justification. It may be helpful for the record for me to read part of the letter that I sent to the scrutiny committee recently in regards to these particular amendments:

> I note the Committee's comment that further justification is required for the possible retrospective extension of a professional standards scheme that has expired in the ACT.

> Two of the main objects of Schedule 4 of the Civil Law (Wrongs) Act are consumer protection and to enable the creation of schemes to limit the civil liability of professionals and others. The professional standards scheme ensures that professionals have professional indemnity insurance. This means that a consumer who suffers economic loss as a result of professional negligence will have access to compensation, even if the professional in question is bankrupt.
>
> Professional standards schemes limit the amount of damages that may be recovered. This reduces the risk for insurers which results in lower insurance premiums for professionals. However, the limit on damages is often still very high—for example, the South Australian Bar Association professional standard scheme caps damages at $1,500,000.
>
> The amendment, by allowing the extension of an interstate professional standard scheme to operate retrospectively, will protect consumers by ensuring that professionals operating under the interstate scheme were required to have insurance for the time between the expiry of the scheme and its extension in the ACT.
>
> By preventing a litigant from being able to make a claim for damages above the limit set out in the professional standards scheme, the amendment will also provide certainty to consumers and professionals about the maximum amount that may be claimed.
>
> The Committee's report considers the effect of the limit of the 12 month extension, and considers whether the amendment would allow an extension of a scheme to occur up to 12 months after the expiry of this scheme. While this is correct, the extension of the operation of the scheme could only be for up to 12 months from the expiry of that scheme. If a scheme was to be extended 11 months after its expiry, for example, it could only be extended for one more month into the future with a retrospective effect for the preceding 11 months.
>
> In the case of an interstate scheme, the ACT is limited by the extension of that scheme in its originating jurisdiction. If another jurisdiction extends that scheme for six months, the ACT would not be able to extend the scheme's operation for longer than six months and would therefore not be in a position 12 months after its expiry to be able to extend it.
>
> In a situation where the notification of an instrument extending an interstate professional standards scheme takes place the day before expiry in the originating jurisdiction (which also may not allow the ACT sufficient time to also notify the scheme the day before expiry) this amendment allows for that extension to be applied in the ACT, to ensure the consumer protection benefits described above.

Madam Speaker, the JACS bill also makes a minor yet important amendment to the Family Violence Act 2016. This amendment addresses a drafting inconsistency and will ensure that the text of the legislation reflects the intention behind it. This change will allow people with family violence orders under the Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act 2008 to make an application in the ACT for those orders to be declared as recognised orders and therefore treated as recognised orders across all the jurisdictions. This will reduce the burden for victims of family and domestic violence

by allowing orders under the old scheme to be recognised interstate without requiring victims to travel interstate to apply for recognition.

The bill also supports our restorative justice unit to deliver its inclusive, culturally appropriate and safe restorative justice scheme. As the Law Reform Advisory Council continues its inquiry into how Canberra can become a restorative city, this amendment recognises the increased responsibilities of the restorative justice unit by adjusting reporting time frames to better reflect the restorative justice unit's expanded workload.

The JACS bill also makes other amendments to adjust time frames, including expanding the circumstances under which an interstate professional standards scheme operating in the ACT may be extended and adjusting the time frames for tabling national amending regulations for the heavy vehicles national law in the Legislative Assembly, as Mr Rattenbury has mentioned. These amendments allow the ACT to participate fully in interstate schemes and ensure that there is consistency and clarity about their application in this jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, the JACS bill makes a range of technical amendments to ensure the protection of Canberrans and the continued participation of the ACT in national and interstate regulatory schemes. The bill will also improve access to justice for victims of family violence and people with decision-making disabilities who are in contact with the justice system. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Leave of absence

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) agreed to:

> That leave of absence be granted to Ms Fitzharris for 12 April 2018 to enable her, as Minister for Health, to attend meetings in Sydney associated with the COAG Health Council meeting being held the next day.

Sitting suspended from 12.12 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Land—Dickson purchase

MR COE: My question is to the Chief Minister. Government documents relating to the Tradies land swap indicate that the Dickson Tradies Club had been seeking to obtain the adjacent car park for some years. The government obtained a valuation for the site. You said in the Assembly on 25 October:

> The government put out an expression of interest to the marketplace some years ago. I will need to check the exact date that that expression of interest was put forward, but it was an open process inviting expressions of interest from all interested parties.

The process started in 2012. Chief Minister, why have you not disclosed the date that the Dickson Tradies Club first expressed an interest in obtaining this block?

MR BARR: I do not know that I have not done that but I have no problem with a search of government records to identify that date.

MR COE: Chief Minister, did the Tradies approach the government in 2010 and, on the back of that approach, what actions did the government take? And did the government obtain valuation for a potential direct sale?

MR BARR: It was eight years ago, so I will need to have a check of records undertaken by the directorate.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, when were you first advised that the Dickson Tradies Club was interested in buying this car park?

MR BARR: I refer the member to my answer to the previous questions.

Health Directorate—proposed organisational changes

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, you recently announced that ACT Health would be separated into two organisations, one to focus on health service delivery and the other to focus on health policy. Can you advise the Assembly of the purpose of this separation?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question and the opportunity to talk about a significant change that is coming, and which will be great for our community. As members know, ACT Health is changing in response to our city's growing needs. As the community grows and our population ages, demand for health services increases, as does the complexity of presentations in our hospitals, our subacute and community-based care. The ACT government is developing new, state-of-the-art facilities and recruiting highly specialised clinicians, medical and nursing staff for a more contemporary health system which includes two, soon to be three, public hospitals and over 7,000 staff to help respond to growing demand.

That is why, on 23 March, Minister Rattenbury and I announced that the Health Directorate will become two distinct organisations. One will be responsible for ACT Health's clinical operations and will focus on the operational delivery of high quality health services to our growing community. A separate planning and policy organisation will be focused on delivering the strategic and policy ambitions across the health system as a whole, building the health system we need for our future: increasing community health services, embedding preventive health and working with the service delivery organisation to enhance hospital services.

This approach will bring ACT Health into line with all other Australian jurisdictions, which have structurally separated their clinical services delivery from their departments of health. In many ways this change is a modernisation of our existing system that will continue to have person-centred care at its heart.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary, Mr Pettersson?

Mrs Dunne: A point of order, Madam Speaker. In accordance with standing order 118(c), I would ask you to rule that, with respect to this question, the answer given was by way of a ministerial statement, and to grant me leave to make a statement, at the conclusion of question time, not exceeding five minutes.

MADAM SPEAKER: I do not believe that it was a ministerial statement. It was a question; it had substance, and the answer was provided.

Mrs Dunne: In relation to the point of order, the standing orders refer to where a member believes that the response to a question was in the form of a ministerial statement. This was about a significant policy change. There were a number of ministerial statements this morning, and the minister did not make a ministerial statement in relation to a significant policy change. I think that it is quite within the realms anticipated by the standing order that leave should be granted to respond to it.

MADAM SPEAKER: It leaves that basically with the Speaker, and I am not providing leave. The minister has at some points over the past week and a bit spoken quite extensively about the restructure.

Mrs Dunne: But not in this chamber. This is the first time it has been mentioned in this chamber.

MADAM SPEAKER: I believe it is right that it has been mentioned as a question. Not every bit of business has to be dealt with for the first time in this chamber. A supplementary?

Mr Coe: What is the point of that standing order, then?

MADAM SPEAKER: I suggest that you look at that in the review of the standing orders, Mr Coe. I have pointed that out before. A supplementary?

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, what will be the benefit of these changes for Canberrans?

MS FITZHARRIS: These changes are focused on improving access, timeliness and the quality of health services for all Canberrans and for those whom ACT Health services in our surrounding region. This is all about making Canberrans receive the best possible care and continue to be the healthiest community in the country. This is an essential change for our growing population and expanding health system which, as I mentioned, will soon include three public hospitals.

This will allow the planning and policy arm to meet the needs of our growing and ageing community through contemporary approaches while the operational arm will have the ability to focus on delivering quality clinical services through providing acute, subacute, primary hospital services and community-based services to the ACT and surrounding region.

The change will streamline governance, management and reporting lines and provide a more effective and efficient governance model. It will support better relationships with the community, the non-government sector, the private sector and our academic and research partners.

As the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, it is my sincere ambition that every Canberran will see and feel the benefits of this new arrangement in their interactions with ACT Health, from patients to our non-government community sector partners, carers and advocacy services. This will be achieved in conjunction with the ongoing implementation of the territory-wide health services framework, the quality and data strategies, and the development of a preventive health strategy.

MR STEEL: Minister, what will happen between now and 1 October when these changes come into effect?

MS FITZHARRIS: It is important that we take the time to get this right and that is why over the next six months consultations with staff, stakeholders and the community will be an important step in informing this piece of work. An ACT Health organisational reform reference group comprising the ACT Health deputy directors-general has been established to guide planning and delivery of the new structure and is being supported by a new transition team. This includes representatives from both the clinical and corporate and policy sides of ACT Health with expert advice being brought into the team as required.

I would like to assure staff and partner organisations that we will consult closely about the development of the new structure through staff forums, other mechanisms and a dedicated transition page on the ACT Health intranet. Staff will also be encouraged to actively contribute to the process.

In the short term, recruitment for two new leaders will commence and I look forward to keeping the Assembly updated. I note that in the interim Director-General Michael De'Ath, previously with the Community Services Directorate, will act as the interim director-general.

ACTION bus service—timetable

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for transport and relates to ACTION bus timetables. Minister, when is the community going to be able to look at and give feedback about the new bus timetables, given that the your say website says that they are to be implemented in mid-2018, that stage 2 consultation is due to end in early 2018 and that a number of community council consultations have recently been cancelled?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. The work to design network 18 was consulted on through the first phase late last year. We will need to update the your say website, because those consultation responses will be up very shortly. What I can say is that they provided very useful information to inform what is the complex design of network 18; that more detailed design of the new routes and *new* timetables, particularly those services that will interact directly with the operation of light rail, will undergo significant community consultation; and that the community will have significant time to input into that.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am unclear whether that means that there is any more consultation. If the minister could clarify her answer it would be most appreciated. My next question is this: will the new bus timetables include major changes to suburban routes, including, potentially, cancellation of existing suburban routes given that, as I understand it, the new timetables are based primarily on the rapid routes?

MS FITZHARRIS: To clarify—as I believe I said previously—there are two phases to consultation for the design and rollout of network 18, which is the new bus service that the city needs to coordinate and integrate with light rail operations. Stage 1 happened at the end of last year. Those results will be out shortly. Stage 2, which will involve the release of detailed routes and timetables, will come out in the next couple of months. There will be significant time for the community and interested organisations to have a look at those and provide feedback.

It is certainly the case that, in particular, the introduction of five new rapid bus services this year is a significant undertaking. Clearly there will be some changes to some existing bus services, principally those in the Gungahlin region, which will integrate with the operation of light rail. Clearly, the red rapid as it currently exists, from Gungahlin to the city, will be replaced by Stage 1 of light rail.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: I recognise in the gallery a delegation of Singaporean teachers that the government has sponsored in their visit to the ACT. Welcome to the Assembly here. Question time is always interesting, and I hope you enjoy our fabulous city.

Questions without notice

ACT Emergency Services Agency—workplace culture

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, on 9 April 2018, the *Canberra Times* reported on a leaked ESA—Emergency Services Agency—staff culture survey. None of the 93 staff who completed the survey had confidence in senior management. Staff in the ESA voted no confidence in the leadership of the ESA in 2016. Minister, why do staff in the ESA continue to lack confidence in the leadership of the organisation, including your stewardship?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Wall for the question. The ESA do a fantastic job right across Canberra, providing a safe Canberra, whether it is in regard to firefighting, paramedic services or police services. I have full confidence in the ESA commissioner, Dominic Lane. He does a fantastic job and he is working through a really interesting part of the future change process for ESA, including firefighters. That is a difficult task for Mr Lane, but I support Mr Lane, and the government does as well.

MR WALL: Minister, as the minister responsible for the Emergency Services Agency, what responsibility do you take for the poor staff culture and the lack of confidence expressed in the management team?

MR GENTLEMAN: It is my responsibility, holding those portfolios as I do, and I take it very seriously. That is why we are investing more in the Emergency Services Agency every year. Of course, we are providing different opportunities for legislative changes as well to support the operations of those staff on the road in the daily aspects of their job.

It is a difficult job. It is shiftwork. Madam Speaker, you and I have both worked shiftwork before. We know what it is like. But they have my full support and I think that they do a great job for Canberra.

MR HANSON: As minister, what responsibility do you take for the lack of confidence in your policies?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do not agree with the premise of the question: that there is a lack of confidence in my policies. As I have said, the ESA do a fantastic job. Canberrans feel very safe and we know that in enormous detail that Canberrans feel this is the safest—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall and Mr Coe, you asked a question. Allow the minister to answer. Do you have more to add, Mr Gentleman?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, just to finish off. Canberrans feel the safest of residents of any city in Australia. That is due to the work that is being done by all our people on the front line and of course our managers in the ESA as well.

Schools—infrastructure projects

MR STEEL: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on some of the infrastructure projects recently completed in ACT public schools?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Steel for the question. The government took some significant school infrastructure commitments to the 2016 ACT election, most of which were funded in the 2017-18 budget. Many school infrastructure projects have been completed over the term of government to date. These include capacity

expansions across the ACT, such as at Amaroo School, which involves a 300-place, multipurpose classroom and gym extension. Other schools include Aranda primary, Garran primary and Telopea School, as well as Yarralumla primary. There are $500,000 of disability access works at Alfred Deakin High School, to enable improved accessibility to music rooms; heat mitigation works at Gungahlin College, as well as at Telopea School; and external learning environments to provide landscaping, play equipment and outdoor classrooms. Nearly $9 million worth of works have been completed as part of the public school infrastructure upgrades program. The government is also delivering school infrastructure investment through dedicated initiatives.

A range of capacity expansions in Gungahlin as part of $24 million of investment include additional transportable classrooms at Gold Creek School junior campus, providing 50 places; additional transportable classrooms at Neville Bonner Primary School, providing 200 places; and modifications to learning spaces at Palmerston Primary School, providing 75 places.

At the start of term 1, the $5.7 million Caroline Chisholm Centre for Innovation and Learning became available for use. I look forward to formally opening that facility and seeing some of the student work soon. There are also early works and new roof works as part of a significant $23.5 million modernisation of Belconnen High School.

MR STEEL: Minister, what are some of the other school infrastructure projects underway?

MS BERRY: Since the 2016 ACT election and before, the ACT Education Directorate has been working hard to deliver the school infrastructure that ACT public school students need. In addition to the completed projects I have mentioned, many projects that will be completed over the coming year are underway. For example, in Gungahlin, work is rapidly progressing on the amazing new school in Taylor. I encourage members to take a drive up Horse Park Drive and check out the $32 million facility as it takes shape.

At Mount Stromlo High School and Erindale College important roof replacements are underway that will improve comfort and support the longevity of these schools. The government is providing Narrabundah Early Childhood School with a new appropriate cultural space in support of the school's reconciliation action plan. The Woden School will be able to support its Year 11 and 12 students better with new classroom facilities that will soon be available for use.

Many more projects are either underway or in planning. The Education Directorate is doing a great job working within the ACT school communities to identify and meet their infrastructure needs. I look forward to continuing to update the Assembly as further school infrastructure projects get underway and are completed.

MS CODY: Minister, why is the government investing in school infrastructure?

MS BERRY: During the ACT election in 2016 the government committed $85 million in capital upgrades for Canberra's public primary schools, high schools

and colleges. This funding was allocated in the 2017-18 budget and will deliver upgrades and extensions to existing classrooms, new classrooms, refurbishment of toilets and change rooms, new gardens, horticultural facilities, equipment upgrades and heating and cooling systems, and energy efficiency improvements to Canberra's public primary schools and high schools.

Alongside this investment, the government committed $24 million to school expansions in Gungahlin, one of the fastest growing regions in the country, and provisioned $15 million in infrastructure grant funding for non-government schools.

We funded the beginning of other big school infrastructure projects like planning for new schools in Molonglo and Gungahlin. The government is proudly making this investment because it believes that every Canberran deserves an education that allows them to get the most out of their life—in their job and their career as well as their community.

Education has the power to break down barriers, improve our health and help people lead fulfilling lives. Every child deserves a great education, regardless of their background or their postcode, and the government is giving Canberra children this opportunity through its investment in school infrastructure.

Crime—statistics

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, today ABC Online revealed that ACT Policing reports rose by seven per cent, the number of burglaries rose by 32 per cent, armed robberies rose by 21 per cent, motor vehicle theft is up 41 per cent and other robberies are up 33 per cent. Minister, why did the number of crimes increase by seven per cent with double-digit growth in theft in 2017?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Milligan for the question. The advice I have from ACT Policing, and what I have said many times as police minister, is that crime is cyclical, it fluctuates and Canberra is not immune to that.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Last week you were in here saying that you were going to be very respectful and not interject. Let us just keep you to honouring your commitment. Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There are some increases in some categories of crime over the four-year period. It is instructive to look at crime trends in the ACT over 10 years. This is advice from ACT Policing: over the past 10 years homicide is down by 75 per cent; burglaries are down by 30 per cent; motor vehicle theft is down by almost 20 per cent; other theft is down by almost 25 per cent; and property damage is down by almost 40 per cent. The crime trends for the ACT are trending down. This is due to the hard work by ACT Policing.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, what relationship is there between crime levels and police resources?

MR GENTLEMAN: That would need a detailed answer. I think that an expert would need to do quite a study into that. I can say that ACT Policing is in a unique position, in that ACT Policing has the ability to call on resources from the broader AFP as operational requirements arise. This includes the special response group, SRG, and canine capabilities, which have previously been grouped into the FTE counts for ACT Policing. These resources are no longer included in that staffing figure. However, they remain available to ACT Policing as required.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on relevance: the question is very much about the relationship between crime levels and police resources, not just an answer giving a long list of police resources. It is about the relationship between crime levels and police resources, and how they are affected. That is the question. I ask that the minister be directly relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think that at the beginning he explained that it was a complex response and then he went into some detail about the resources available to ACT Policing. Do you have something to add, minister?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, I do. In regard to those resources that I have mentioned, they are no longer included in the staffing figure. However, they remain available to Policing as required. This flexibility is one of the key reasons for the ACT government's purchase agreement with the AFP for community policing services in Canberra. ACT police resources also fluctuate throughout the year due to mobility between ACT Policing and AFP national operations, as well as attrition and the timing and commencement of new recruits.

I have talked about shiftwork before, Madam Speaker. You and I both know what it is like to try to fill shifts. The FTE is 946 in the ACT. That is a strong number of people who work both on the front line and behind to support those front-line police. *(Time expired.)*

MR HANSON: Minister, what relationship is there between crime levels and population growth?

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, if you look at the statistics there is a direct correlation between population growth and crime across the ACT. When I was born, in the ACT there were 20,000 people. The police operations then were, I think, one sergeant and four police officer guards. We have gone from that to over 946 FTE. In regard to looking at the challenges for ACT Policing and the resources that the government is providing, we are supporting ACT police through further funds, infrastructure and legislative change.

Citizens juries—process

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Chief Minister. I refer to claims reported by the ABC on 10 April about a member of the citizens jury walking out on the last day of

the process claiming it was grossly corrupted and misleading. Of particular concern was the jury not being presented with critical information about whole-person impairment until the final day. Chief Minister, what actions have you taken to ensure the citizens jury was not misled and was given all the information it needed to make an informed decision?

MR BARR: Yes, the jury was an excellent process. I met with a group of about a dozen of the jurors when they presented their report, including those who presented the minority report, to the government. I thank them for their work and I thank democracyCo for engaging the process.

MS LAWDER: I could echo Ms Le Couteur and say that I am not quite sure what the answer was there; but, to the next question: Chief Minister, what processes were in place to ensure that the process was independent of government and not able to be manipulated to result in the favoured outcome?

MR BARR: I would refer the member to the information that is publicly available on that in regard to that question.

MR COE: Minister, again, what actions have you taken to ensure that the citizens jury was not misled, or is this just another governance issue in your directorate?

MR BARR: As I said, I have met with the jurors and I am confident in the process.

Children and young people—adoptions

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, a number of people have reported that they attended a carers meeting on 9 April 2018, at which ACT Together said they will no longer be assisting foster carers with adoption applications and that all such applications are now on hold. If correct, this is out of step with the commitment to permanency outlined in A step up for our kids and contradicts the CSD's website on adopting a child from out of home care. Minister, what do you know about this meeting, and what exactly did ACT Together tell carers regarding the current state of adoption in the territory?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Kikkert for her question, and I welcome the opportunity to provide some clarity on this matter to the Assembly and to the public. I have to say, of course, that I was concerned to see some comments on social media this morning suggesting that the Community Services Directorate and ACT Together would no longer be progressing adoptions. I can assure the Assembly most categorically that this is not the case. There was a meeting, as Mrs Kikkert said, yesterday evening with carers. Child and youth protection services, CYPS, attended that meeting, at the invitation of ACT Together, to speak to carers about permanency and the adoption process. At the meeting a number of items were addressed, including enduring parental responsibility and the adoption of children and young people in care.

I am assured that CYPS reiterated their support to carers and delivered the following key messages: CYPS remains committed to supporting carers to provide the best

possible outcomes for children and young people in care; CYPS is aware that carers are investing in obtaining permanency of a child or young person and will present the best possible case to the court in order for the court to make a final decision on these matters; CYPS advise that it has taken on board some recent feedback from the ACT court about the conduct of adoption matters—and CYPS is undertaking a review this week of present adoption matters to ensure that all applications are meeting the court's expectations to present the strongest case possible; and CYPS is actively working with other relevant directorates to implement the recommendations of the adoption task force as well, the report of which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in 2017.

I absolutely acknowledge that carers make a truly valuable contribution to the community by offering safe and stable environments for vulnerable children and young people. Again I can assure members of the Assembly and the public that CYPS will continue to work to support carers to achieve adoptions or EPRs. *(Time expired.)*

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, are you aware of any obstacles currently impeding or even delaying the adoption of children in out of home care and, if so, what are they?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Some of the timeliness issues were of course covered in the report of the adoptions task force and a number of those recommendations have already been addressed and others are in progress. As I said in response to the first question, CYPS is also taking on board recent feedback from ACT courts about the conduct of adoption matters and is seeking to review those issues to ensure that all applications that it makes are meeting the court's expectations.

We need to remember that adoption matters first and foremost need to be considered in relation to what is in the best interests of the children and young people involved—that is the primary consideration in relation to adoption—and to note that enduring parental responsibility orders are an alternative to adoption in terms of providing permanency for children and young people. But I reiterate and reinforce to the Assembly that finding a safe and loving permanent home for children and young people in out of home care is and remains a priority for the government under A step up for our kids.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, will you investigate and report back to the Assembly by the end of this week on what steps led to ACT Together making the statements that they appear to have made last night? What steps are being taken to mitigate the issues that have been raised by ACT Together? Will you also take steps to ensure that the people who were at that meeting get the message loud and clear that adoption is still a priority for this government?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will it take on notice to come back with any further information that I can get by the end of this sitting week. But I will say that some positive feedback has also been received in relation to the information. I have been provided with an extract from an email from a participant that I am advised I am able to share with the Assembly. It says, "Thank you so much for the opportunity to attend this evening's permanency workshop. It was a very informative session. I had all my

questions answered as well as gaining a much better appreciation of the process. The in-depth insight provided this evening really helped my understanding of the legislative environment, the bigger picture as well as the challenges ahead. Please pass on my thanks to all those involved in pulling the evening together. It was very much appreciated."

As I said, I was concerned to see some of the reporting on social media this morning. I do provide an absolute assurance to the Assembly and to the public that CYPS will continue to work to support carers to achieve adoptions or enduring parental responsibility orders where that is in the child's or young person's best interests. I will provide any further information I can, certainly by the end of the week

Health Directorate—proposed organisational changes

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, on 24 March, the *Canberra Times* reported on your decision to split the Health Directorate into two new directorates, one focused on policy, the other on operations. The paper reported that you said "the new policy arm would focus on overseeing operations and policy". Minister, will the directorate responsible for operations be accountable to the directorate responsible for overseeing operations?

MS FITZHARRIS: I cannot comment on the precise quote in the *Canberra Times* as I do not have it in front of me. Certainly the governance arrangements not only within each organisation but between them are aspects of the important work that is currently underway by the transition team. We have many examples across the country to learn from, to learn what has worked well, to learn what could be improved, and to determine what is the best model both for each organisation—

Mrs Dunne: You have already announced it.

MS FITZHARRIS: Indeed we have, and that work will now get underway. And it will involve consultation.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, how will splitting the directorate in two create efficiencies in the health system?

MS FITZHARRIS: The work that the transition team will undertake over the next six months will determine the relationship between the two organisations. What it will allow the service delivery arm to do is focus solely on service delivery, whether that be Canberra Hospital, the University of Canberra hospital, our community health centres or walk-in centres, or other community-based services like hospital in the home. There will be a clear focus on delivering high quality services efficiently for our community.

MS LEE: Minister, how will an operations directorate, answerable to a policy directorate, both of which inevitably will end up with different processes, reduce waiting times in the emergency department and for elective surgery?

MS FITZHARRIS: I reject that there is an inevitability about that. What I would say is that the government has taken an important decision. We will take the time to work on the implementation plan. We will do that in consultation with stakeholders, staff and the community. That is a very normal process.

What I would also add is that we are the last jurisdiction, particularly since the national health funding reforms were implemented between the commonwealth and all states and territories in 2011, to implement such a model. This model exists in every other jurisdiction.

As I said in my previous answer, we are not the smallest jurisdiction. We also serve a significant and growing region in south-eastern New South Wales. We have good models to work from. We will learn from those and we will determine come 1 October the model that works best for our community.

Justice—magistrates

MS CODY: My question is to the Attorney-General. How will adding an eighth permanent ACT magistrate provide greater access to justice?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cody for the question. A justice system is, as I have said before, only truly a good justice system when it is accessible, transparent and timely. Resourcing for the courts, and everyone who supports the members of our community through the courts, helps to achieve this.

The Magistrates Court undertakes critical work for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Magistrates make decisions about family violence orders in response to people seeking protection. Magistrates make decisions about bail that involve crucial public safety and individual liberty considerations. Magistrates oversee coronial investigations that uncover the causes of tragic deaths and can make recommendations for public safety.

These are vital public functions. The government is committed to ensuring that our justice system is resourced properly at all levels to provide them. The government's decision to fund an eighth magistrate is based on engagement with the courts to analyse their ongoing workload and to ensure that they have sufficient resources to keep providing first-rate court services to this community.

MS CODY: Minister, what measures has the ACT taken to ensure transparent and merit-based selection of magistrates?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary question. The ACT government recognises the importance of, and adheres to, a transparent process for selecting judicial officers. The process and the criteria for selecting a new magistrate are set out in the Magistrates Court (Magistrates Appointment Requirements) Determination 2009, which is available online.

The ACT's legislative framework ensures that a transparent, merit-based selection process occurs for new magistrates. Under the framework, the government is required to seek expressions of interest by public notice and to consider applications against a set of performance criteria. The Chief Magistrate must be consulted on possible appointees.

The public set of criteria and the public advertisement process ensure that decisions about appointment are merit-based. The government recognises and values the importance of local views, and we will be seeking nominations from both the Law Society and the Bar Association as part of this process. The government values the input of the local profession and will continue to engage with them in the context of the statutory framework.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how does the appointment of a new magistrate strengthen the government's support for access to justice across other parts of the legal system?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. This government takes a whole-system approach to resourcing the justice system. Whenever a decision is made about resourcing one part of our legal system, we must carefully consider any flow-on consequences in other parts of the system.

That is why, in the latest announcement, we are providing additional resources to the Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Aid ACT. The DPP will receive $987,000 over four years to employ staff to support criminal prosecutions before the new magistrate. Legal Aid ACT will receive an additional $1.3 million for additional staff, also to assist with servicing additional demand before the courts. In last year's budget we provided $2.477 million over four years to our community legal centres. That funding supports vulnerable people who seek protection from the courts, including women seeking family violence orders.

These resources will help to ensure that matters which come before the new magistrate are supported to achieve just, timely and transparent outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate—workplace culture

MR HANSON: My question is to the Attorney-General and it relates to an article in the *Canberra Times* entitled "Justice directorate staff are concerned about bullying" The article refers to a leaked staff survey which identified "staff concerns about workplace bias, preparedness to speak-up against misconduct and confusion around areas of accountability". It reveals that the directorate has become a "toxic workplace", with a "culture of blame and little trust" and "a lack of common purpose". The report also notes that similar concerns have spread throughout other arms of the justice directorate. Attorney-General, how far have these concerns spread throughout the other arms of the justice directorate?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the member for his question. The 2017 JACS staff survey results provide valuable information on what works well in JACS and it identifies

some opportunities for ongoing improvement. The survey is one tool that assists the directorate in understanding the broad culture of our organisation and makes an assessment of the level of staff engagement.

We have noticed that JACS is committed to improving its workplace culture. That is clear. The results are reflected in the differences in culture across the diverse nature of JACS's broad functions. There is more work to do, but it is positive to note that the justice portfolio has improved in its engagement rating to reach a culture of ambition. The directorate's results reflect that, when compared to other large public sector organisations, JACS on average is good but not yet good enough. We will continue with the great work that JACS is doing.

MR HANSON: Attorney-General, will you provide to the Assembly a full copy of the survey and, if not, why not?

MR RAMSAY: The survey is, as has been noted in relation to other surveys, confidential, so that the staff can feel confident in what it is that they are saying and what it is that they are contributing. We value that and we will continue to do that.

MR COE: Attorney-General, what are you doing to demonstrate leadership so as to avoid the department remaining a toxic workplace, with workplace bias, a culture of blame and a lack of common purpose?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the member for his question. JACS is continuing to engage in ongoing developments and improvements in its work. As I say, it is recognised that it has achieved an average level at this stage, and there is ongoing improvement. I continue to work with the head of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, the executive staff and staff throughout as we continue to build and develop a strong culture. I want to place on record my admiration and support for the leadership and all of the members of the JACS team as they contribute such important and valuable work to this community.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, before I call Ms Lee, as we will be living as neighbours next to a construction site, we will provide advice on that. I noticed that at the beginning of question time we had a noisy jackhammer again. That has been halted now until 3.30. I will endeavour to keep the hour of question time as quiet as possible, but I look to members and know that that is not going to happen very readily. Just bear with us over time, and I would appreciate any feedback that you may have.

Education—NAPLAN survey

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, were you made aware of, or consulted about, the Australian Education Union ACT Branch survey on NAPLAN among government school teachers either before or while it was being undertaken?

MS BERRY: Yes, I am aware that the Australian Education Union engages with its members in a variety of ways, and I was aware of this particular survey.

MS LEE: Minister, will you be seeking the views of educators in the non-government schools sector in making any decisions about the future of NAPLAN in ACT schools?

MS BERRY: I have invited the non-government schools to engage in the future of education conversation. Through that conversation I have heard from all sectors about their views around standardised testing, league tables, and the stress and anxiety that they are bringing to our children.

Yes, they have been part of that conversation, and I will continue to talk with the Canberra community more broadly as we talk with the states and the Northern Territory about a possible review of NAPLAN.

MR WALL: Minister, are the AEU survey findings an accurate assessment of NAPLAN in ACT government schools?

MS BERRY: I have not looked in detail at the union's findings around NAPLAN in ACT government schools. But it is clear that there are some concerns in the school community, particularly in public schools, around how NAPLAN is used and whether it can be used better to support teachers to give children the best learning experiences. With that in mind, it is an important piece of information, but it is not the only piece of information that will be considered.

I look forward to having conversations with my ministerial colleagues in the very near future about NAPLAN and how we can improve that to make sure that it is providing the data the teachers need to support students in their classrooms.

National Youth Week—youth achievements

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, what is the government doing to support the celebration of national Youth Week in the ACT?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cheyne for her question. As members will be aware, Youth Week is a week-long celebration of young people aged between 12 and 25 years. This year ACT Youth Week will run from Friday, 13 April to Sunday, 22 April.

ACT Youth Week encourages us to celebrate the wonderful contribution young people make to our community while providing a platform for young people to share ideas about the future and to advocate on issues they are passionate about. I will launch ACT Youth Week at the prestigious ACT Young Canberra Citizen of the Year awards on Friday, 13 April.

To support events and activities during Youth Week, the ACT government committed $25,000 for small grants for organisations and groups of young people to organise events for other young people as well as for a range of free public events across Canberra. The grants are funding innovative new projects so that young people can see their ideas become a reality.

The 2018 ACT Youth Week events include Black Mountain School's Youth Arts and Music Festival for All, the Dickson College ACT Youth Week expo and barbecue, an East African community youth sports and game day, and a sunset festival with the YWCA. Free events funded by the ACT government are occurring across Canberra and are open to all young people. These include Phillip Ice Skating Centre hosting "Skate it Out" in Woden and Back Bone BMX hosting BMX clinics in Belconnen and Gungahlin.

I encourage everyone to get involved in ACT Youth Week 2018. This could involve attending a local event celebrating the contribution of young people, promoting events happening across the city or even just taking the time to listen to a young Canberran about their passions and the challenges facing their generation.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how do the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year awards, as part of national Youth Week, celebrate the achievements of young Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary question. Of course, I will be very pleased to announce the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year awards on Friday. These awards are now in their 29th year, so they are somewhat older than the impressive young Canberrans who are acclaimed by them.

The awards recognise and celebrate young people aged between 12 and 25 years for their personal achievements and for their contribution to the Canberra community. The awards are an opportunity to recognise the innovation, diversity, talent and tenacity of both young individuals and groups across four categories this year: Young Canberra Citizen of the Year, personal achievement, individual community service, and group achievement.

Each year young Canberrans are nominated for their remarkable and inspiring efforts across a range of fields, including community work, the arts, sport and the environment. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the calibre of previous young Canberra citizens we have honoured. The 2017 recipient, Mustafa Ehsan, was acknowledged as an exceptional role model who champions inclusion in the Canberra community through sport. The 2016 recipient, Jordan Kerr, established the National Youth Council of Australia. The 2015 recipient—someone I am sure we are all very familiar with—Nip Wijewickrema, was acknowledged for her contribution to the community, including her work in establishing socially sustainable florist GG's Flowers, which employs and supports people with disability.

Each of these young people is an inspirational and remarkable young person in our community. I am sure that this year's recipients will be no different. I look forward to seeing who will be this year's Young Canberra Citizen of the Year at the awards ceremony on Friday.

MS ORR: Minister, why is it important that we recognise the contributions and challenges of young people in our community?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. As we all know, young Canberrans have a unique experience of our city and provide a unique perspective into the challenges we face as a community. The ACT government recognises and supports young people through funding awards and the youth InterACT grants and scholarships but also through consulting young people to ensure that their voice is heard.

One way this recognition is realised is through the Youth Advisory Council. The Youth Advisory Council, or YAC, provides strategic advice to the ACT government on issues affecting young people in the ACT. Membership of YAC reflects the diversity of young people residing in the ACT, including gender balance, people living with a disability and representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We are working hard towards better outcomes for young carers, young people with disabilities, young people who come from CALD backgrounds, LGBTIQ young people, young workers and young people who are involved in the justice system.

While it is important that we take the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and contributions of these specific cohorts of young people we must also ensure that we consider the experiences of young people more broadly. The celebration of Youth Week and the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year awards are opportunities to bring the stories of young people to the forefront, highlighting the successes of individual young people to remind us all of the contributions they make to our society and the unique challenges they overcome to do so. Empowering young people to celebrate each other and reflect on their own achievements sets the stage for a confident, successful and inclusive generation of Canberrans into the future.

Light rail—safety

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, last Thursday, 5 April, you launched the rail-ready light rail safety program. Why have you not coordinated with emergency services to ensure that they were rail-ready before launching this program?

MS FITZHARRIS: We have coordinated with the Emergency Services Agency and the campaign will continue until the operation of light rail.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, why is the government proceeding with light rail track testing on public roads before the emergency services have been fully equipped, trained and resourced to deal with any accidents involving light rail?

MS FITZHARRIS: That is incorrect. We have a highly skilled and well-resourced emergency services agency, which, like all agencies across government that have involvement with the light rail project, has been consulted and engaged with since day one.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what reassurance will you give Canberra drivers, cyclists and pedestrians that they will be safe during track testing of light rail?

MS FITZHARRIS: I can give the highest levels of assurance to the community. Canberra Metro, as the builders and operators of light rail, the ACT government and, importantly, the national regulator will oversee not only the planning but also the delivery of light rail operations, which will also include, in the lead-up to operations, commencing light track testing.

Gaming—consumer privacy

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Regulatory Services. Minister, in late March this year the Gambling and Racing Commission wrote to licensed clubs across Canberra requesting that they provide the personal information of every recipient of a gaming machine payout in excess of $1,500 made between October and December last year. Minister, why is the commission specifically trying to ascertain the identities of those receiving payments?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the member for his question. As the member would know, the GRC is independent of government and, when it undertakes regulatory investigations or action, it is not something that it would be seeking ministerial engagement on.

MR PARTON: Minister, how can you support such a breach of privacy, and can you guarantee that this data will not be more widely distributed, either knowingly or by accident?

MR RAMSAY: I have full confidence in the GRC's actions.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, is the commission seeking similar information from the casino and Tabcorp agencies?

MR RAMSAY: I will take that question on notice.

City Renewal Authority—grants

MS ORR: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the outcome of the first round of city grants delivered under the City Renewal Authority?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question. I am advised that the City Renewal Authority has awarded $173,614 in grants to 12 recipients for a wide variety of projects, from music festivals to public art and temporary installations. Over the next three months the city grants will help to activate and improve the city centre, with six events, three installations, a research project and an accessibility education campaign, as well as a new public art mural.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, how will the events deliver activity in the city that supports local businesses?

MR BARR: The authority is working with businesses in the Sydney and Melbourne buildings to tidy up space in the building laneways through the construction of new waste enclosures. This supports existing businesses in that area.

The city grants that I referred to previously will fund the loaded laneway festival in Verity Lane—the Sydney Building. This will be delivered in partnership with businesses the Reload Bar and Treehouse. City grants will also support the Wellspring Environmental Art and Design organisation in creating three temporary sculptural seating installations from transformed recyclables. The three sites will be designed to encourage social interaction, to promote sustainability and to bring aspects of nature into the city.

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, how do these grants benefit all Canberrans?

MR BARR: The grants are funded through the city centre marketing and improvements levy, which is a contribution from building owners in the CBD that supports events and activations in the city. A vibrant and fun CBD should be the commercial, cultural and social heart of our city, and that benefits everyone.

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

Question taken on notice

Statement by member

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (3.27), by leave: Madam Speaker, I wish to make a statement to correct the record in relation to an answer received while I was overseas. On 20 February this year I asked a question without notice of the Minister for Mental Health in relation to the Productivity Commission's 2018 report on government services. In my question I stated:

> … this report shows that the number of mental health acute care beds per 100,000 people between 2005-06 and 2015-16 has fallen by 17.6 per cent.

The minister took the question on notice and provided an answer on 19 March 2018. As members know, I was absent from the territory at that time, and this is why I am seeking leave to correct the record now.

In his answer the minister provided some figures that did not align with the figures that I had quoted, and noted:

> ACT Health was unable to establish where the decrease of 17.6 per cent Mrs Dunne referred to has come from.

Madam Speaker, I have reviewed my question and, indeed, there was an inaccuracy—it should have read "from 2006-07", and that is why I wish to correct the record. The Productivity Commission's 2018 report on government services, at table 13A.13 indicates that in 2006-07, for the ACT, the number of beds per 1,000 people provided in acute hospitals with psychiatric units or wards, was 20.7, and the

corresponding number for 2015-16 was 18.6. Applying the arithmetic method to those figures across the period, it indicates a decline a little over 10.1 per cent.

I apologise to members for the error. I fear I may have used that figure elsewhere and it may have been in this place, so I put this on the record as a correction for those errors if I have made other errors. For the purpose of the minister's answer to the question taken on notice, I have clarified the matter with a further question on notice, which I submitted today.

2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act—Select Committee
Report—government response

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (3.30): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

> 2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act—Select Committee—Report—*Inquiry into the 2016 ACT Election and the Electoral Act*—Government response.

This paper was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting.

I move:

> That the Assembly take note of the paper.

I am pleased to table the government's response to the report of the Select Committee on the 2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act following its inquiry into the 2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act. The government is committed to maintaining and improving the act's fair, transparent and robust electoral framework. Successive reforms to the Electoral Act made by the government, and continued administrative improvements made by the ACT Electoral Commission to the conduct of elections, have strengthened political participation and democracy in the ACT.

We also have mature processes for oversight and scrutiny of elections, both through the independent examinations of the Auditor-General and through the tripartisan inquiry of the select committee in this place. Our electoral system is one the ACT community should be very proud of. The inquiry report makes clear that we enjoy high levels of transparency and fairness as candidates and parties contest elections. Taken together, the inquiry report, the Electoral Commission's report, and the ACT Auditor-General's report show that reforms undertaken during the Eighth Assembly have largely achieved their purpose. But there is always more to be done to accommodate new generations of voters, to utilise new technological advances, and to build on the evidence from other jurisdictions about ways to improve the electoral system.

The government views the select committee's report and its recommendations as an opportunity to once again review and improve our electoral framework. I thank the select committee for its considered report and for its recommendations.

The government response I have tabled today will guide further consultation, policy development and legislative reform over the next two years. The government has agreed or agreed in principle to 15 of the select committee's recommendations. The government has noted six recommendations, and has declined to pursue only two for very specific reasons.

The inquiry's report shows that the Electoral Commission, the Auditor-General, and many submissions to the inquiry can serve as a basis for reform beyond just the recommendations. The government will be pursuing reforms beyond just those recommended by the committee with the following objectives: to maximise the ability of voters in the ACT to participate fully in choosing their representatives; to clarify party and individual obligations around elections and election funding that minimise the burdens of compliance and maximise transparency of campaigning and campaign funding; to ensure that parties and candidates are accountable for campaign activities and fundraising; and to introduce technical changes to ensure that the existing legislation continues to serve its purpose.

Turning first to recommendations that are aimed at maximising participation, the government welcomes the useful recommendations for encouraging voting and making participation easier and more efficient, particularly for people with disabilities. While a number of practical changes to the conduct of elections are directed at the independent Electoral Commission, the government is supportive of innovative ways to promote elections and voter engagement.

The government agrees with the committee that at this time the minimum voting age not be lowered. The government notes that this issue is part of an enduring debate about the inclusion and equality of young people in democratic processes Australia wide and that there are compelling arguments for and against lowering the voting age. Given the significant practical and procedural challenges outlined in the report, the government will not be moving to legislate at this time.

Encouraging participation can and should start at an early age, and in this respect the government notes the committee's recommendation that the government develop components on civics and civic education as part of the curriculum for years 11 and 12 students in the ACT. The government will consider this suggestion further but notes that civics and citizenship is an important aspect of years 11 and 12 courses such as English, Australian and global politics, geography, legal studies, sociology and history.

Looking at recommendations aimed at clarifying the obligations on candidates and parties, this government supports making requirements simple to understand and apply. This will increase compliance and build public confidence in the electoral system. The government agrees with the committee's recommendations about reviewing legislation, regulation and practices around the separate and overlapping functions of MLA, member of the executive, political candidate and private citizen. This issue has particularly arisen in confusion about the use of the communications allowance.

The original intent of the allowance was to provide funds for MLAs to communicate with their constituents in a public capacity. There have been numerous challenges in practice with providing the communications allowance as a salary component. This is an example of better clarity and demarcation between executive, MLA, political and private functions and will improve transparency and reduce red tape in reporting.

Accountability and disclosure obligations around fundraising are absolutely vital to a fair and transparent electoral system. For example, the $1,000 disclosure threshold provides an important source of information for the public in evaluating political candidates and parties. The committee recommended that the $250 exception for fundraising events in section 198AA of the Electoral Act be removed in part to protect the integrity of the $1,000 disclosure rule. The government agrees and will be moving to subject fundraising events to the same disclosure thresholds as other gifts and donations.

The select committee has supported the government's policy of banning donations from property developers. The government has publicly committed to implement this policy, and the select committee's work reinforces the importance of implementing this reform.

Finally, the select committee's report outlines a series of technical issues around restrictions on signs and other campaign materials that need to be addressed. These include recommendations about the suitability of the current 100-metre canvassing exclusion zone, which the government notes and will consider further in consultation with the Electoral Commission. There is also a recommendation about simplifying enforcement and removal of noncompliant electoral advertising signs, with which the government agrees. The government will be engaging with the Electoral Commission on the basis of this report and looking to make administration of elections as clear, and as simple, as possible.

There are two recommendations the government will not be pursuing at this time. One is about allowing the display of signs inside the 100-metre exclusion zone on private property, which the government will not be supporting as we wish to maintain the equality of application of the exclusion zone.

The second is on increasing the time between the close of nominations and the declaration of nomination under the Electoral Act to allow for time to address challenges to nominations. The government is of the view that these challenges are properly addressed through our existing court process, which is designed to occur after an election is complete.

In conclusion, the government looks forward to responding to the evidence base and the suggestions provided by the select committee to further refine our electoral system over the next two years. We will aim to maintain an electoral framework that provides candidates and parties with a clear and fair set of obligations and that promotes full and fully informed participation by voters. I commend the response to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Papers

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Boxing Control Act—

Boxing Control (Combat Sports) Code of Practice 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-42 (LR, 13 March 2018).

Boxing Control Regulation 2018—Subordinate Law SL2018-1 (LR, 13 March 2018).

Gambling and Racing Control Act and Financial Management Act—Gambling and Racing Control (Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-48 (LR, 19 March 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act—

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Building and Construction Industry Levy Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-46 (LR, 19 March 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Community Sector Industry Levy Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-45 (LR, 22 March 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Contract Cleaning Industry Levy Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-44 (LR, 22 March 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Security Industry Levy Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-43 (LR, 22 March 2018).

Planning and Development Act—Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges—Environmental Sustainability) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-40 (LR, 6 March 2018).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Greenway) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-41 (LR, 8 March 2018).

Radiation Protection Act—Radiation Protection (Student) Exemption 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-39 (LR, 8 March 2018).

Taxation Administration Act—Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Utilities (Network Facilities Tax)) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-51 (LR, 22 March 2018).

Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Act—Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Public Interest Monitor Panel Appointment 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-38 (LR, 13 March 2018).

Tree Protection Act—Tree Protection (Criteria for Registration and Cancellation of Registration) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-50 (LR, 22 March 2018).

Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act—Utilities (Technical Regulation) (Gas Network Boundary Code) Approval 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-47 (LR, 22 March 2018).

Utilities Act—Utilities (Gas Network Boundary Code) Revocation 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-49 (LR, 21 March 2018).

Heritage protection
Discussion of matter of public importance

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

> The importance of protecting and celebrating our Aboriginal, European and natural heritage.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.40): It is great to talk about the importance of our heritage, as we are on the brink of the 2018 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival. What better way to highlight the importance of our natural history, our Aboriginal history and our European or perhaps more accurately our post-1788 heritage than by celebrating it during the festival but also year round. There is very much a sense of excitement amongst members of the heritage community about the upcoming festival and their opportunities to speak to more Canberrans about the events that are available.

The festival starts next Saturday and runs from 14 to 29 April. It was recently launched by Minister Stephen-Smith, on behalf of Minister Gentleman. I congratulate everyone involved in organising this year's heritage festival, especially all the volunteers who contribute their time and expertise towards the festival events. The theme this year is "My culture, my story", and the festival devotes 16 days to the celebration of all things heritage in and around our nation's capital.

The Canberra and Region Heritage Festival website tells us the festival will focus on what makes a place special, encouraging us all to embrace the future by sharing the strength of our cultural identities. It encourages us to learn about our own identity so that we are better able to respect each other and create a more inclusive society.

There are a wide range and diversity of activities listed in Canberra and the region as part of the festival, so the program is testament to the richness and value of our shared heritage. For example, during the festival a glimpse of our Indigenous heritage will be revealed by elder Wally Bell on an Aboriginal heritage walk at the Pinnacle Nature Reserve at Hawker, and Ngunnawal dreaming stories will be shared by Richie Allan while exploring the Jerrabomberra wetlands.

We are fortunate that, in addition to the spoken traditions, the ACT region is also rich with archaeological evidence of Aboriginal occupation, particularly in Namadgi and Tidbinbilla but in other areas as well. Archaeological excavation and carbon dating of

sites in the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Namadgi National Park puts Aboriginal presence in our region 25,000 years ago. Many Aboriginal people from different clan groups and neighbouring nations gathered here for initiation ceremonies, marriage, corroborees and trade.

Also in the festival program our post-1788 built heritage will be highlighted, with activities in and around Lanyon Homestead, St John's church, St Andrew's church, the Jennings' Germans history, Tuggeranong Schoolhouse and the Macedonian Orthodox Church, to name just a few that illustrate the variety on display and available during the festival.

Modern cultural heritage expression will be on display during tours of the Carillon, artist in residence programs, the voices of Spirits of Earth, Monaro Folk Society dancers, bush poets and storytelling. It is certainly not strictly European, as so many different cultures have contributed to our post-1788 heritage.

Of course, our natural heritage is a jewel in the ACT crown. We are fortunate to have a huge variety of parks and recreational areas, ranging from district parks with barbecues and playgrounds within urban areas through to the rugged and majestic landscape of the Namadgi National Park. The natural areas protect our cherished native plants and animals and their habitats and also ensure that we have some of the best water in Australia. Our parks and open spaces are also featured throughout this year's heritage festival.

The protected area estate in the ACT is over 235,815 hectares, which is about 55 per cent of the ACT. No country and very few jurisdictions globally have more of their land area under natural protection. This compares to 11.5 per cent of the total land area across Australia, so we have the highest level of protection at 55 per cent, followed by Tasmania with nearly 40 per cent and South Australia with 25 per cent. The lowest level of protection is in Queensland and the Northern Territory, with less than six per cent, so we are very lucky to have so much natural history under protection here in the ACT.

Governments have important roles in protecting, preserving and enhancing all of our Aboriginal, post-1788 and natural heritage, and there are many valuable contributions to make and many ways in which the long-term protection of our heritage can take place. For example, in the built environment sometimes one of the best ways to preserve and celebrate our heritage is by using those assets and not leaving them empty and derelict, which opens them up more to vandalism. We should ensure they continue to flourish with life and vitality inside them and maybe put them to reuse so that when people visit those buildings and other sites they can look at the heritage values of the buildings and celebrate and enjoy them rather than the buildings being closed off and unavailable to them.

There are many ways we can celebrate our natural heritage, our post-1788 heritage and our Aboriginal heritage. I encourage all members here to participate in the upcoming ACT and Region Heritage Festival and to take advantage of many of the tools and displays that are available. I guarantee that you will learn something about our region that you did not know before. There is so much to learn and so much to see,

and you will be the richer for it, as we are all the richer for celebrating and sharing our heritage.

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) (3.46): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing forward this MPI today. People are often surprised to learn that the ACT is rich in natural and cultural heritage. There is a perception that, as a relatively young city and a smaller jurisdiction, we cannot have many heritage places or objects. This is far from the case.

Our heritage includes places, values and experiences that represent where we have come from and provide a context for the future. By protecting and celebrating our heritage we enable these places and values to continue and to be experienced by others.

Aboriginal occupation of the area has left a rich legacy spanning over 25,000 years. There are many signs of this occupation throughout the natural and built environment, including scarred trees, rock shelters and artefact scatters. Built heritage in the ACT encompasses the 19th century pastoral history of the area as well as many places and objects that tell our important and unique story as the nation's capital. Natural heritage places in the ACT are reflected in our nature reserves and parks as well as other locations throughout the city where remnant flora or fauna species or important landforms might be located.

It is important that we recognise and protect these places and objects into the future, and keep the stories they tell of who we are and the past that has helped to shape us. Knowing where we come from is important to knowing where we are going. The ACT's 20th century heritage as the nation's capital is an important contribution to our story and to our sense of place and identity.

We are fortunate to have Aboriginal, European and natural heritage that shape our history and the future of the ACT. And it is not only really old places that have value. Many places and objects dating from the 20th century are recognised as having heritage significance in the ACT. Some of the youngest heritage places on the ACT heritage register include Callum Offices in Woden, completed in 1981, the Swinger Hill cluster housing precinct, built in the 1970s, and Gus's cafe in Civic, built in the 1960s.

Many of the ACT's beautiful, tree-lined garden city precincts dating from the 1920s are also entered on the ACT heritage register, recognising the social, domestic and planning aspects of our origins as the nation's capital. All of these historically rich and important places and objects, customs and traditions are protected under the heritage legislation.

The Heritage Act 2004 establishes a system for the recognition, registration and conservation of natural and cultural heritage places and objects, including Aboriginal places and objects. The act establishes the ACT Heritage Council. It provides for heritage agreements to encourage the conservation of heritage places and objects and

establishes enforcement and offence provisions to provide greater protection of heritage places and objects.

Furthermore, the Heritage Act provides a system, integrated with land planning and development, to consider development applications having regard to the heritage significance of places and to heritage guidelines. And what better time to celebrate and raise awareness of the ACT's heritage than this year's Canberra and Region Heritage Festival, which is running from 14 to 29 April 2018? This year's theme, as we have heard, is "My culture, my story". It focuses on what makes a place special, encouraging all of us to embrace the future by sharing the strength of our cultural identities and our language.

Our sense of identity and continuity is drawn from highly distinctive cultural expressions passed down through generations and evolving in response to their environment. Through learning about our own identity we are better able to respect each other and create a more inclusive society.

The festival, as we have heard, launched by Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith last Thursday, has been running in various formats for 36 years. In fact, I understand that there were 80 people at the launch, by far the most ever for our local festival launch. This is an ideal occasion to celebrate what makes us unique as a region. Shane O'Leary, the General Manager of Destination Southern NSW, spoke last week to the National Capital Attractions Association. Not only did he include the capital region as a vital part of tourism for this area but he highlighted heritage as one of the four pillars, as a key motivator and attraction for travel to this part of Australia.

Over 20,000 people each year attend the plethora of events on offer over the two-week period. This year there are 81 tours, 23 talks and workshops, 16 exhibitions, 15 open days and 12 cultural events. The festival is a chance to connect with country, with a number of Aboriginal events. There are Aboriginal events at Jerrabomberra wetlands on bush tucker, boomerang making and a tour called Ngunnawal dreaming. Tours will also be conducted at the Pinnacle Nature Reserve, the Botanic Gardens, the Lanyon canoe tree, Black Mountain and at the ANU.

It is important to mark milestones, as we did in 2013 for Canberra's centenary. Last year was the 80th birthday of a number of buildings, including the Ainslie Primary School, Hotel Kurrajong, Old Parliament House and Calthorpes' House. This year the house on the hill turns 30, and there are tours and exhibitions acknowledging this within the festival.

I mentioned that heritage does not necessarily mean 19th century or earlier. The Enrico Taglietti designed Giralang school, from 1976, is on the heritage register and is open next Monday. The bonus is that the kids are on holidays and the architect will be present.

In 2018 we commemorate the centenary of the Armistice that ended World War I. Anzac Day always occurs during the heritage festival, which includes events linked to our military history. Anzac Parade tours are run by the National Capital Authority. The training trenches built by the Royal Military College to prepare soldiers for the

Western Front are the focus of five tours at Jerrabomberra wetlands. A new addition to our program is the Anzac eve peace vigil on Mount Ainslie where, after community singing and ceremony, one makes one's way towards the War Memorial in a lantern-lit procession, re-imagining the Anzac story away from its exclusive focus on past overseas wars and towards a peaceful and inclusive narrative.

One of the fabulous things about the festival is that it enables many smaller community groups to be involved and have their event promoted. This is something they could not afford—and we would be the poorer for missing them. These are volunteers with a passion for heritage, nature, a collection, or a skill like lace making, shingle making or other old crafts to demonstrate. Over the many past festivals, heritage places not normally open to the public have been made accessible, and the response has been enormous. Last year 3,000 people attended Gungahlin Homestead at Crace. Other places have included the former forestry school in Yarralumla, Parkwood Chapel, the properties of Elm Grove and Cuppacumbalong, Duntroon dairy, Environa and many others.

Each year a dozen or more completed heritage grants are showcased during the festival. This means we can see where funds have been spent. It also means that the program each year is dynamic, with new activities. The ACT government invests in supporting the celebration and protection of heritage through these grants. This year we have a bus tour by Engineers Australia, tours of churches, the heritage-listed Giralang school, Aboriginal walks, an art exhibition and the National Trust's open day at Lanyon that I am looking forward to.

I have not yet touched on the heritage trails in the ACT as part of Canberra tracks. Over 150 interpretive signs value-add to locals' and visitors' experience of Canberra. The Canberra tracks app uses augmented reality technology to bring the Canberra tracks self-drive heritage trails alive. By downloading the free app and then opening it and holding it above certain images on the sign, videos, audios and 360-degree photography are triggered. So if you cannot get inside the building, the internal photography will allow you to examine the interior through your device. This is available at Duntroon dairy, Tuggeranong Homestead and schoolhouse, and other sites as well.

Through heritage grants, the festival and interpretation, we not only educate but also acknowledge the need for protection and conservation. I have mentioned our award-winning architecture that is a focus for the design festival in November, and the heritage festival kicking off on Saturday.

Another important way of celebrating and protecting our heritage is through adaptive reuse. Adaptive reuse can add new layers without erasing the old layers. It becomes part of the long history of a site. It is another stage but not the final outcome.

In the competitive residential and commercial markets, heritage provides a point of difference that delivers an ambience that cannot be replicated by new buildings and development. The retention of heritage places also makes an important contribution to our environmental, social and economic sustainability. The ACT has heritage

buildings in prime locations that provide exciting opportunities for the community. *(Time expired.)*

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (3.56): I am delighted that Ms Lawder brought this matter of public importance before the Assembly this afternoon, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to it for a few minutes.

I feel that it is essential that we do everything we can to protect and celebrate both cultural and natural heritage. Knowing something about our past and knowing where we have come from provides us with a sense of identity and purpose. Learning about the richly wonderful heritage of those around us and those who were here before us helps us to understand one another and create a society filled with respect and goodwill.

I recently had the opportunity to visit my homeland. Whilst there, I made a visit to ancient stone tombs built by some of my ancestors. It was like being transported back in time. I am very grateful that over hundreds of years these examples of physical heritage have been preserved.

I am also grateful for the stories that form a part of our heritage. My stories are important to me and have shaped who I am. I love hearing other people's stories as well and getting insights into why they are who they are. I feel passionate about keeping such heritage alive through telling and retelling stories. Young people develop a strong sense of identity as they learn these stories. As the shadow minister responsible for youth, I worry sometimes that we live so much in a world of "now" that we forget to tell children about all that has come before.

As those in this chamber will know, I recently sponsored a writing competition for children and young people called "Back to your roots". I did this specifically to encourage kids to go to their parents, grandparents and others to ask them to share their stories so that the heritage is not lost. The winner of the primary division, 11-year-old Matilda Jenkins from Wanniassa, wrote a beautiful short story about her grandfather's experience growing up in Far North Queensland. I would like to quote what she had to say about it:

> This story seems the perfect embodiment of my heritage: what stood out to me from my research was the toughness of my ancestors. They survived droughts and flooding rains, and ran stations all over Australia. They worked hard and displayed true courage. And that, I'm proud to say, is my heritage.

Matilda will benefit throughout her entire life from the resilience and hard work of her ancestors, which she knows about only through the stories that have been preserved and told, and hopefully will be retold.

As we join together to celebrate and enjoy the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival during the second half of April, I specifically invite people to participate in two events that are occurring in the Belconnen area. The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra, which runs its own family history library in the suburb of Cook, will hold an open day at the Belconnen library on Saturday, 21 April from 10 am to 4 pm. They

will have experts on hand to share resources and provide tips on researching family history.

In addition, the Parkwood Chapel, located just four kilometres west of the suburb of Macgregor, will be open for tours between noon and 2 pm on both Sunday, 22 April and Monday, 23 April. This beautiful structure was constructed in 1880 by Thomas Southwell, a devout Wesleyan, and was the first Methodist church established in the area. It has recently been restored by the Southwell Family Society and forms an important part of Canberra's built heritage.

I specifically invite culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans to take advantage of the numerous opportunities available during the heritage festival to visit these and other sites and exhibitions and to participate in events. In this way they can come to better understand and appreciate the Aboriginal, European and natural heritage of their new home, thus enriching the vibrant heritage they have brought with them.

In conclusion, I once again thank Ms Lawder for bringing this matter of public importance before the Assembly today. I thank organisations such as the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra and the Southwell Family Society for all that they do to preserve our heritage and make sure we never have to forget it.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.01): The ACT Greens value Canberra's history and its importance to our lives and our culture both now and for future generations. Heritage is a reflection of our territory's history, including the more than 3,500 known Aboriginal heritage sites throughout our territory. I am sure that members would agree on the importance of heritage protection not being limited to the preservation of buildings and other places and objects but including the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, such as the memories and stories of Aboriginal elders.

The Greens are very supportive of both public and private collection and protection of our shared heritage. We are highly aware of the need for a careful balance between protecting heritage places and allowing our city to meet the demands of growth and sustainability.

As Ms Lawder mentioned in her opening remarks, the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival is on this month in the ACT. There are a wide variety of great things on here in Canberra. There are workshops, tours and open days for almost everyone, depending on your interests.

I note that, although the heritage grants program provides funding for groups to undertake specific conservation projects, I understand that the National Trust, as the relevant peak body, is constantly under funding pressure. Its fate is large tied to the ups and downs of federal funding. It would be remiss of me not to mention the heritage application backlog, which means that there is a very long wait for a decision. I believe these are largely prioritised based on development pressures.

Consultation is a key part of the heritage assessment process. The Greens would like to see improved and increased community consultation in relation to identifying what is considered a heritage place and what should constitute its protection. We also think

it is important for heritage and other community groups to have legal standing and the capacity to provide input into relevant development proposals.

On that, our community has a good sense of how to protect heritage that may defy the expectations of some. I have seen in various places around the world some excellent examples of where heritage has been well protected whilst allowing things to change. This seems, on the face of it, a contradictory comment, but I think there are terrific examples of people working to identify what really matters and how that might be creatively protected and respected in the context of doing something different, particularly in a physical context.

One of the challenges and issues we face, particularly here in Canberra, is that, as the national capital, we fall into a strange situation whereby many of the things we think of as our local heritage in fact fall under national capital heritage protection or, indeed, fall into a no-man's land of protection. We think there is scope for better alignment, where practical, of ACT and federal heritage protection laws to overcome the present jurisdictional complexity, which risks some sites falling between the cracks and not being protected.

One of these particular complexities is central Canberra. We support the national heritage listing of Canberra's central national area and inclusion of the inner hills on Australia's national heritage list. This aims to protect sites of significant heritage importance while providing a framework for future development and will necessarily include a specific reference to the Griffin plan.

One other national heritage issue that has arisen in the past few decades in the context of this national discussion is the plight of the Aboriginal tent embassy. Despite being established in 1972 and being Australia's longest standing protest site, it is still unprotected and subject to the whim of the federal government of the day. In 1995 it was protected as a site of significance under Australian heritage legislation. Then, just years later it was taken off the heritage register by the Howard government. The tent embassy still struggles to this day to get the recognition and support it deserves.

The Greens are aware that the term "European heritage" is broadly used to mean heritage that is not Aboriginal. However, we are also mindful of the fact that over the past 200-plus years we have had migrants from all over the world come to Australia and Europeans are only one part. I was pleased, having read the blue this morning, to hear Ms Lawder clarify that she meant post-settlement or post-1788 heritage. I did think it was a strange reference. I am pleased that is clarified, because the role that so many of our migrants play is such an important part of the history of both this city and this country.

Post-settlement heritage is very interesting across Canberra. Some of it is in many ways quite a short history—even things like the bark slab huts or the slab huts that feature around this city and some of the early schoolhouses of which there are still remnants. These are a really important part of the history of this region post-settlement.

Some areas the Greens have also been keen to ensure support for are the villages in the ACT. Tharwa, Pialligo, Hall and Oaks Estate all their own character and their own strengths in relation to tourism and heritage. The heritage festival provides one opportunity for people to get out and visit places around the city, particularly in these areas. We are keen for these villages to be supported through our tourism strategy.

But it is not just about tourists. I am sure that many residents of Canberra do not realise that these villages exist or what there is to offer in each of them, as they contribute in their own way to creative arts and entertainment precincts. We are very keen to see a history and heritage tourism strategy developed to capitalise on this part of our heritage as part of the broader tourism strategy for the ACT and region.

When it comes to the built environment, an important issue is making sure that Canberra's heritage, vision and values are integrated with our planning rules. An example arises from the government's housing choices consultation process on the planning rules for our residential areas. Currently, heritage protected housing precincts like the one in Reid are largely in residential 1 zone areas, or RZ1 areas. This means that it is very hard to build dual occupancies, duplexes and townhouses.

The housing choices discussion paper raised the possibility of allowing dual occupancies, duplexes and townhouses in the RZ1 zone as a way of improving the supply of medium-size housing. This is worth looking into, as we have a growing shortage of this type of housing. However, an unintended result could be a new conflict between the heritage rules and the planning rules in the housing precincts. I worry that that conflict will lead to the loss of heritage if it is not managed carefully.

A related issue is that conservation management plans are currently developed site by site. This works reasonably well for individual landmark buildings and small clusters of buildings under one ownership. However, the heritage protected housing precincts have dozens and potentially hundreds of houses all under separate ownership.

We worry that the result will be fragmentation of the precincts because each owner and their heritage consultant will interpret the rules slightly differently. A second important aspect is that much of the heritage significance is actually between the buildings, in the streetscape. It is in the public street trees, the lampposts and various other historical artefacts where much of the heritage story is, in fact, told.

One conservation management plan per owner means that the important public areas are not integrated visually within the government's management of the streets. We see the potential for the fabric of the heritage to be unpicked, often inadvertently. That is an issue for consideration.

I would like to finish on the issue of Aboriginal heritage. It is very important that we as a government, as an Assembly and as individuals recognise and respect the local traditional custodians and representatives of other Aboriginal people in relation to their skills and knowledge of conservation and heritage places.

One of the reasons the Greens included in the parliamentary agreement the idea of ensuring that cultural connections are considered in planning and heritage assessments was to change our current system of heritage protection. Our system at the moment is really more of a collection of artefacts, to give you a glimpse of how life might have been, but they are not really enough to ensure that culture can be passed on to coming generations.

We are keen to shift the basis of heritage assessment to ensure that a landscape, or songline, perspective can be examined, to look deeper at how that area of land relates to other areas, and to determine ways to value, protect and promote Indigenous understandings of connection to land. This broader landscape perspective will enable local custodians to retain deeper connections to their land and their uses of the various areas: sacred sites, burial sites, initiation sites and others.

At the moment, the process of protecting only tiny pieces of land at a time is a slow degradation of country and story. We need to get a better understanding of the land and recognise and respect local dreaming stories to ensure we protect sacred sites. In this way, the grandchildren of today will become the grandparents of tomorrow and ensure that their cultural connections to land and landscape will continue, and all of us will benefit, non-Indigenous and Indigenous alike.

This is one way we can affirm Aboriginal law and custom and acknowledge their sovereignty that was present before 1788. We are concerned about the loss of Aboriginal languages across the country. Perhaps heritage needs to include language and stories as well. When these are lost it is very hard to relearn them and to teach them to the next generation.

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) (4.11): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this matter of public importance to the Assembly today. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about the importance of celebrating in this place our Aboriginal, non-Indigenous and natural heritage and built heritage in the ACT.

It was a great pleasure to represent the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister Gentleman, at the launch of the 2018 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival at Mugga-Mugga cottage last week. The launch took place on another spectacular autumn morning in Canberra. Wally Bell welcomed us to country and shared the story of his family's ongoing connection to the Canberra region. Jonathan Efkarpidis, from the Molonglo Group, the son and nephew of Greek migrants, talked about the importance of creating spaces that will be valued now and decades into the future.

I also want to acknowledge the presence at the launch of Canberrans from a range of cultural backgrounds, including Antonia Kaucz, Chair of the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council. As others have noted, the theme of this year's heritage festival is "My culture, my story". Last year's theme, "Questions and change", coincided with the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, and prompted many conversations about

our culture and our history. It is great to see the theme for the festival again go beyond the built form and precious old buildings to include the people, cultures and traditions that have built our proudly diverse community.

The Canberra and Region Heritage Festival is a great opportunity to learn about our region's Aboriginal heritage and the ongoing connection to country. Festival-goers can get out in the fresh air and take part in a Ngunnawal dreaming tour around the Jerrabomberra wetlands, where you will learn about local history and dreamtime stories that have been passed down through the generations.

I expect the bush tucker tour that others have mentioned to be popular with chefs, home cooks and foodies, particularly with the new-found appreciation of and interest in native ingredients in restaurants and cafes across Australia. Other festival events celebrating our region's Aboriginal heritage include a Lanyon canoe tree walk and a Pinnacle heritage walk.

I was pleased to learn that the family history workshops at last year's festival were incredibly popular and will this year be held again at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, AIATSIS. AIATSIS is truly a gem in our city, and I am pleased that more and more people will be visiting AIATSIS and using its resources.

As members would be aware, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement 2015-18 acknowledges that connection to country holds spiritual, social, historical, cultural and economic importance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The ACT government supports community members to celebrate their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and to maintain their cultural identity through cultural grants.

Late last month I announced the recipients of the most recent round of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural grants. The recipients included a program to create bush tucker cultural education gardens in schools, which will develop, deliver and create garden spaces using local plants and Ngunnawal traditional knowledge not only to educate but also for hospitality program purposes.

The cultural grants encourage and support any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individuals or community groups to apply for financial support to assist in a program or event that will promote wider understanding of the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the ACT. I encourage the Canberra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to apply for future cultural grants, and I look forward to announcing future grants and meeting recipients into the future.

Like other people in this place, I often speak at multicultural community events, and I always take time not only to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land but also to make a point about their contribution to the diversity of our society as we celebrate the newest arrivals in our community, including our fast-growing communities in Canberra that are so diverse and contribute so much to our community.

The most recent census tells us that more than one in four people living in the ACT were born overseas, and for about a third of Canberrans both parents were born in another country. More than one in five Canberrans speak a language at home other than English, including Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Hindi, Spanish and many more.

The ACT government is committed to ensuring that Canberra remains a socially cohesive and inclusive place to live. That means actively supporting culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans to engage in the city's social and economic life and, importantly, share their culture and their heritage with the rest of us and pass it on to future generations.

The ACT is home to the biggest celebration of cultural diversity, the National Multicultural Festival. From humble beginnings as a one-day community event, the festival is now a highlight on the Canberra calendar, bringing Canberrans from all walks of life together to celebrate what makes this city great: the diversity of its people.

The heritage and culture of our non-Indigenous community is also celebrated through this year's heritage festival, as we have heard from others already. Just in my electorate of Kurrajong, the Macedonian Orthodox Church will open its doors, as will the Irish Embassy.

The ACT government also supports our multicultural community through grants. In 2017-18, more than 100 ACT multicultural organisations and groups have benefited from the 2017-18 grants, which give organisations and groups the opportunity to celebrate and promote their culture and heritage. Recipients included the Pearl of the Pacific Samoan cultural and dance group, the Canberra Punjabi Sports and Cultural Association, Bangla Radio Canberra, and the Chinese Language and Cultural Association.

Canberra is lucky to have such a rich and diverse culture, and it is because of the heritage and traditions that people have brought with them. It is exciting to think about how our city will change into the future as new neighbours arrive, bringing with them their culture and traditions. It is also important that, as we move into the future with new developments, we reflect on our history, on the culture and heritage that have come before. I encourage everyone to have a look at the heritage festival online. I am sure that there will be events that catch people's interest.

Madam Assistant Speaker, it is a particular privilege to represent, as you do, some of the oldest built areas in Canberra. Within Kurrajong's boundaries you can appreciate the monuments of the nation: new Parliament House and Old Parliament House; the national cultural institutions; the memorials along Anzac Parade, and the War Memorial itself; AIATSIS; and our Australian National University.

At a local level, farm buildings from the Duntroon estate and heritage houses with their humble footprint in the inner north and inner south through to historic buildings like the Ainslie School in Braddon and the Australian Forestry School in Yarralumla

tell the story of our city's development since European settlement from a sleepy sheep station to a thriving city and our national capital. Many of us walk, ride or drive past these buildings every day. Every now and then, one of them catches our eye, and we wonder what it was used for in its heyday or how the people who lived and worked there experienced life. We may just learn more about those buildings and those people during the heritage festival.

I note that this year's ACT heritage grants are currently open for application, closing on 11 May. It has been great recently to see the concrete street signs from the 1930s restored in Barton, thanks to a recent ACT heritage grant and the hard work of volunteers from the Kingston-Barton residents group. I encourage interested individuals and organisations to apply for a grant that will preserve and promote our local heritage.

Kurrajong is also home to incredible examples of natural beauty. This weekend I walked up Mount Ainslie, something I do not do often enough, and I was reminded again just how lucky we are to have this environment on our doorstep and how important it is to protect and to celebrate it. I looked over the sleepy Molonglo River as it transforms into the created Lake Burley Griffin to the natural wonder of the Brindabellas on the horizon and the grasslands that are home to so many rare species of plants and animals.

With 130 activities and events celebrating all of this and more, the heritage festival truly has something for everyone. I again thank Ms Lawder for bringing this motion to the Assembly, for the opportunity to talk about the work underway to celebrate and preserve our city and regions, Aboriginal, non-Indigenous and natural heritage. Finally, I would like to thank the heritage festival team, particularly the volunteers who organise events during the festival each year and who work tirelessly throughout the year to preserve, celebrate and share our heritage, whether it is our built, natural or diverse cultural heritage.

Discussion concluded.

Adjournment

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

> That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Matthew Harding—tribute

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (4.21): I rise today to honour the life of a great artist, Matthew Harding, a talented and internationally renowned Australian artist and designer who had a diverse practice of sculpture, public art and design in Canberra and far beyond. Sadly, Matthew ended his own life on 22 February this year at the age of 53.

Almost all Canberrans will be familiar with Matthew's work, even if they do not specifically know his name. He was the creator of some of the ACT's most iconic and affectionately regarded public artworks. Countless Canberrans have sat on the stainless steel cushion in Garema Place to watch the world go by, walked under the ACT Memorial in Ainslie Place, or patted or even dressed up the chain link sheep at the Kambah shops. After news of Matthew's passing, locals placed black bands around the sheep to honour him. I noted last week when driving past it that they are currently sporting floral bonnets.

We are privileged here in the Assembly to have an artwork made by Matthew Harding and others, the stately Moai Easter Island head sculpture in the interior courtyard, which was created as part of a highly successful collaboration led by Matthew at the 1998 Multicultural Festival with visiting Easter Island carvers. There is also one of Matthew's works in the veterans Garden of Remembrance at Woden Cemetery, where his mosaic of coloured stones is based on the image of stones skipping across water. A spectacular example of one of Matthew's furniture pieces entitled *Dialogue* is currently on display at CMAG, in their exhibition celebrating 20 years of collecting.

Few artists have touched the Canberra landscape so extensively. Indeed, there is more of Matthew's art in the ACT public realm than that of any other artist. Matthew lived in Canberra for 10 years, studying at the ANU school of art from 1992 to 1995. He was trained in visual arts, construction industries and various craft traditions. Matthew's sculptures located in the ACT reflect his versatility as an artist and his expert ability to work with a range of materials. The casuarina pods in City Walk are bronze. *Ebb and flow* in Bunda Street and the famous cushion are stainless steel. And in Veterans Park in the city, the commission *Longitude* by Matthew is carved stone.

Matthew created objects that were meant to be interacted with, touched and sat on, objects that reflect and morph. His work is found in cities across Australia, including Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle and Hobart, where his striking mirror-polished stainless steel work graces the facade of the Museum of Old and New Art. Matthew's work is in public collections nationally and internationally, including the National Gallery of Australia, the ANU, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the British royal collection and the Inami sculpture park in Japan, as well as in various corporate headquarters in Singapore and China and in private collections in Australia and all over the world.

Matthew was a guest lecturer and spoke at various higher education institutions across the country, including the ANU and the University of Tasmania. And he had an interest in cross-cultural collaboration, travelling to many countries and finding a common language through artistic expression. Matthew was exposed to the craft skills of various cultures throughout his travels, such as stone sculpting in Zimbabwe and carving in New Guinea, New Zealand and Cambodia.

Matthew's artworks have shaped our experience of urban places in Canberra, providing visual interest, promoting conversation and simply delighting many of us. Matthew was loved by his friends and his family, including his partner and four young children. He will be deeply missed by them and by the many thousands of people who continue to value and enjoy his beautiful art.

Back to your roots writing competition

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.25): National Youth Week begins this Friday. It is 10 days dedicated to young people between the ages of 12 and 25. These young people are our future, and it is good to know their issues and concerns. It is also important to help them form and reach goals as well as to help them build strong and confident identities.

To help with this last point, five months ago I launched the back to your roots writing competition for all children and young people who live, study or work in the ACT. My goal was to encourage young Canberrans to develop a clearer sense of identity through exploring and then sharing something significant from their cultural backgrounds. I received submissions from people from a range of ages and backgrounds. For those who wish to read the three winning submissions in their entirety, I encourage you go to back2yourroots.org.

Today I wish to share parts of these beautiful texts. The primary division winner, Matilda Jenkins from Wanniassa, submitted a short story that vividly portrays the toughness demonstrated by her ancestors on a remote cattle station, including the courage depicted in this passage:

> Everyone went down in the back of the Blitz to the waterhole, the stockmen, Aboriginals, us boys and all, and that was where Alfie yelled.
>
> He pointed out into the waterhole, where we could all see the beady eyes blinking out of the mud.
>
> As the waterholes dried back, in the dry season, the crocs'd bury themselves in the mud near a cattle pad. You always had to look out for crocs before riding a horse into water on a cattle pad.
>
> This was what we were seeing now. The boys raced back to the house for a rifle, and I just stood there, looking into the eyes of the crocodile, my eyes pulsing with excitement, daring it to leap up and bite me.
>
> I was tough. We all were. We weren't scared of a big old croc.

A poem submitted by junior division winner Ananya Ravi of Franklin traces the broad sweep of India's past, as shared with her by her parents and grandparents, concluding on this note of bright optimism:

> Statues of gods made of gold,
> Stories continuing to be told.
> Music and dance the focus of pleasure,
> Carnatic and Hindustani sung for leisure.
> To this day, these traditions are there,
> People following them everywhere.
> I look at the sky to see dark blue,
> Like India's past, the weather improved too.

The poem written by senior division winner Eden Sellick from Dunlop richly recreates an important day in the life of an Italian ancestor and subtly introduces the combination of excitement and fear that often accompanies migration and the forging of multiple cultural identities, as in this passage:

> Papa says we are moving to a new place soon
> A place called Australia
> I wonder if they have any festivals there
> With big feasts
> And lots of families
> I wonder if they talk funny
> Do they have a patron saint?
> I bet they drink lots of wine at the festivals just like we do
> And they probably sit with all their family and friends
> It will be sad though because none of our family will be there
> It will be just us
> Alone

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to congratulate these winners and all the other children and young people who took the opportunity to enter this competition. I am proud of them. As I said earlier, these young people are our future. Unfortunately, as many of them have confided in me, they feel that they face an uncertain future. They worry about unemployment and underemployment. They struggle with bullying at school and elsewhere. Many of them have no clear sense of identity. Far too many of them experience homelessness.

I therefore call upon the ACT government to take these young people and the issues that they face seriously. It is good to talk about our young people during Youth Week. It is far more important to focus on the issues that are foremost in their minds throughout the year.

Planning—Woden

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (4.30): I talk a lot in this place about Woden town centre. I am going to talk about it again today because it is exciting to see change taking place in the town centre—the new residential developments, light rail stage 2 on its way and now a new focus on place-making in the centre. While many of the spaces in Woden are privately owned, those that are in ACT government control present an opportunity for improvement and activation, particularly Woden town square.

On 26 March, Woden Library hosted the Woden experiment town hall, kicking off a discussion on how we can better activate our public space in the town square. The town hall was part of the six-week initial discovery phase of the Woden experiment project, funded by the ACT government as part of our efforts to support the regeneration at the town centre.

We are partnering with Street Furniture Australia, who are familiar to many in the Canberra community as those responsible for the backyard experiment activation of

Garema Place in 2016. Their pop-up, featuring new seating, greenery, lighting and a range of colourful and vibrant additions to our city centre, make it a more welcoming place for people to sit, socialise and just spend time. Throughout the backyard experiment, visitors to Garema Place grew by almost 200 per cent, results that we hope to emulate in Woden town square.

The Woden experiment town hall in March gave members of the community an opportunity to outline how they use the square, their experiences of it and their ideas about how to make it a place that people want to spend more time in, rather than its current use—largely as a walkway from public service buildings located at Woden through to the Westfield shopping centre. There was the acknowledgement at the town hall of some of the challenges in the space, particularly its windy nature, but also of the opportunities to create a more useful space to meet with others, dine, enjoy the sun, wait for a bus and for children to play.

It is envisaged that the Woden experiment will see a six-month installation in the square, beginning in August, which will help to activate the area and provide a better place for people to mingle, sit and just enjoy. This is in addition to the existing micro park installation, which has already been in place since January near Woden Library and the Phillip Health Centre.

The Woden experiment town hall was well attended, with representatives from the Public Transport Association of Canberra, the Woden Valley Community Council, Woden Community Service, small business owners from Woden and, perhaps most importantly, regular residents of Woden who want to see their town centre become a more vibrant and welcoming place. Street Furniture Australia has also been conducting detailed interviews with users of the square to include their feedback during the consultation.

At this early stage I encourage all south-siders, particularly those living or working in Woden, to get involved in making Woden town square a better place for people and to support the government's regeneration efforts in Woden. I look forward to seeing the discovery report. I will be keeping Woden residents updated as the project progresses.

Heritage—Manuka pool honour roll

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (4.33): On the afternoon of Canberra Day I had the privilege of attending the unveiling of the refurbished Manuka pool honour roll. The honour roll commemorates the nine young men of the Canberra Amateur Swimming Club who gave their lives in service to our country in World War II. This important memorial has been restored, thanks to the efforts of the Friends of Manuka Pool and a grant from the commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Manuka pool has a long and rich history and it is a vital part of Canberra's heritage. Upon opening in 1931, the pool became home to the Canberra Amateur Swimming Club, providing a social hub for young people in the area. Many of the young men who were part of the Manuka pool community went off to war in 1939. Sadly, nine of them never returned.

The courage and sacrifice of Harold Thorpe, Ian Ray, Eric Peterson, Lindsay Knowles, Ian Ingram, Wally Hall, Bill Dullard, Mick Clements and Frank Browning were originally acknowledged with a plaque that was unveiled in the foyer of Manuka pool in 1947. These young men aged 18 to 25 were among the best and brightest of young Canberrans. They lived with their families in Ainslie, Reid, Forrest, Griffith and Red Hill. Most attended Canberra High School or Telopea Park School, and most went on to join the public service after graduation.

Five of these men began their military careers before the war by joining the 3rd Infantry Battalion. The others joined after the commencement of hostilities, answering their nation's call to serve. They served on the home front and on active service in Europe, North Africa, Malaya, New Guinea, India and Borneo.

After 70 years, the memorial plaque was showing its age. Restoring the plaque has been no easy feat. The Friends of Manuka Pool have spent about 12 months working on this project. The plaque has now been restored and rededicated to the memory of those nine men who gave their lives for our country.

The plaque is now accompanied by a beautiful photograph showing a young group of friends boarding a train at Canberra station as they left for war. The honour roll was unveiled on the evening of Canberra Day at a moving ceremony in the foyer of Manuka pool, against the backdrop of children's laughter as Canberra families made the most of the public holiday and the dying days of summer.

Merv Knowles, brother to Lindsay Knowles, shared stories of his and his brother's adventures at the pool. Merv and his brother were present for the Christmas Day opening of the pool in 1930 and Merv, now 95 years of age, still regularly swims laps at the pool.

The unveiling was followed by the *Last Post*, played by musician Justin Williams from the RMC band, a particular highlight, with ceremony attendees and swimmers standing side by side. I thank Air Commodore Matt Hegarty, Commandant, Australian Command and Staff College, for unveiling the restored honour roll. Other special guests included members of the Browning and Dullard families, along with the Knowleses.

I particularly commend the Friends of Manuka Pool for all of their hard work and effort in restoring this memorial and reminding us of the sacrifice that so many young Canberrans made during the war so that we might continue to enjoy the freedoms that we have today.

Education—early childhood

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.36): On 27 March this year early childhood educators across the country walked off the job in record numbers to demand government-funded pay equity. Today I would like to take the opportunity to proudly stand in solidarity with these workers. Despite having some of the lowest professional wages in this country, early childhood educators undertake demanding work that requires them to be highly

qualified. These workers are educated and experienced. Their work is physically, intellectually and emotionally intensive, yet they are paid as low as $21 an hour.

It is for this reason that so many early childhood educators walked off the job last month. These educators took action so that they could be heard, and I would like to share with you what they had to say. Judith Kuzma said that, despite 25 years experience, with 14 of those years as her centre's director, her income is still $25,000 per annum, less than her partner's secondary school teacher salary. Judith said:

> I know so many educators who have to supplement their income just so they can be independent and afford items of need.

Pixie Bea said that her family has had to give up their dream of owning a home because of her low income. She said:

> My partner is on a disability pension, his income did not cover bills and groceries. By living extremely frugally over the previous years we had savings, so didn't go under, but it's heartbreaking to dip into the savings you've been putting aside in hopes of someday buying your own home, just to pay rent.

Rowena Muir talked about the incredibly difficult choice many in her line of work have to make. She said:

> I've worked in the education and care profession for almost 25 years and over that time I've seen inspirational and dedicated individuals leave the sector because they can no longer afford to live on the low wages and the feeling of being so undervalued by society.

This includes Rowena herself, as her salary's inability to keep up with her financial needs meant that she had to temporarily give up her job in 2008. As Pixie also said:

> Leaving the industry for a better paid career … would deprive me of work I find highly rewarding, it would deprive the sector of my accumulated skills and knowledge, and it wouldn't fix the problem for the next educator that would fill the space I'd leave behind.

Francine Horne spoke of the demanding workload that comes with being an early childhood educator, saying:

> In my 20 years of working in the childcare industry, not one weekend has gone by when I haven't had to do extra unpaid work to keep up with government expectations.

When Francine's son decided to follow in her footsteps and become an early childhood educator she asked him not to, saying:

> It's not a job with a future at the moment.

Unfortunately, leaving the industry or reconsidering even starting in the industry are the only solutions currently offered to early childhood educators to address issues

with pay and employment conditions. This solution is simply not viable for the industry; nor is it an acceptable option for the workers.

Early childhood educators have a difficult job but one that is essential to the functioning of our community. Without early childhood educators, working parents would struggle to balance work and caring responsibilities, and children would miss out on the development benefits they get from formal education in their early years.

While the federal coalition government continues to undervalue and disregard the role of early childhood educators in the workforce and, in doing so, underpay workers in majority female industries, educators like Judith, Pixie, Rowena and Francine will continue to suffer. Those who walked off the job are asking for an end to the uneven valuation of traditional male and female work roles. They are asking to be paid as the professionals that they are. And they are asking for proper investment in their industry and in the future of our children.

In 2018 it is outrageous that this sort of gross pay inequality is the standard for the early childhood education profession. Today I would like to congratulate these educators and the big steps campaign for holding the Turnbull government to account for the inequality and mistreatment that still exists in the early childhood education sector. I would like to thank big steps educators for the tireless and thankless work they do every day. They have my support for the work they do and in their call to be paid fairly and treated fairly too.

Schools—visits

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (4.41): Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the joys of being an MLA, as you would also be aware, is the opportunity to meet groups of people that you may not have had the opportunity to meet in your previous life. And certainly my shadow portfolio of education has given me the opportunity to visit a number of schools across the territory. The schools have ranged from early learning centres through to year 12, and without exception each has demonstrated without doubt that the education of young people in the ACT is in the good hands of some pretty amazing teachers and school leaders.

The Montessori school at Holder caters for students ranging from babies in its bumps and babies group aged from 0 to 18 months; for 18 month to three-year-olds in the parent toddler program; and in three groups or cycles of three to six years, six to nine years and nine to 12 years. I was taken around the school by Ms Aine Barker, the deputy principal. Ms Barker has taught in Montessori schools in the USA and Ireland and set up the first Montessori school in mainland China. She explained that in the Montessori education system "follow the child" is at the heart of their learning.

Children are in age groupings rather than single years, based on the teaching ethos that every child has a different rhythm and approach to learning. By observing each child, the classroom teacher, or director as they are referred to, observes what activity the child is interested in and uses that to guide their exploration of the curriculum rather than insist on set lessons on set topics. A small school of 130 students, Montessori is a wonderful example of the range of educational choices that parents

have, and I am thankful to Ms Barker and her team for taking time out of their busy day to showcase their school.

Daramalan College has been operating at its Dickson location for 56 years. Founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1962, it began as a boys school for students in years 5 to 12, but it has developed over time and is now firmly established as one of Canberra's leading co-educational schools for students in years 7 to 12. It has a very strong former student network, evidenced by the number of students whose parents were also Daramalan students. In the foyer of the school you are greeted by a wonderful ceramic sculpture of an eagle, which symbolises the origins of the school's name, from the Aboriginal word "daramala".

I met with the very inspirational principal, Ms Rita Daniels, who is understandably proud of what has been achieved on what is now a landlocked, limited space. A new science wing and modern sports facility are the most recent additions and have artfully blended into the original architecture.

The school has a strong science faculty, with three of its students, Gabby Jarvis, Emma Johnson and Kavinya Welikala, finalists in the prestigious national BHP Billiton science and engineering awards. This is the second year in a row that Gabby and Emma have reached the finals. In the past three years Daramalan has produced eight of the finalists in the most prestigious student science competition in the country. But Daramalan is equally well known for staging very professional drama and musical productions and it is a frequent recipient of CAT awards.

Despite being a large school—some 1,400 students—Daramalan prides itself on the quality of its care and attention to the individual needs of students, and that is evidenced by the enthusiasm and professionalism of Ms Daniels.

With schools like Montessori and Daramalan, the education of our children in the ACT is in the good hands of some of our phenomenal teachers—and I take my hat off to every single one of them—working hard to give our children the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

I hope that in future adjournment debates I will be able to speak about visits to some of our government schools. I am awaiting a response from the minister's office to the request I made in February to visit some of our great government schools, because I have no doubt that they too deliver a range of quality programs. I look forward to being able to visit and meet with our great government school teachers.

Dementia Australia ACT

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.45): I recently visited the offices of Dementia Australia ACT in Kaleen. Dementia Australia ACT is the peak body representing the interests of people in the ACT affected by dementia. It was founded in 1997 by a group of dedicated professionals and volunteers working in the community and aged care sectors. Nowadays the Kaleen premises are the headquarters for 22 professional staff and 20 volunteers, and together they provide support services for people with dementia, their families and carers. Of course, they were previously known as

Alzheimer's Australia and Alzheimer's ACT. The organisation changed its name last year to Dementia Australia.

There are more than 100 different types of dementia, and Alzheimer's disease is just one of those. The new name reflects that as the peak body they are here for people of all ages living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. To coincide with the name change, Alzheimer's Australia's state and territory bodies joined together to become one single organisation, Dementia Australia.

Dementia is the second leading cause of death of Australians, contributing to 5.4 per cent of all deaths of males and 10.6 per cent of all deaths of females each year. In 2016 dementia became the leading cause of death amongst Australian females, surpassing heart disease, which had been the leading cause of death for both males and females since the early 20th century.

Without a medical breakthrough, the number of people with dementia is expected to increase to more than 500,000 by 2025 and over a million by 2056. Currently an estimated 250 people get diagnosed with dementia each day.

Dementia is estimated to cost Australia more than $15 billion in 2018. It is the single greatest cause of disability in Australians aged 65 years or older and the third leading cause of disability burden overall. People with dementia account for 52 per cent of all residents in residential aged-care facilities.

Dementia is a collection of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. It is not one specific disease. It affects thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday tasks. The hallmark of dementia is the inability to carry out everyday activities as a consequence of diminished cognitive ability. Doctors diagnose dementia if two or more cognitive functions are significantly impaired, such as memory, language skills, understanding information, spatial skills, judgement and attention.

Although the likelihood of a diagnosis increases as we age, dementia can be diagnosed in younger people in their 50s and 40s or even as young as their 30s. And younger onset dementia describes any form of dementia diagnosed in people under the age of 65. There are an estimated 26,443 Australians currently living with younger onset dementia, and this figure is predicted to increase to more than 42,000 by 2056. When words begin to escape you and you cannot remember where you live or that you have met someone before, a previously vibrant, intelligent and self-reliant adult may face a devastating diagnosis of early onset dementia, the impact of which on that individual and their family cannot be understated.

Dementia ACT provides respite links, dementia links, a counselling service, a dementia network, liaison officers, a library, a mobile response team and a newsletter, amongst other services. Madam Deputy Speaker, you can find out more from Dementia Australia, which is located in Kaleen, or you can call the national dementia helpline on 1800 100 500.

I would like to thank and congratulate the Dementia ACT office in Kaleen—Petrea Messent and the whole team of full and part-time staff and volunteers—for the vital work they do to support people with dementia and their families.

Question taken on notice—statement by member

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I announce the adjournment, just for the information of members, today I made a statement to clarify something. My staff told me that I misspoke when speaking on a figure. I said one in 1,000. It should be one in 100,000 and, for the sake of clarity in the *Hansard*, I want to put on the record that the figure I was referring to was one in 100,000.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.50 pm.