



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

NINTH ASSEMBLY

9 MAY 2018

www.hansard.act.gov.au

Wednesday, 9 May 2018

| | |
|---|------|
| Magistrates Court (Retirement Age of Magistrates) Amendment Bill 2018 | 1625 |
| Orders of the day—discharge | 1627 |
| Hospitals—governance | 1627 |
| Government—initiatives | 1645 |
| Transport—connectivity | 1667 |
| Questions without notice: | |
| Senator for the Australian Capital Territory—casual vacancy | 1671 |
| Emergency services—communications | 1672 |
| Light rail—stage 2 | 1672 |
| Roads—Ashley Drive | 1674 |
| Trade unions—influence on government | 1675 |
| Trade unions—influence on government | 1676 |
| ACT Health—proposed organisational changes | 1677 |
| Women—government support | 1677 |
| ACT Health—proposed organisational changes | 1679 |
| Canberra Hospital—accreditation | 1679 |
| Housing—housing choices | 1680 |
| Light rail—stage 1 construction | 1682 |
| Schools—Weston preschool | 1683 |
| Casino Canberra—development proposal | 1684 |
| Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assault allegations | 1685 |
| Federal government—budget | 1685 |
| Transport—connectivity | 1687 |
| Animals—dangerous dogs | 1696 |
| Energy—efficiency | 1708 |
| Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—foetal health | 1720 |
| Adjournment: | |
| Christopher Latham—tribute | 1733 |
| Anzac Day | 1734 |
| Federal government—budget | 1735 |
| Visitors | 1736 |
| Adjournment: | |
| Schools—visits | 1736 |
| Katy Gallagher—tribute | 1738 |
| Planning—Gungahlin | 1738 |
| Homelessness—fundraising | 1740 |
| Katy Gallagher—tribute | 1740 |

Wednesday, 9 May 2018

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

Magistrates Court (Retirement Age of Magistrates) Amendment Bill 2018

Mr Hanson, pursuant to notice, presented the bill and its explanatory statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.01): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

This is a simple bill but it goes to an important matter. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Magistrates Court Act to extend the retirement age of magistrates from the current 65 years old to 70 years old. This brings the retirement age in the ACT Magistrates Court into line with the retirement age that applies in the Supreme Court and also with that in most other jurisdictions in Australia.

In a submission to the New South Wales parliament, the president of the New South Wales Bar Association, Mr Arthur Moses SC, stated that there were “compelling reasons” to lift the judicial retirement age to 75, including stemming the loss of experienced judges “who would otherwise have had the capacity to continue to make significant contributions to the development of the law”.

Closer to home, lawyers have also spoken on this issue. I present the highlights from an article by Mr Andrew Fraser, but I maintain his meaning. He writes:

The ACT’s magistrates are the victims of mandatory sentencing.

They must quit when they hit 65.

In NSW and Tasmania, magistrates run to 72; in Victoria, the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia it’s 70 ... What’s holding us back here?

It is said that the ACT Government, in a previous incarnation, did not rate a higher magisterial retiring age as “a priority” but a new Attorney might take a fresh look.

What would it take?

How about a Bill in the Parliament that amends “65” to “70”? ... Not too difficult.

Indeed, that is precisely what this bill does. It is not too difficult. I know this is an issue that has been talked about for some time here in the ACT, in other states and

nationally. As I have already indicated, other states have moved to 70 years some time ago.

In fact, in New South Wales there has been a push to raise the retirement age even higher. In other cases, such as here, the issue seems mired in a range of unrelated matters. I am stating that this does not need to wait for other changes. It can be done simply as a singular issue. It does not need a holistic approach. The time has come for it to be changed.

I turn to the bill itself. The first three clauses relate to the name, date and amendment details. The fourth clause merely omits the current words “65 years old” and substitutes “70 years old”. It really is that simple.

With regard to the human rights implications, the bill does not have any human rights implications because even though it addresses age, the bill does not actually limit the age at which magistrates must retire. It actually extends the age that they can continue to work. It does not force a person to work beyond their desire. It means they are not forced to retire against their wishes.

The extension of retirement age does raise the issue of whether there should be a retirement age at all. On this point, I remind members that a retirement age for magistrates was subject to a national referendum at the time when judges were appointed for life. This is something that I must say I was unaware of, but the referendum was conducted in the 1970s. I will quote from former High Court Justice Michael Kirby on the result:

The Members of Parliament, who rarely saw the justices of the High Court in those itinerant days—

before the court got its permanent home by Lake Burley Griffin—

were uniformly shocked at McTiernan’s great age and apparent feebleness. It was the sight of the octogenarian which encouraged the bipartisan support for the amendment of the Constitution providing for the compulsory retirement of federal judges ... Henceforth there would be no more life appointments.

While there may be possibly a broader discussion about retirement ages, and I would welcome further discussion, this is beyond the scope or purpose of this bill. The current retirement age was set many years ago. It does not recognise the valuable contributions these people could still provide to the Canberra community, and it is out of step with modern standards.

It takes many years of legal practice and professional development to attain the skills to be a magistrate. When those magistrates are at the peak of their ability and experience, we are now forcing them to retire. This bill not only recognises the value of allowing experienced and capable people to keep working; it also addresses an anomaly where the retirement age in the Magistrates Court is 65, but in the Supreme Court it is 70.

Furthermore, we have been hearing for years about the workloads in our courts and how magistrates have to deal with the issues of an ever-increasing population with the same number of magistrates. This allows our best and brightest to continue to serve our community. Other jurisdictions in Australia have already moved to 70 or higher. It is now time for the ACT to make the retirement age of magistrates meet community standards and expectations. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

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

Orders of the day—discharge

Motion (by **Ms Le Couteur**) agreed to:

That order of the day No 2, Private Members' business, being the Crimes (Invasion of Privacy) Amendment Bill 2017, be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Hospitals—governance

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (10.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) in relation to the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC):
 - (i) media reports on 26 April 2018 about concerns of clinical staff at the CHWC that mothers and babies' lives are being put at risk by chronic overcrowding within the maternity unit;
 - (ii) the article reported that CHWC clinical staff had sent a letter to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, outlining their concerns, which included:
 - (A) a lack of integrity in presenting the CHWC for the accreditation audit undertaken in March 2018;
 - (B) a lack of appropriate human and equipment resources and CHWC capacity;
 - (C) the presence of a culture of bullying; and
 - (D) the prevalence of physical and emotional exhaustion among staff;
 - (iii) the CHWC was built in 2012 with no more capacity than the facility it replaced;
 - (iv) according to the answer given to a question taken on notice on 24 October 2017, there were short periods during September 2017, in which the CHWC was over capacity and the maternity ward at Calvary Public Hospital was at capacity; and
 - (v) Calvary Public Hospital is increasing its maternity ward bed capacity by only three, which will not be ready until July 2018;

- (b) in relation to the March 2018 accreditation report by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) for The Canberra Hospital:
 - (i) the accreditation report revealed the hospital failed to meet 37 standards;
 - (ii) of the failed standards:
 - (A) two were rated as extreme risks, relating to patient safety in mental health;
 - (B) six were rated as high risks, relating to governance, strategic planning, decision-making, non-compliance with policy and procedures, and low completion rates of surgical safety checklists and inpatient discharge summaries;
 - (C) 15 were rated as moderate risks; and
 - (D) 14 were rated as low risks;
 - (iii) the media reported the:
 - (A) Minister for Health and Wellbeing had said that the governance issues validated the ACT Government's decision to restructure the Health Directorate;
 - (B) Acting Director-General of the Health Directorate had said not being accredited is not an option; and
 - (C) Australian Medical Association had said the loss of accreditation would be a disaster;
 - (iv) there were media reports of claims by staff of the CHWC that:
 - (A) dirty and broken furniture and faulty equipment in use before the accreditation audit had been removed prior to the audit and returned to use after it was completed; and
 - (B) over-rostering of staff was used to create the illusion of appropriate staffing levels during the audit; and
 - (v) the ACHS will review the failed standards in July 2018;
- (c) the intention of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing to split the Health Directorate into two directorates;
- (d) the continuing worsening of emergency department and elective surgery waiting times;
- (e) the delays to the delivery of the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiation and Emergency (SPIRE) building at The Canberra Hospital; and
- (f) the unreported waiting times for elective surgery patients to attend an initial appointment with their specialist surgeon; and
- (2) calls on the Minister for Health and Wellbeing to:
 - (a) in relation to the CHWC:
 - (i) by the close of business this day:
 - (A) table the letter that the CHWC clinical staff sent to her; and

- (B) update the Assembly on the action the Minister and ACT Health took in response to the letter, including any consultation with staff and the agreed outcomes; and
- (ii) on the first sitting day in June 2018, present a ministerial statement to the Assembly outlining the Government's short, medium, and long-term plans for maternity health services in the ACT; and
- (b) in relation to the accreditation report for The Canberra Hospital:
 - (i) table in the Assembly by the close of business this day the:
 - (A) ACHS' final report and recommendations of the accreditation audit conducted in March 2018; and
 - (B) Government's response to that report;
 - (ii) report to the Assembly by the first sitting day in June 2018 on the progress being made to address each of the 37 failed accreditation standards in readiness for the accreditation review in July 2018; and
 - (iii) table in the Assembly by the first sitting day in August 2018 the:
 - (A) ACHS' final report and recommendations of the accreditation review conducted in July 2018; and
 - (B) Government's response to that report;
- (c) in relation to the proposed split of the Health Directorate, table in the Assembly by the close of business this day:
 - (i) all ministerial briefs prepared by the Health Directorate and given to the Minister, including the Minister's response to those briefs; and
 - (ii) the Director-General's letter of resignation;
- (d) in relation to emergency department and elective surgery waiting times, table in the Assembly by the close of business this day:
 - (i) all statistical reports and related ministerial briefs given to the Minister since 1 January 2017; and
 - (ii) the timetable for publication of waiting times for elective surgery;
- (e) in relation to the SPIRE building, table in the Assembly by the first sitting day in June 2018, the full timetable for the design, construction and commissioning of the building; and
- (f) in relation to the unreported waiting times for elective surgery patients to attend an initial appointment with their specialist surgeon, table in the Assembly by the first sitting day in June 2018, the timetable for introduction of publication of waiting times for elective surgery patients to attend an initial appointment with their specialist surgeon.

Minister Fitzharris has been the Minister for Health and Wellbeing for some 18 months and the Assistant Minister for Health for six months before that. After 18 months it is clear that the minister is not across her health portfolio, has failed to set clear priorities in health and has lurched from crisis to crisis. At first, the crises she faced were inherited, but she did not handle them well. Since July 2017 the crises have been increasingly of her own making.

Time and again it has been discovered through accountability mechanisms such as questions on notice, freedom of information and other processes used by the opposition and the media in this town that the minister for health has been misrepresenting the serious problems in our health system. That is why this motion calls on the minister to produce documents and present the Assembly with updates on several issues. Minister Fitzharris needs to produce the documents named in this motion so that the community and this Assembly can be assured that she is now telling the truth about much of the situation.

I start with the serious problems at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. The *Canberra Times* reported on 26 April 2018 that midwives had sent a letter to the minister. The report in the *Canberra Times* quotes the midwives as saying that staff at the Centenary hospital need appropriate resources and support to provide adequate and safe care to women, babies and families across the board. The report quotes from the letter:

“All areas are severely lacking, and bullying is ever-present. The issues raised impact on the care of patients on a daily basis.

“It is demoralising for staff who care so much about the job they do, and there are many of us.

“It is frustrating and upsetting to feel so helpless in such a poorly managed and possibly busy work environment, unable to provide the care that we know we should and feeling constantly exhausted physically and emotional. The negative effects on patients and staff are seen daily.

“It is only a matter of time before there is an adverse outcome for a mother, baby or staff member.”

Since then several patients have come forward raising concerns with problems in their time at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. The claims by mothers back up the claims made by the staff about a lack of staff and the pressure under which midwives and other staff operate. The problems at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children are largely caused by a lack of beds. The hospital was built in 2012 with no more beds than the building it replaced. At the time the then minister for health was extolling this as a virtue—that we were getting more circulation space but no more beds.

As the population has grown, as the Chief Minister spoke about yesterday, the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children has been facing difficulties. In the previous term Mr Hanson raised concerns, which were also raised by Ms Miragaya, at the time the head of the midwives and nurses federation in the ACT, about the lack of proper planning. The government is planning to spend \$70 million over four years to upgrade the Centenary hospital. However, it should have been planned properly in the beginning. The government appears to be repeating the problems at Calvary hospital with the upgrade only increasing the number of beds by three. I doubt there will be enough beds to meet the growing population in Canberra’s north and to take the pressure off the women’s and children’s hospital.

We need the minister for health to table the documents referred to in this motion by close of business so that we can see what has been happening in this area. We also need the Minister for Health and Wellbeing to make a ministerial statement in this place on her plans for maternity services.

I turn now to the serious accreditation problems facing the Canberra Hospital. The two most serious problems relate to patient safety in mental health. We know that the adult mental health unit has been facing serious problems with an average occupancy rate of 105 per cent and high rates of turnover in permanent staff. There have been issues raised in the past about the higher level of locum staff available. The minister has given us assurances that that was going to be a thing of the past, and we need to look closely at that. These problems have put the lives of vulnerable people at risk and they threaten the work environment of hardworking mental health staff in an area which is one of the most difficult in health.

The Minister for Mental Health made a statement yesterday claiming that the government is recruiting more staff and that the office for mental health will finally be opened. I hope these things will start to improve our mental health system, but I will be keeping a watching brief in this area.

Six of the higher risk areas identified in the accreditation, including risks relating to governance, strategic planning and decision-making, are issues for which the ministers are responsible. Yesterday in the *Canberra Times* Minister Fitzharris was reported as saying:

I have also acknowledged to staff in recent times the governance of the organisation has let staff down.

Minister Fitzharris is responsible for the governance of the Health Directorate. Not only has she let staff down but she has let down patients and the wider community. Minister Fitzharris said in January that she was responsible for providing clear priorities for staff. The March 2018 accreditation report makes it clear that she is failing in this task. Both the acting head of the directorate and the head of the ACT AMA have said the failure to regain accreditation is not an option. Even a limited reaccreditation would reflect on an ongoing lack of confidence by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards in the standards at the hospital.

In 2015, as an example, the board of urology of the Australian college of surgeons stripped the Canberra Hospital of its accreditation for two years in the area of urology. The board raised concerns about internal culture and significant disharmony amongst staff. This lack of accreditation for two years has had an ongoing impact on the urology program and we cannot afford to have this repeated across the hospital at large.

My motion today calls on the minister to provide relevant documents on the accreditation process and the progress made in meeting the standards specified by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards by July this year.

On 24 March 2018 the minister for health and the Minister for Mental Health announced a proposed restructure of the Health Directorate into two organisations. We were advised that one organisation would be responsible for health policy and the other would be responsible for operational issues. The Minister for Health and Wellbeing has provided scant detail about this restructure and how it would work. Indeed we do not even know what these organisations will be called.

The Minister for Health and Wellbeing caught everybody by surprise with her announcement, which, of course, was done at 3 o'clock on a Friday afternoon. At the time Dr Stephen Robson of the AMA advised the *Canberra Times*:

When the governance is wonky it sends ripples through the entire organisation ... There's been a huge upheaval at ACT Health recently and there are a lot of balls in the air.

Their accreditation runs out in July, unless they meet that it would be a bit of a disaster.

Dr Robson added the following comments about the sudden departure of the director-general:

My concern at the moment is it's not well understood ... The nurses, doctors, everyone needs to understand who they are working for.

Certainly with director general leaving suddenly and unexpectedly it engenders concern with everyone.

I notice that the minister has circulated while I am speaking a page-and-a-half amendment, in classic style of her accountability.

There are two people responsible for the wonky governance of health in the ACT—the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and the Minister for Mental Health. In her ministerial statement in February 2018 Minister Fitzharris made no mention of a proposed restructure. The decision to restructure ACT Health appears to many to be a \$1.6 billion thought bubble based on political, not clinical, evidence. This motion calls on the government to produce documents so that the community and interested groups can understand the real reason for the restructure.

I refer to recent claims reported in the *Canberra Times* of 26 April of attempts to mislead the Australian council on healthcare accreditation by over-rostering of staff and temporarily removing broken down equipment. I have no capacity to make claims about whether these claims are true or not. However, I note they are consistent with past problems in the Health Directorate, such as the 2012 data doctoring scandal. I refer to the problems with Ms Fitzharris providing inaccurate information to the Assembly about elective surgery and emergency department waiting times. I hope what we have seen with these allegations is not a deliberate attempt to provide false information to the accreditors.

The issues that need to be addressed here are serious. Although there has been some questioning of the minister and some assurances, they were not her personal assurances. I note yesterday that the minister was very careful not to give her own personal guarantee. She gave assurances based on the information provided to her. I think the people of the ACT need more than that.

Labor's so-called 10-year health plan promised that a surgical procedures, interventional radiology and emergency facility, known as SPIRE, would be built on the Woden campus by 2022. In the 2017-18 budget most of the work on this project has been deferred until beyond the next election. On 12 March 2018 media reports indicated the SPIRE centre would now not be finished until almost 2025, which is two elections away. The SPIRE centre has been progressively put off. The community cannot afford the delays to the SPIRE centre at the Canberra Hospital as it gets older and the problems of infrastructure there are causing problems for staff and patients as well as visitors.

Long-term planning issues can often be set aside during restructures, and this will cause further problems. The Canberra community needs assurance that the SPIRE centre will not languish on the backburner as the minister lurches from calamity to crisis. At the moment there will be one more accreditation report before the SPIRE is built. This motion calls on the minister to provide an update to the Assembly which includes a full timetable for the design and construction of the facility. The people of Canberra need to have certainty about their hospital infrastructure.

The final part of my motion relates to the hidden waiting lists. On 20 February 2018 the *Canberra Times* reported on the case of a disability pensioner facing a five-year wait just to see a specialist. Once she sees the specialist, she faces a potential long wait for elective surgery. There is no doubt that this patient needs elective surgery, but this patient faces an incredibly long wait. While the minister states that not all urology patients need surgery, five years is a long time to wait to have a treatment plan for a condition that involves medication or any other sort of treatment.

The minister has committed to providing information on hidden waiting lists, as has happened in Victoria. I note that in response to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Services report into annual reports last year the minister undertook to start providing this information. But as yet there is no timetable for how this information will be provided and how this information will actually be presented. That is why this motion also calls for work to be done and tabled in this place on that matter.

In conclusion, it is time for the wonky governance, as the AMA put it, of the ACT health department to end. The Minister for Health and Wellbeing needs to produce these documents and address the issues in this motion so that there is capacity to address the issues emerging in the community. I commend the motion to the Assembly, a motion which calls simply for the presentation of papers and the provision of information, the sort of information that the ACT community is entitled to see.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (10.21): I thank Mrs Dunne for the opportunity again to talk about the important healthcare services that the government is delivering for our community. I have circulated an amendment. Mrs Dunne has kept me quite busy for the last couple of days; if I could have provided it earlier, I would have. I move:

Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) maternity services for the Canberra community are safe and high quality and recent reporting of some staff and patient concerns have been promptly addressed and acted upon by ACT Health, and include planning for managing future demand for maternity services in the ACT;
- (b) the accreditation process for ACT Health is continuing, following initial feedback that 176 core criteria were met and 33 core criteria were not met and required further action;
- (c) ACT Health will be separated into two organisations, with one organisation focused on the strategic policy and planning stewardship of the health system and another organisation focused on the operations and delivery of quality health services to our growing community, in order to improve the governance, performance and accountability of the ACT public health system;
- (d) in the 2017-18 Budget, the ACT Government provided \$236m to plan, design and commence construction of the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiation and Emergency (SPIRE) Centre;
- (e) the impact of increased demand on ACT Health, noting patient presentations to The Canberra Hospital and Health Services Emergency Department increased from 77 747 during 2015-16 to 85 093 during 2016-17 which is a 9.4 percent increase;
- (f) in February, the ACT Government announced an additional \$6.4m to reduce the number of patients waiting for surgery on the elective surgery waiting list;
- (g) the ACT Health System-Wide Data Review has recently been completed;
- (h) Calvary Public Hospital is an important part of the ACT public health system and the trusted partnership between ACT Health and Calvary will continue through an improved agreement for the delivery of public health services for Canberra and the region;
- (i) the Government has invested in the redevelopment of Canberra and Calvary operating theatres to ensure they are contemporary, fit for purpose and support the cross-territory management of elective surgery; and

- (j) ACT Health staff share a commitment to delivering high quality health services to the Canberra community and they will be genuinely consulted with regarding ACT Health changes over the coming months;
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) table a copy of the original correspondence from some staff at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children about maternity services and update the Assembly in August 2018 about the future planning for public maternity services in the ACT;
 - (b) deliver the \$70m expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children and complete the \$2.6m refurbishment of the maternity ward at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce which will support the growing need for maternity services in Canberra and the region;
 - (c) provide an update to the Assembly in June 2018 on ACT Health accreditation;
 - (d) finalise the ACT Health accreditation process by July 2018 and table the final Australian Council on Healthcare Standards report in August 2018;
 - (e) provide an update to the Assembly in October 2018 about the separation of ACT Health and associated consultation with ACT Health staff and stakeholders;
 - (f) invest in health infrastructure to enhance and complement our existing health facilities, including new nurse led Walk-in Centres, expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, the SPIRE Centre and northside hospital facilities;
 - (g) update the Assembly about the conclusion of the ACT Health System-wide Data Review this week and table the final report as well as the Government response in the coming months; and
 - (h) outline in the Government response to the ACT Health System-Wide Data Review, how and where information will be published to ensure the community has access to robust data on areas, including emergency department performance and elective surgery waiting times.”.

I note that it aligns very much with the themes in Mrs Dunne’s original motion and does agree to provide information to the Assembly both today and at later dates. I note also that these issues were discussed at length yesterday but again I welcome the opportunity to discuss them today.

If I can start with the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, it was opened by this Labor government in 2012. It is a purpose-built facility with services including neonatology, gynaecology and women’s health, maternity, paediatric, and a women, youth and children nutrition service. It is a facility we are extremely fortunate to have here in the ACT.

I regularly do hear wonderful stories about the services at Centenary and about its skilled, caring and professional staff. I am sure that those opposite would agree that the majority of feedback they receive about the hospital from our community is positive.

As I said yesterday, the recent anonymous letter from staff concerned me greatly. As soon as I received it I asked ACT Health to urgently follow up on the issues and claims it raised. ACT Health's executive management held well-attended, open maternity staff forums, followed up in writing to staff. I visited the maternity ward at the hospital that week to touch base with staff and hear their concerns.

I have responded to the letter and I now table the original correspondence. I present the following paper:

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—Maternity services—Copy of letter to Andrew Brown, The Canberra Times, from Concerned staff members, Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, The Canberra Hospital, dated 15 April 2018.

I propose to update the Assembly in August this year about the future planning for public maternity services in the ACT.

All staff at Centenary hospital work hard. They do a wonderful job caring for families during one of the most significant times of their lives. It is a popular facility. An increasing number of families are choosing to birth there. As I mentioned yesterday, demand management strategies are in place to address the additional pressure this places on staff, such as a maternity escalation policy that uses the birth centre for patient overflow, extended hours for the maternity assessment unit, rostering additional doctors and midwives, and a midwifery attraction and retention strategy. The graduate midwifery program recruited 15 new staff this year, a 50 per cent increase since 2017.

The government has also committed to a \$70 million expansion of the hospital to deliver new and increased services for women, children and adolescents requiring inpatient care across a number of disciplines as well as a number of specialist outpatient services for women and children.

In addition the government has recently funded a \$2.6 million refurbishment of the maternity ward at Calvary Public Hospital, Bruce and I look forward to this project being completed in July. It will see Calvary offer a combination of 10 single rooms with ensuites and four large two-bed rooms with bathrooms.

We certainly want to encourage more women, particularly those expecting a lower risk birth and who live on the north side, to consider Calvary. ACT Health and Calvary are working together to implement a new, territory-wide approach to better manage maternity demands with a right care at the right place policy.

I want to join with ACT Health staff and assure Canberra families that the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children is a safe and modern facility providing quality care. In fact the patient experience discharge survey from the past year showed that 93 per cent of mothers with experience at Centenary were satisfied with the service they received. But as I noted yesterday and note again today, we will continue to work with staff and the Canberra community about how best to manage maternity services across our city.

As members are aware, ACT Health is currently undergoing a re-accreditation against the 10 national safety and quality health service standards. All public and private hospitals in Australia undergo this process and I am advised close to 25 per cent of hospitals do not initially meet all the core criteria they are assessed against during the accreditation process.

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards conducted an organisation-wide survey of ACT Health between 19 and 23 March. During this survey ACHS assessed ACT Health's implementation of the national standards. The report shows ACT Health met 176 core criteria against the 10 national standards but also assessed 33 of the core criteria under five of the 10 national standards were not met. It provided ACT Health with a remediation period of 90 days. ACT Health will be reassessed on those core actions through a process called an advanced completion survey. Two surveyors will conduct an advanced completion survey on-site at Canberra Hospital and Health Services between 3 and 5 July.

The ACHS survey team have 10 working days following this survey to submit their report to ACT Health, and ACT Health then have five working days from receipt of the report to review and provide a response to the ACHS, which takes that date to 26 July. I will be pleased to provide the Assembly with an update on this process in June.

Substantial work is underway to address the "not met" core criteria as outlined during yesterday's debate. The re-accreditation process is an opportunity to identify areas of improvement to ensure ACT Health continues to deliver high quality and safe health care to our community. It is important to also emphasise though that improving quality and safety is an ongoing process in the health system and this does not start or end with accreditation. There is significant work underway every day in our healthcare system that is focused on quality and patient safety.

We have many dedicated people working in our health workforce: doctors, nurses, allied health workers and many more. These people are there to ensure the community receives the highest level of health care and I commend them for the outstanding job that they do.

The accreditation report highlights many of the good and outstanding things that Health does, and I do want to acknowledge this, in particular noting it makes mention of the high quality ACT Health quality strategy that was launched in February this year. But for now the focus for ACT Health must be on addressing those "not met" core criteria, and it is.

Regarding the separation of ACT Health, I propose providing the Assembly with an update in October on the separation of ACT Health into two organisations and the consultation with key staff and stakeholders that has occurred in the lead-up to this.

As I mentioned yesterday, I was privileged to speak with a number of ACT Health staff last week at forums at Canberra Hospital and at ACT Health headquarters in Woden. I outlined yesterday the discussions that I had with them and my acknowledgement that the governance of ACT Health had let them down in recent times. Some of these issues were certainly reflected in the accreditation survey and confirmed a range of feedback and views I had formed throughout my first year in the role.

As I said to the Assembly yesterday, I want to ensure the ACT public health system is best positioned to plan for and deliver sustainable, high quality health services to our community. This is why the separation of ACT Health is so important.

Like the rest of the nation, our population is growing. Our population is growing slightly faster than that of most other jurisdictions. In the next 10 years our population is expected to grow by nearly 17 per cent to 470,839 people. In the same time period the number of Canberrans aged over 65 will increase by 15 per cent.

This trend, together with increased rates of chronic disease, changing consumer expectations, advancements in medical technology and the rising costs of delivering high quality health care, presents a number of challenges and some opportunities for the ACT's health system. To be able to respond to these challenges and opportunities I have outlined how ACT Health will continue to deliver high quality services to our community and the broader south-east New South Wales region.

It is for this reason that in March this year Minister Rattenbury and I did announce a significant structural and systemic change to the governance of ACT Health. One organisation will focus on the operations and delivery of health services. The other will oversee the health system, undertake planning and set strategic policy for the health system. These new structures will enable a clearer focus on operational effectiveness and efficiency, improve accountability and governance, improve access, timeliness and quality of health services, and bring us into line with every other jurisdiction in Australia.

To reinforce what I said yesterday, I expect the transition will be seamless for people accessing our health services. I want to again reassure the Assembly and ACT Health staff that they have the opportunity to be involved in the development of the new structure, and consultation with stakeholders will also take place.

The government has a proud track record of investing in health infrastructure and is committed to continuing this record. As I said yesterday, in last year's budget we made a significant down payment for better health infrastructure now and into the future with funding for an expanded Centenary hospital, the SPIRE centre, new north side facilities and community health facilities.

Our third nurse walk-in centre is well on track and is expected to be completed in the second half of this year, and I very much look forward to that opening to serve the Gungahlin community. It will add to existing walk-in centres already in operation in Belconnen and Tuggeranong. The walk-in centres complement existing health services by providing free, one-off treatment and health advice for people with minor injuries and illnesses. The Belconnen and Tuggeranong services have been well received in our community, with more than 36,000 presentations for assistance with minor injury or illness each year.

As I have already mentioned, the government's long-term plans to manage maternity demand in the ACT include a \$70 million expansion of the Centenary hospital which was funded in last year's budget. Major construction works at Canberra's dedicated rehabilitation hospital are now complete. Staff have been recruited and I very much look forward to that new hospital opening in the next few months. UCH has been specially designed to support recovery and rehabilitation and includes a hydrotherapy pool, rehabilitation courtyards, gymnasiums and kitchens. Operational commissioning is underway to prepare the hospital and its staff to deliver clinical and support services from July this year.

Last year's budget included \$236 million over four years for planning, design and the start of construction for SPIRE, a major hospital investment which will take some time to plan. I look forward to providing further advice to the Assembly and the community on this in the upcoming budget. Since last year the territory-wide health services framework has also been developed. It is important to me, underscored by conversations particularly recently with many clinicians, that this service planning must inform infrastructure planning to ensure that the new facility is purpose built and designed to support our clinicians and our community.

The construction of SPIRE will start in 2020 and, from detailed planning over the last year, is unlikely to be completed in 2022-23 as originally considered but in the following financial year. Current tender processes and further service planning will give us greater certainty over the next 12 months about time frames for completion of the various stages.

As we know, health systems across the country are dealing with unprecedented challenges that come from the demand for health services expanding and becoming more complex. There is always going to be more we can do to improve timeliness and access to care in our hospitals. As such, the important services we provide in our EDs and in the delivery of elective surgery will always be areas of focus for the government.

Further to my earlier points about the increased demand for emergency treatment, when talking about the ED, context is important. We are one of the country's busiest emergency departments, a major tertiary centre for the ACT and surrounding New South Wales regions treating many urgent and complex cases particularly at Canberra Hospital. To improve timeliness ACT Health is focusing particularly on patient flows from the ED into the hospital. ACT Health is currently looking at processes in relation to the discharging of patients in the ED, patients being admitted to a ward in the hospital and discharge from the inpatient setting.

I also want to echo what the AMA said about ED wait times on ABC radio last week: one of the challenges is people presenting to our EDs that perhaps have preventable or chronic conditions that could be better managed by GPs or in primary health care. It is important for chronic conditions to be managed appropriately in the primary care setting before people get so unwell that they need to present to the ED. This also highlights the need for a national focus on prevention, which is also a priority for me as minister. As I also mentioned yesterday, it is concerning that we continue to also see more presentations of category 3 patients to our emergency departments—again going to demographic change in our community and again a trend reflected across the country.

To improve elective surgery wait times the government has had a deliberate focus on reducing the number of patients who are waiting longer than clinically recommended for their surgery. And to help provide more elective surgeries the government has invested additional funding in this financial year which will see more Canberrans receive elective surgery.

I would note, as I mentioned yesterday, it is also important to consider all health settings and managing people's health and wellbeing in all settings. The hospital is of course important but we are seeing a real focus around the world and around Australia on making sure that people can get care closer to home.

In the remaining 19 seconds I also want to speak to data. I look forward later this week to tabling a statement on the outcomes of the data review and making it clear that my focus is on providing more transparent information to consumers, clinicians and the broader ACT community.

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) (10.37): The Greens will not be supporting Mrs Dunne's motion today because, as I said yesterday, I do not believe it presents a full and accurate picture of the work the government is doing to improve health services in the ACT. There is no doubt that there are areas of our health system that are under stress and can be improved, particularly as our city continues to grow and demand for health services increases. Mrs Dunne took the opportunity to prosecute many of these matters in yesterday's motion but I am happy to expand on the comments I made yesterday in response to some of these issues in more detail. She herself has flagged a greater level of detail today.

On the issue of the ACT Health accreditation process, as I said yesterday some of the results from the survey were both disappointing and concerning, particularly a number of specific items relating to patient safety in mental health inpatient units. I have asked ACT Health to respond to these issues as a matter of urgency and I am being regularly briefed on the progress of work which is already underway. The key issues for mental health are infrastructure works to remove ligature points in the adult mental health unit, commissioning of an independent review of all Canberra Hospital and health services inpatient mental health facilities, and establishing a review advisory body to oversee the review and action any recommendations that come out of it.

I want to be clear that the government has accepted all of the recommendations in the “not met” report and is actively responding to each issue. I can advise the Assembly that the infrastructure works in the adult mental health unit have already started, with significant progress already made. Additionally, arrangements for the independent review and the advisory body are currently being finalised.

The accreditation report also noted the need to improve practices related to discharge summaries across ACT Health, including in mental health wards. Work is now happening both to address the backlog of outstanding records and to improve IT systems and make that process easier to complete in a timely manner in the future. The forward agenda on this is particularly important, to make it easier for staff to get this done, to ensure that patients receive this and also to make sure that staff can do it in a timely and efficient manner and focus on not only getting this done but then having more capacity to spend time with patients.

In relation to justice health services, the report included a recommendation to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke for staff working at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. ACT Health have advised me that a response to this issues is being worked through with ACT corrections, and I expect that a practical solution can be resolved for that matter quite readily.

I want to assure the Assembly and the Canberra community that progress against each item is being closely monitored by both me and Minister Fitzharris in the lead-up to the advanced completion survey in July. ACT Health has developed an action plan to respond to each of the “not met” criteria in the accreditation report, and a national standards leadership committee, chaired by the interim director-general, has been established to oversee the implementation of the action plan.

In particular, I want to reassure the community that despite the recommendations in relation to the adult mental health unit, the unit remains the safest place for people in Canberra with an acute mental illness who need inpatient care. As I have already noted, infrastructure works are underway to remove the identified ligature points. Additionally, it is important to reinforce that it is not simply the physical environment that is a measure of safety. The role of staff supervision and the treatment an individual is receiving are critical in reducing, as much as possible, the risk of harm.

The governance concerns raised through the accreditation process are an issue that impacts across all of ACT Health. As Minister for Mental Health, I know these issues are important for clarifying reporting lines and responsibilities, including in our mental health services. The decision that the government has taken to split ACT Health into two agencies is one important part of the work being done to help address these governance issues.

The reality is that as our city grows, so too does our health system. And there is a reason why other, larger jurisdictions have adopted similar governance arrangements to what is being proposed in ACT Health. The complexity of health systems should not be underestimated, especially for a system that is now providing services not only for over 400,000 people here in Canberra, but also for those coming in from

surrounding regions. Health systems need to be able to respond in a clear and decisive way when risks or issues are identified. By separating out policy and operational functions, the new governance structure will provide streamlined and clarified reporting lines so that issues can be responded to in a timely and efficient manner.

Of course, there are a range of issues identified in the accreditation report. While the proposed restructure of ACT Health will not be a solution to all of these issues, it will enable a clearer focus on efficiency and effectiveness for clinical operations and free up capacity within the policy agency to undertake core strategy and big picture system management functions.

I also want to reiterate that improving quality and safety is an ongoing process in the health system. It does not start or end with accreditation. There is significant work underway every day in our hospital, as well as in our various other health services across the city, that is focused on quality and patient safety. This accreditation report provides us with a number of opportunities for improvement, and as Minister for Mental Health, I am strongly committed to improving standards in our mental health services. I believe the Minister for Health and Wellbeing shares this commitment for all of ACT Health.

I also want to speak briefly on the issues Mrs Dunne has raised about the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. I reiterate what the minister has said, that maternity services delivered at the Canberra Hospital are safe and high quality. However, I do acknowledge that there are staff at the hospital who did not feel that their concerns were being listened or responded to, and this is an area we need to improve.

I know that this is an area that the interim director-general is strongly focused on, and I fully support him in his endeavours in that space. Our staff on the ground are hardworking, dedicated and knowledgeable, and we need to have better systems in place to allow them to raise concerns. This is also true for consumers and carers, who can provide very valuable insights into the operation of our health system. Putting the systems in place to better respond to feedback is important for the ongoing process of quality improvement that I spoke about earlier.

I also want to highlight some of the efforts that are already underway to improve health services at a more systemic level. Minister Fitzharris has spoken previously in this place about the territory-wide health services framework. This systemic reform is important for making sure our services are equipped to respond to the needs of our population over the coming decade.

At the same time, in the mental health space we are working on establishing the office for mental health and wellbeing, which I spoke about yesterday. We are also working with the Capital Health Network to develop a regional mental health plan for the ACT and region. Both of these projects are important for improving coordination and integration of mental health services across the system. What we want is for people to be able to access the right service in the right place at the right time. And with our system becoming increasingly complex, we need to take a strategic approach to make it easier to navigate for consumers and carers. I say often that this is a time in people's

lives when they are perhaps at their most vulnerable, and we need to make sure the system is capable of supporting them at that critical moment in their journey to wellness.

There are many people who have excellent experiences in our health system every day, and we should not forget that in amongst some of the issues we are currently dealing with there are many positive stories and many people who get the help they exactly need. Our system is full of committed and experienced staff who go to work every day doing their best to improve the lives of people in our community who need help. I appreciate that the past few weeks have been a difficult time for those staff. Today I want to reiterate my commitment to working with them to deliver the best health outcomes we can here in the territory.

The issues that Mrs Dunne has raised in her motion today and yesterday are important and worthy of discussion. But as I said yesterday, the original motion does not paint the full picture of what is happening to respond to these issues. For that reason, the Greens will be supporting the amendment put forward by Minister Fitzharris. I look forward to continuing to work with the minister to improve health services for the Canberra community.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (10.46): I get the impression that no-one else is falling over themselves to speak on this matter. When I was making my comments, I did note that the minister had circulated a page and a half of amendments. I am flattered that the minister, with the resources of her department and her ministerial office, can be put under such pressure by one opposition member and her three staff that she does not have the capacity to provide such a lengthy amendment in a timely fashion. I take it as a badge of honour that the minister is under such pressure that she cannot fulfil the courtesies of this place.

If the members of the opposition did what the minister for health just did, there would be an outcry. We would have Mr Rattenbury or Ms Le Couteur saying, "We cannot possibly contemplate these amendments because we haven't had enough notice." It is what happens every Wednesday. If we put forward an amendment, their response is to say, "We cannot possibly contemplate it. You have not given us enough time." This minister thinks it is okay to wait until I get on my feet to move a 1½-page amendment.

Ms Lawder: She is too busy.

MRS DUNNE: She is being put under such pressure, by her own admission. "Mrs Dunne has kept me so busy that I have not had time to do this." Mrs Dunne is Mrs Dunne and her three staff. This minister has 7,000 public servants and a ministerial office three times the size of my office and she cannot get her act together to show the courtesies of this place.

I welcome some of the stuff that is in this motion. I welcome the fact that the minister has already tabled a copy of the letter that we asked for. I welcome also the apparent willingness to report on some matters. I also notice that there is a complete reluctance to report on some other matters.

It is clear that this amendment is getting up, because, again, the Greens are not interested in providing information to the community and to the Assembly. Mr Rattenbury, with his record on freedom of information reform, which he likes to trumpet and is rightly entitled to do, shows himself to be entirely schizophrenic when it comes to something which is difficult and close to home. He is just as enthusiastic as everybody else on the government benches to close ranks and deprive people of information.

The motion that I put forward today was simply calling for the presentation of papers and the provision of ongoing information. The government clearly has a copy of the March accreditation report. It is not beyond the wit of the government to photocopy the copy of that and have it tabled in this place, but there is no commitment to do that. Yes, there is a commitment to report back in June and August, but the original motion calls for the government to provide the interim report to the Assembly and the people of the ACT, so that we can see clearly what the 33 or 37 items are, depending on how you count them, and what exactly they say about these things, so that we, as a community who invest \$1.6 billion in health every year, can have oversight of the accreditation process which has gone pear-shaped and which, if it continues to go pear-shaped, has huge, incalculable implications for health provision in the ACT.

We do not know what will happen if we do not get accreditation. It is completely and utterly uncharted waters. We cannot afford to fail in July. There is a complete outbreak of unanimity on that. If this minister wants us not to fail in July, the people of the ACT deserve to know what is going wrong now that we failed in March. We do not have a commitment to that in this amendment.

Neither do we have a commitment to providing an accurate timetable for the construction of the SPIRE. My original motion called for a timetable and regular reporting on this. What we actually have is a substitute, in 2(f) of Minister Fitzharris's amendment, a commitment to invest in health infrastructure. We know they are investing in health infrastructure, though we are not entirely convinced it is the right investment in health infrastructure, but there is no commitment to providing up-to-date information about what it will cost, when it will be built and what will be built. In my original motion, that is what was called for.

The minister has not learned the lessons of yesterday, and she will not learn the lessons of yesterday because she knows that she will be protected by the Greens at every turn. Minister Rattenbury is just as culpable and has just as many failings in his area of health responsibility as this minister has.

The Liberal opposition will not be supporting this amendment. The amendment only goes part of the way. It is a concession to provision of information, but it does not provide all the information that we needed, that we called for, that the community should have access to. The great paragon of freedom of information, access to information, will not support it. It needs to be put on the record today that the foremost campaigner for improved freedom of information—he would describe himself as the foremost campaigner—has squibbed it. He has completely and utterly squibbed it. It is not convenient for him to have this information out in the public. He will come behind the Labor Party and run protection for the Labor Party because it is

collectively inconvenient for the Labor-Greens government to provide this information.

We will not be supporting this amendment. We know that it will get up, but we will not be supporting this amendment.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Noes 10

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mr Barr | Ms Orr | Miss C Burch | Mr Milligan |
| Ms J Burch | Mr Pettersson | Mr Coe | Mr Parton |
| Ms Cheyne | Mr Ramsay | Mrs Dunne | Mr Wall |
| Ms Cody | Mr Rattenbury | Mr Hanson | |
| Ms Fitzharris | Mr Steel | Mrs Kikkert | |
| Mr Gentleman | Ms Stephen-Smith | Ms Lawder | |
| Ms Le Couteur | | Ms Lee | |

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Government—initiatives

MS CODY (Murrumbidgee) (10.58): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) Canberra is growing by 7 000 people a year, and is estimated to become a city of half a million people by 2030;
- (b) major international companies and organisations are increasingly recognising Canberra is a good place to base their Australasian operations, bringing with them highly paid and secure jobs; and
- (c) a growing Canberra needs ongoing, long term strategic investment in services and infrastructure to help keep Canberrans moving and productive, as well as protecting this city's enviable lifestyle;

(2) further notes that the ACT Government is growing core social and economic services for a growing city, including:

- (a) investing \$3 billion over the next four years on key capital projects that will help Canberrans move around our city more quickly and access more high quality services locally;
- (b) delivering green bin services to Weston Creek, Kambah and Tuggeranong, and rolling out the popular time and cost-saving municipal service to the remainder of Canberra by 2019;

- (c) operating nurse-led walk-in centres in Belconnen and Tuggeranong which saw 36 785 patients seen in 2016-17, opening a walk-in centre in Gungahlin in 2018, undertaking design work to construct a walk-in centre in the Weston Creek region, and planning for a health centre in the Inner North this parliamentary term, as well as delivering more hospital and health services;
 - (d) improving freight and passenger connections around Australia securing daily international flights;
 - (e) delivering more aged friendly suburbs by improving accessibility for residents of Ainslie, Weston, Kaleen, Monash, Page and Hughes;
 - (f) building an integrated public transport network for our growing city, including commencement of Light Rail Stage 1, planning for Stage 2 to Woden, and delivering five new Rapid services and more buses more often;
 - (g) improving local public schools with more than \$85 million worth of works underway to upgrade and improve teaching and learning spaces at schools across the city, and plan and build new schools for the future; and
 - (h) keeping Canberra safe as the city grows, through support for the emergency services, including personnel, equipment and infrastructure; and
- (3) calls on the Government to continue to invest in expanding our core community, social, health, education, emergency services and transport services to cater to a growing and thriving city, for the benefit of its residents and visitors.

When I ask myself how well this government, or any government, is going, I look at how it is going in delivering secure jobs, quality services and the egalitarian society we strive for. Doing all those things, of course, requires a strong economy.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Cody, just a minute. Members, please! Ms Cody, continue.

MS CODY: Thank you. I was finding it hard to hear myself. Doing all those things, of course, requires a strong economy. When I look around the Australian Capital Territory I see a lot of challenges being met—met with competence, compassion and real leadership. As an ACT government, there are many things we cannot control. We cannot control immigration. We cannot control the fact that the opposition continue to speak during my speeches. But we do have a choice about how we welcome the 7,000 new Canberrans arriving every year.

We cannot regulate or tax our biggest industry, the commonwealth public service, but we do have the choice of building the transport, health and education services to ensure every local family has a good quality of life. Likewise with the planning decisions that left us with our—how would the ABC put it?—curious infrastructure legacy, we have a choice about how we adapt it to our future as a larger city.

Rather than taking the soft option of kicking problems down the road, rather than taking the soft option of running our infrastructure into the ground, this government is taking the hard option on all of these issues. The challenge is vast. Our population has expanded by 34,000 people over the last five years. In the 12 months to September 2017, there were 7,165 more people in our city.

We also had over 10,000 new jobs created in our city last year. Importantly, 80 per cent of those jobs were full-time jobs, the sort of jobs that let people pay a mortgage, support their family, save for their retirement and have a high quality of life. Any old job is not good enough. We should be delivering good jobs for our community, and the Barr Labor government is doing just that.

Due to the wise leadership of our Treasurer, the ACT now has the lowest unemployment rate and highest average incomes in Australia. Rather than the downward spiral of lowering wages and profit stripping advocated by the Liberal Party, the Barr Labor government is delivering high wages and high growth for an inclusive economy.

There are great stories of growing businesses, large and small, across this city. The latest SGS Economics & Planning report on economic performance of Australia's cities and regions showed that the highest contribution to Canberra's GDP growth came from the professional services sector, at 2.7 percentage points. It accounted for almost 60 per cent of all growth in the period.

In cyber security, Canberra established the first operational node of the Australian cyber security growth network. Our companies are world leaders in system administration, secure cloud storage, security and cryptology. The 2018 Australian military sales catalogue showcases the products of an unprecedented nine Canberra defence companies.

Another example is Lockheed Martin Australia. The defence prime has an annual turnover of \$293.8 million and has invested \$12 million in a new headquarters in Canberra. Just last month two local cybersecurity success stories, Penten and QuintessenceLabs, announced a strategic partnership. Under the partnership, Penten's spin-off, deception.ai, will use QuintessenceLabs' random number generator technology in its new machine-learning platform. This is a great example of two Canberra companies collaborating to build market opportunities.

Of course, the confidence expressed by those businesses and many more in our city and our territory are not reflected everywhere. The federal Liberal government, and our second senator, Zed Seselja, have been trying their best to rip the guts out of our city. Fortunately, they have not been very competent at it. Maybe it comes with the party membership.

After the disastrous attempts to move government departments, last night they announced they would have a go at killing more local jobs. Unlike our commitment to develop a modern, efficient transport network, Zed cannot decide if he would like to take credit for the light rail, as he did in the media this morning, or sabotage it, as he

was talking about in the paper last week. The Liberal Party always seem so keen to be running things, but they seem equally keen to be running them into the ground.

That is why Canberra people keep showing confidence in the Labor Party. It is because we have the commitment to growing services for a growing city. We need to invest in our city now because Canberra is growing rapidly. In 2016-17 our economy grew by 4.6 per cent, the strongest growth rate of the states and territories and well above the national average of two per cent.

At the last election Mr Barr laid out an ambitious plan to make Canberra even better, and now this government is delivering. Over the next four years we are investing \$3 billion in infrastructure to meet the community's needs today while laying the groundwork for our growth in the years and decades to come.

Our city's growth is important but it is also a challenge. Canberra is already more lively and diverse today because of it, but we know that services and infrastructure have to grow alongside our community to make sure a bigger Canberra is also a better one.

The construction of Canberra's light rail network is the most significant transport project this city has ever embarked upon. With construction on stage 1 from Gungahlin to the city now well on track for completion in late 2018, we are driving ahead with stage 2 to Woden, in stark contrast to what Zed would like to see. The Liberal senator seems to want fewer jobs—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Cody, when you are making the reference, can you refer to Senator Seselja?

MS CODY: Sorry, of course I can, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS CODY: The Liberal senator seems to want fewer jobs, fewer transport options and fewer services in our city. One new service I have been especially enthusiastic about is the rollout of our green bins. As at March 2018, the pilot had generated over 9,400 registrations from approximately 16,500 eligible households, with around 34 per cent of these claiming to hold a concession card.

The pilot commenced on 18 April 2017. From then to February 2018, around 2,200 tonnes of garden organic green waste has been collected. This includes the expansion to Tuggeranong. Contamination rates for Weston Creek and Kambah remain low at 0.01 per cent or 15 grams per participating household, demonstrating an excellent result.

As Canberra is growing, so is our health service. Our community places considerable importance on investment in high quality health services across our city. To meet this growing demand we have planned and delivered health services where they are needed, including in the community and in hospitals. The health services we have

created to meet demand in the community are incredibly popular. I note that Minister Fitzharris spoke about them this morning but I too would like to talk about them.

Over the last 12 months the number of presentations to our nurse-led walk-in centres at Belconnen and Tuggeranong have grown by about eight per cent. This growth is increasing. They are an important alternative to visiting our busy emergency departments. They are very popular for less serious conditions and are open for longer hours to cover periods when people most often need care.

Only this week the Minister for Health and Wellbeing received a very positive endorsement of the value of the walk-in centre at Tuggeranong from a 90-year-old member of our community who tripped over in her garden and needed stitches near her eye. She said, “These clinics are a great alternative to spending hours at the hospital for the treatment of minor injuries. The nurses are obviously very experienced and know when referral to a doctor is necessary.”

Building on the success of these walk-in centres, the ACT government started constructing the new walk-in centre in Gungahlin in February this year, investing \$2.9 million. This walk-in centre will be open later this year. Planning is underway for a new walk-in centre in Weston Creek to meet our rapidly growing community there.

Finally, as Minister Fitzharris has already spoken about today, we are well advanced in opening the third public hospital in Canberra with the construction of the University of Canberra hospital, a specialty centre for rehabilitation, recovery and research, completed.

They are just a few of the things that this government is continuing to deliver on. I look forward to the coming weeks and months when we will hopefully move forward, deliver on more things and progress the wonderful work that this Barr Labor government continues to do.

This city is a wonderful city. We live here; we love it; many of us grew up here. To see the changes and the continued investment in our city by the Barr Labor government is something that I am very proud of. I am proud to be standing in this place and to be able to talk about all of the wonderful things that we continue to do.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (11.11): Ms Cody’s motion today very broadly calls on the government to continue to provide the most basic functions and services that governments should be delivering. Of course, the opposition agrees in this role of government to provide essential services and to provide them well.

This government, like any government, should be spending money on the Canberra community. But they should be spending it wisely and they should not be over-taxing. There should be considerable funds dedicated to health, education, emergency services, transport, and community services—in effect, all the essential areas of government.

The concern the Canberra Liberals have is that this government continues to mismanage resources and fails to invest when and where funds are needed the most.

We see this in the health portfolio. There are huge amounts of money going into that portfolio, but we are not necessarily getting value for money. It is one thing to spend money; it is another to get value in return. It is one thing to measure on inputs; it is another to measure on outputs.

Every Canberran pays considerable taxes, fees and charges, and rates. That money should be spent on delivering services that benefit our community. The fact that the Labor-Greens government is not adequately providing services or investing wisely is the real issue. The government brings in huge revenue. Unfortunately, there continues to be a downward trend in the level of services offered by successive Labor-Green governments and declining standards across all portfolios. Health and education are a couple worth looking at. Yes, the ACT government should be investing in our city. But it should invest wisely, have good governance processes and have competent ministers running the show.

Ms Cody mentioned this government is wisely managing our infrastructure. A cursory look at various Auditor-General reports, including stormwater assets and roads, would suggest that there are some pretty major problems. There are also issues that have been identified by Icon Water. Unfortunately, the Labor-Greens government has failed to properly resource territory authorities. It has also failed to empower them to concentrate on the things that really matter. It has failed to follow the principles of good governance and failed to appoint good ministers.

I welcome this opportunity, but I really do wonder what is going to change as a result of this motion. What is the motion actually calling for? In contrast, look at what we have called for in the health portfolio. Look at what we have called for in the previous motion on health: a huge number of documents that would inform legislators in this place. Look at what we have called for with regard to Miss Candice Burch's motion: tangibles regarding bus services in the evenings. Again, look at what has been called for by Ms Lawder's motion: tangibles that will provide information to legislators. Mrs Kikkert's motion, of course, has a huge impact in terms of accessing and screening all detainees. This is all solid, practical stuff that has an impact on Canberrans.

In contrast to that, we have the latest fluff piece which "calls on the government to continue to invest in expanding our core community, social health—

Ms Fitzharris: Absolutely; very important things, I think.

MR COE: Were they not going to do it had we not moved this motion? Had this motion not been put forward, what was going to happen tomorrow? It would have all just ground to a halt. Suddenly nothing would have happened. The territory would have a stockpile of cash and not be spending a buck. That is what would have happened had we not moved this motion today.

I expect we will have 10 speakers in the debate on this motion. They will all speak for 10 or 15 minutes. What will happen as a result? Absolutely no change whatsoever. Next time, Ms Cody, do us all a favour and call on something specific. I am sure that is what your electors would want you to do.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (11.17): What a pathetic response from the Leader of the Opposition. He has nothing constructive to contribute to a debate about this city's infrastructure, and essential government and community services. In the end his fundamental philosophical position is for government to retreat from the provision of those services. He wants smaller government. He wants government to do less. His fundamental philosophical position is that of the classic conservative. He is for smaller government and not a friendly society. It is a society based on surviving under your own means. That sort of classic conservative tradition that is so well represented—

Mr Wall: Because government does such a good job of living our lives for us, don't they? They do such a good job of living our lives for us. Really, Andrew; God forbid if anyone gets sick in this city because the government is the biggest threat to public health.

MR BARR: Indeed, we hear interjections from his partner in crime, Mr Wall, who is also right out there on the fringe of the right wing of the Liberal Party seeking to minimise the role of government, seeking to minimise the important role of community services. That is what we have heard in the contribution this morning from the Leader of the Opposition. So, no plans for the future. We know everything that he is against. We know exactly what he is against, but nothing about what he stands for. That is why he will continue to sit on that side of the chamber.

We are very pleased to support Ms Cody's motion today. We continue to work towards making the city that we love even better by growing services for Canberrans. We want to continue to expand access to public health services. We want to provide better schools and education facilities, and an enhanced transport system that helps people move around the city easier every day, investing in our suburbs and creating more jobs in our city.

We have, as we have discussed at some length, significant population growth. People are voting with their feet and wanting to live in Canberra, which is fantastic. Our population grew by more than 11 per cent between 2011 and 2016, which was the fastest growth rate in the country. I note Gungahlin grew the quickest within the ACT, having added 24,000 people during this period.

Population growth is an opportunity but it is also a challenge. Canberra has many more employment and entertainment options today than this city had a generation ago. But our services and infrastructure have to grow alongside our community. With this growth, it is essential that the government develop and implement a comprehensive services plan for the city that we will be: a city of around 500,000 people over the next decade. Great cities work by getting basic services right; by making sure residents are well connected to their community, to employment, to education and for lifestyle opportunities.

Unlike those opposite, we believe that government has a critical responsibility to provide those essential services. An ACT Labor government will always favour an

active and significant role for government to make our residents' lives better. In the upcoming budget the Assembly can expect to see the government investing to meet this population growth with more places at new and expanded schools, and new front-line health services, nurses and doctors. We will be employing more teachers, more nurses, more doctors, more police, more ambulance officers and more firefighters. We will continue to invest in our city's infrastructure to grow public services for our growing city.

That is exactly why the government invested in light rail in the face of vocal and ongoing opposition from the conservatives opposite. The construction of Canberra's light rail is a significant transport project—the most significant one this city has ever embarked upon. The government is committed to its delivery. We are also in the planning stages, and will continue to work closely with the commonwealth parliament, to build the second stage of the light rail network through the parliamentary triangle and on to the Woden town centre. This links Canberra's major employment centres and our city's significant tourist attractions.

We will continue to work to integrate the bus network with the new light rail, providing more flexible and frequent transport options so that people have the option to leave their car at home. Our city will truly have one network, one public transport fare system, which will make moving around the city as easy as possible.

The government will continue to quickly design and deliver the nurse-led walk-in centres in Gungahlin, Weston Creek and the inner north, building on the excellent services already being provided in Belconnen and Tuggeranong. We know that Canberrans are looking forward to expanded out-of-hours health care and advice in their local area.

We have started the incredibly successful and popular rollout of the municipal green bin service. The initial program in Weston Creek and Kambah has seen nearly 9,500 registrations to the end of March 2018, with around 2,200 tonnes of garden organic green waste collected from April 2017 to February 2018, including those initial Tuggeranong collections. This is already saving Weston Creek and Tuggeranong residents time, effort and money every week. Every suburb in Canberra will have access to register for the service by 2019, making an environmental difference as well as providing a concrete measure to improve cost of living and lifestyle for every home that signs up.

Canberrans can also expect more age-friendly suburb improvements, similar to what has been experienced by residents in Ainslie, Weston, Kaleen and Monash, with Page and Hughes next in line. The age-friendly suburbs program is planned to operate until at least 2021 to improve suburbs, making it easier for older people to be active in the community. Two suburbs per year are selected on the basis of demographics of the suburb, community requests and existing infrastructure.

These projects deliver path network improvements to make it easier, convenient and more accessible for older residents to walk and to use other modes of active public transport travel within their suburb. Works include footpath upgrades, widening and removal of trip hazards, and completing segmented sections of work with additional

seating and improved road crossings for pedestrians. This is a very practical way that the government is working with the community to maintain and improve Canberra's active lifestyle.

These are just some examples of the areas this government is focused on in supporting our growing city. The forthcoming territory budget will build on the work already underway to ensure the benefits of our recent growth are shared by all Canberrans.

Budgets, as we have seen in the last 24 hours, are about choices. They are about where we as a community invest our resources and what our priorities are. Both in territory politics and at the national level, there are clearly quite divergent views on how government should invest available community resources, which areas should be prioritised and what role government has to play in making a better society. In this context we are very happy to compare our approach, our beliefs and values around the role of government to improving the lives of our citizens to those of the opposition.

In this morning's motion, which the Leader of the Opposition derides as having no value, he passed up a very clear speaking opportunity to outline an alternative plan for this city, an alternative set of priorities for a government that he would lead. But no; he was too busy attacking individuals and deriding the role of private members' business in this place. That is a very sad reflection both on him and on the team that he leads. It shows a lack of respect for other members in this place. If the new test that he wishes to set is that there must be some absolute, meaningful outcome then most contributions to debate in this place would probably not meet that very lofty benchmark, I am afraid to say.

Nevertheless, these days we devote one-third of our parliamentary sittings to private members' business. It is appropriate that we have the opportunity to debate these issues. If the Leader of the Opposition has no plans at all for infrastructure, it stands against what he has been doing in this place for the last two years. (*Time expired.*)

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.27): The Greens will be supporting Ms Cody's motion today without amendment, and we congratulate the government on the steps taken towards implementing a number of key priorities from the ACT Greens-Labor parliamentary agreement, particularly as so many items in the parliamentary agreement were, of course, Greens commitments during the 2016 election campaign.

Canberra is growing, and it is really pleasing to see advancement in a number of areas, including increasing engagement from major national and international companies and organisations in the ACT, because they bring economic benefits and jobs. These are much needed as the ACT moves away from just being a company town with the public service being the company. We could talk about that in the context of the federal budget last night, but I will refrain. I could spend all my time addressing each of the points addressed by Ms Cody, but I only have 15 minutes so I am going to focus on those in the parliamentary agreement as these are the ones the Greens have particularly contributed to.

I will start with commending the expansion of the nurse-led walk-in centres to Gungahlin and Weston Creek. This was the very first policy item in the parliamentary agreement as the Greens believe these centres have been a great addition to our healthcare system in Canberra. They offer reduced waiting times, free high quality care and one-off treatment and advice for sick Canberrans. I note, however, that this motion includes planning for a health centre in the inner north as opposed to a walk-in centre. I hope the government has done its homework and that the planned service—I am not entirely sure what it will be—will meet the needs of those who live in the inner north and will include the benefits of a walk-in centre.

I also, of course, commend the rollout of the age-friendly suburbs program which my colleague Mr Rattenbury commenced when he was the Minister for Ageing and the TAMS minister in the previous Assembly. It makes improvements to footpaths and cycleways, additional ramps, seating at bus stops and upgraded street furniture. Promoting positive ageing and facilitating opportunities for older people to share their wisdom and experience benefits the whole community. This is why the Greens sought to ensure the expansion of the age-friendly suburbs program and the flexible bus service were included in the parliamentary agreement between the Greens and Labor at the last election.

The Greens also made sure the flexible bus service was expanded to the inner north to ensure residents across Canberra with restricted access to public or private transport options were able to get to and from their homes to go to shops and medical appointments and access the community services that many of us want and I am sure all of us here take for granted.

These are important measures to ensure that older people can be active participants in their communities, reducing the risk of falls while they are trying to be active participants in their community, and improving feelings of safety and confidence. This helps not only older residents in these suburbs to walk to the local shops, the bus stops, or visit neighbours but also people with mobility aids and mums and dads and grandparents pushing prams.

The other item from the parliamentary agreement is about an integrated public transport network. I note and commend the rollout of the five new rapid routes. However, I note that the parliamentary agreement calls for an integrated public transport network, including more rapid routes, not to mention a trial of electric and hybrid buses. It was, of course, with some sadness and regret that I learned that the recent purchase of new buses that will last for 20 years were all diesel. I hope the next buses purchased will be electric. We need to be buying for the future, not the past.

I hope other bus services do not suffer any harsh reductions in frequency as a result of the rollout of the new rapid services. I trust the reason the government is taking longer than it originally planned in putting forward the new timetable is that they are doing a very good job of consultation. Clearly, more rapid services will be a good thing, but there will be people whose bus services will be disrupted, and we need to make sure that they are still able to get around in Canberra and that Canberra continues to be an inclusive place as far as transport is concerned. On that note I should note that we are going to be supporting Candice Burch's motion regarding evening bus services.

More importantly, I support the call on the government to continue to invest in expanding our core community, social, health, education, emergency services and transport services to cater for a growing and thriving city. We must not forget those who are doing it tough right now. This is especially relevant today after a federal budget last night which did nothing, absolutely nothing, for people at the bottom economically.

We must ensure that our rollout of services always takes into account the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community—those who do not have a secure roof over their head or a job or the supports they need to live their lives. In the past few weeks we have seen reports from Anglicare and ACTCOSS about poverty and homelessness. There are consistent and loud calls for additional investment in social and affordable housing. We must hear these calls and act upon them.

It is clear from the national ACOSS raise the rate campaign that those living on benefits are living below the poverty line. It is important to note that ACOSS and ACTCOSS both calculate the number of people living below the poverty line based on their income after housing costs. Therefore, for all those people on low incomes not able to access social housing and affordable rental accommodation options in the ACT—those spending more than a third of their income on housing—this has a direct impact on their available spending for other essentials like food, transport and household energy bills. This means these people are contributing the vast majority of their income—and in some cases more than their actual income—to growing our local economy. They are spending it on rent and on essential food. But their money does not go to things like meals and restaurants, theatre tickets or international flights.

The recent ACTCOSS report shows that in the ACT nearly 35,000 people are living below the poverty line. That includes more than one in 10 children, a number close to 8,900. We should all think about that for a moment—more than one in 10 of the kids in the ACT, in our schools, in our services, are living in poverty.

As ACT Council of Social Services head Susan Helyar said in the *Canberra Times* this week, people are forced to choose between keeping a roof over their head, food on the table, buying medicine and turning on the heater. This should not be the case in the ACT. This is not relative poverty whereby some people, compared to the affluence of the large proportion of public servants and other people in Canberra, do not do as well. This is absolute poverty where people do not have enough food and they do not have safe shelter, and this is in the ACT now.

As we all know, our average household income and our cost of living are relatively high compared to other capital cities, and this makes the gap between rich and poor even bigger in practice and harder to negotiate if you are on the wrong side of it. Often it is easy to ignore the numbers, but when there are examples like the St John's Care food pantry running out of food for vulnerable individuals and families—the worst situation they say they have had for more than 15 years—we cannot and should not gloss over the data. It was reported in the *Canberra Times* this week that the number of people using the service has jumped by 25 per cent in the past year. As well as dwindling food supplies, they have had to cut back electricity vouchers from \$50 to \$25 due to increased demand, and this is before winter.

Of course, I am really pleased there was such an outpouring of community support when the plight of St John's came to the attention of media—social and traditional—on Monday, and these generous donations are really promising. It is great that they have propped up St John's for the next few months, but I fear this is not a sustainable way for St John's or other services in Canberra to operate. The recent drop in donations that St John's reported could possibly be due to rising cost of living pressures, and I fear the community's support may wane again in the future. Foodbank in the ACT has also reported increasing demand, with an extra 389,486 meals needed per year to meet the needs of our community.

It is not just food and housing costs that are a daily concern; people living in poverty often cannot pay bills for the basics that many of us take for granted like utilities, car registration and insurance or minimum credit card repayments. We need more funding for local community services who are supporting the vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged people and families, who are bearing the brunt of successive cost-cutting measures. These services are vital to help people get access to the supports they need to get back on their feet, including education and employment services.

On census night 2016, 1,599 ACT residents and 121 Queanbeyan residents were considered homeless. This is a slight reduction from 1,739 in Canberra and 127 people in Queanbeyan in 2011, but this means that approximately one out of every 250 people—that is 0.4 per cent—in the Canberra-Queanbeyan region was experiencing homelessness, and this also coincides with a 33 per cent increase in significantly overcrowded homes.

The most recent Anglicare rental affordability snapshot found that not one rental was affordable in the area for a single person on Newstart or youth allowance. Anglicare also notes that 8.3 per cent of the Canberra-Queanbeyan population who were renting accommodation were paying more than 30 per cent of their household income for rent, putting them in an unaffordable situation.

Although this is a lower rate than for Australia overall, which is at 11.5 per cent, this reflects the higher median income in this region rather than the affordability of accommodation for low income earners in the ACT. Aside from a small number of dwellings affordable to age pensioner households, there were no affordable housing options for any household that derived its income from a Centrelink payment. With a total lack of any increase for this in the budget last night, that situation is not likely to improve any time soon.

That is why I have been advocating so strongly for social and affordable housing targets. It was disappointing to see the government try to amend my motion in private members' business in the last sitting period. I called upon the government to commit to growing social housing stock to at least maintain the minimum of 7.1 per cent of ACT's housing stock as social housing, and that is where rent is set to a maximum of 25 per cent of the tenant's income. However, I am pleased the motion was supported by a majority of this Assembly because now the government is instructed and hopefully committed to maintaining that level of social housing. Hopefully, this will prevent the overall number of social housing dwellings from falling in future.

Hopefully, it also demonstrates to the community the benefits of actually having the Greens in the Assembly.

Further, I note that I am waiting eagerly—the whole sector is waiting eagerly—for the government to deliver its affordable housing strategy. I think everybody is hopeful that it will deliver meaningful actions to reduce the widening inequality gap in this space. I support very much Ms Cody's call on the government to continue to invest in expanding our core services, but we need to make sure that this investment is for the benefit of all our residents, including those who are doing it tough.

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) (11.41): I am pleased to rise today in my capacity as both a minister and a member for Brindabella. I want to congratulate Ms Cody on her excellent motion and her eloquent and thoughtful contribution when moving the motion. Our city is growing. Canberra is growing because people from across Australia can see the possibilities here: interesting, well-paid jobs; world-leading study and research opportunities; and a community that champions innovation and new businesses. More and more people who have grown up here are also choosing to stay in Canberra over leaving for Sydney or Melbourne because of its blend of big city activities, lack of traffic congestion, inclusive community, great amenity and healthy lifestyle.

Our city's growth is an opportunity and a challenge. Canberra is already more lively and diverse today because of it. But we know that services and infrastructure have to grow alongside our community to make sure a bigger Canberra is also a better one. As the ACT budget trends to balance, we are increasing investment in core services that Canberrans need and rely on—great local schools, reliable and accessible health care, and transport infrastructure that makes commuting quick and easy. We are putting more police, firefighters and paramedics to work keeping Canberrans safe, and delivering better amenities for both our city and local suburbs.

No other government in Australia delivers as many different services as we do. From schools, hospitals and emergency services to footpaths, recycling and parks, we really do deliver across the spectrum and understand that the quality and convenience of these services is a big part of what makes Canberra such a great place to live.

The ACT government is growing services for our growing city. As the Chief Minister advised, the construction of Canberra's light rail network is the most significant transport project this city has ever embarked upon. With construction on stage 1 from Gungahlin to the city now well on track for completion in late 2018, we are driving ahead with stage 2 to Woden.

We are upgrading, building and planning for eight important roads, including duplicating Gundaroo Drive through to the Barton Highway and signalling the intersection of Gundaroo Drive and Mirrabei Drive. We are extending Canberra's 3,500 kilometres of footpaths and cycleways by starting work on the Belconnen bikeway to link the University of Canberra, Radford College, CIT Bruce and GIO Stadium with the Belconnen town centre. We are also investing over \$4 million

in upgrading footpaths and cycleways in high traffic areas and delivering more secure bike parking options in Braddon. The City Renewal Authority delivers a better CBD, and we are investing in local town centre upgrades with landscaping, infrastructure and traffic improvements to the Tuggeranong, Kambah and Gungahlin centres.

Investments are also being made in the area of emergency services. The ACT community can be assured that they live in one of the safest cities in the world, with well-funded, well-resourced and well-governed emergency services. As evidenced in the report on government services, the ACT Emergency Services Agency, the ESA, provides emergency response services to the territory that are among the best in Australia when measured by response times and capabilities provided.

As the city expands, the ACT government is committed to providing additional front-line resources that will aim to meet continued increases in demand. The government's commitment in this area is demonstrated by the recent announcement to recruit 23 additional paramedics. The ACT Ambulance Service boasts the best response times in the country for the past six years, and these additional staff will allow the ACT Ambulance Service to continue to maintain these high standards of delivery.

A further recruit college for new firefighters funded in the 2017-18 ACT budget will see an additional 17 firefighters placed in front-line positions by June this year. This follows on from the 16 firefighters who joined ACT Fire & Rescue as part of the 2016 recruit college and the nine firefighters who commenced duty as part of the lateral recruitment in November 2017. The government will continue to make investment towards firefighters as needed to ensure we have the resources required to keep our city safe.

The ESA also has access to approximately 1,800 volunteers across the ACT State Emergency Service, ACT Rural Fire Service, community fire units, and mapping and planning support. Each of these volunteer groups provides fundamental capability that enables the ESA to work together to care for and protect the ACT community. To make sure our workforce of the future is accommodated in suitable buildings, the ACT government is making sustained investments into the workforces and workplaces our emergency service workers work in and from to ensure they are fit for purpose and suitable for diverse and varied employees and volunteers. The ESA station upgrade and relocation program is about improving community safety for Canberrans while the city expands and the population grows. Strategically locating ESA stations to better service the needs and expectations of the community will allow the ESA to continue to deliver high safety outcomes for the ACT well into the future.

The ACT government's strong track record of supporting our emergency services includes ensuring they have the equipment to allow them to do their job effectively and safely. This is demonstrated by the government's commitment to providing a new aerial pumper appliance and two new intensive care ambulances during this term of government. The growing ACT population, changing urban landscape and impacts of climate change all contribute to bushfire being identified as an extreme risk in the ACT. I assure the ACT community that the territory is better prepared for a bushfire

emergency than ever before. The ACT's policies, warning systems and governance arrangements lead emergency management practice on a national level.

The Emergencies Act 2004 under which the ESA operates is viewed as the best practice in emergency management. Under the Emergencies Act, the ESA commissioner must prepare a strategic bushfire management plan every five years which sets out complementary and integrated strategies through which the government and the community reduce the risks of bushfire in the ACT. In planning for new estates in or near bushfire-prone areas the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate works very closely with the ESA.

In addition to the Australian standards for construction in a bushfire-prone area, the strategic bushfire management plan allows the ESA commissioner to set additional standards in a situation where a development proposal is received that would concentrate vulnerable members of our community in a bushfire-prone area. Applying building construction standards reduces bushfire risk by minimising the likelihood of property loss, and it provides a critical level of protection to people who may shelter in these structures during the passage of bushfires and extreme conditions.

As our city grows this Labor government is investing and helping to make a great city even better, and we believe in our city. Unfortunately, this belief and desire to help make Canberra great is not shared by the Liberals. Last night's federal budget was sadly lacking for our city. It cut staff at our national institutions such as the National Archives. It also showed the cost of the pork-barrelling exercise that is seeing a federal agency being relocated away to help Barnaby Joyce. The relocation is costing \$25 million, and I am advised that equates to one-quarter of what is being provided in the federal budget to the ACT for infrastructure. I look forward to hearing from those opposite calling out the Turnbull government on their failures in last night's budget.

In contrast to the Liberals, the ACT government has encouraged growth by promoting Canberra as a city of innovation and opportunity, attracting investment, and supporting local entrepreneurship and creativity.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.49): Canberra is a growing city. Last year alone our population grew by 7,000 people. It is expected to grow at 1.5 per cent per year over the next decade. Canberra will be home to half a million people by 2030. My own electorate of Yerrabi is the fastest growing region in the ACT and one of the fastest growing regions in the entire country. For the past five years the Gungahlin region has grown by almost 24,000 people. This growth presents enormous opportunities for our city, but it is not without its challenges. That is why our government is investing in city services that will ensure Canberra remains the livable city it is today.

Our government is investing in health, transport, education, suburban amenities, public spaces, tourism and community support programs to serve our city. Canberra deserves a government with a vision of its future and a proactive agenda to ensure services can adequately support our growing city.

A well-run health system needs health services to take the load off the hospital system. Many of my constituents have utilised the nurse-led walk-in centres in Belconnen and Tuggeranong, all with rave reviews. One had suffered a sporting injury late at night and required stitches but did not want to clog up an emergency waiting room for a relatively minor cut. He visited the nurse-led walk-in centre and was in and out in 30 minutes, all with professional stitching. This is why I am pleased the ACT government has started construction of a walk-in centre in Gungahlin to help service my constituents right there in Yerrabi.

Part of why Canberra is a livable city is because Canberrans are not stuck bumper to bumper in traffic every single time they leave the house. As Canberra grows, we need to ensure that our transport infrastructure adapts as well. In part, that means reducing our reliance on cars. Our integrated transport system has five new rapid bus services to more efficiently transport Canberrans across our city, particularly in peak travel times.

The first stage of light rail will help do this in north Canberra and Gungahlin. The journey time from Gungahlin town centre to the city will be 24 minutes. There will be 13 stops within the journey. This will completely change how people in the north of Canberra travel. It will reduce congestion along Northbourne Avenue and free up bus services to bring commuters not within walking distance of light rail to their closest stop. The flow-on effect of less cars on the road will greatly benefit those who choose not to catch the light rail. With room on board for bikes, the light rail will encourage a more active and healthy lifestyle for Canberrans.

Gungahlin is one of the fastest growing jurisdictions in Australia. Congestion will only get worse if forward-thinking transport policy is not implemented. Upgrading our roads is just as important. The current upgrades in Yerrabi are vital to ensure the livability of our community. To ensure that roads are safe, they require constant management. Our government resurfaces more than a million square metres of road across the territory. Within Yerrabi, this includes \$35 million for stage 2 duplication of Gundaroo Drive. This duplication will see upgrades and the replacement of the roundabout at Gundaroo Drive and Mirrabei Drive with traffic lights, a new four-way signalised intersection at the Federal Highway and Old Well Station Road as well as stormwater works on Flemington and Morisset Roads. Good roads and public transport are vital for Canberra to be a growing and livable city.

A well-funded education system will always be the priority of any Labor government. In my electorate of Yerrabi we are delivering an extra 844 places for students at their local schools. This will be from expansions at Harrison School, Gold Creek School, Neville Bonner Primary School, Palmerston district school, and a new school being built in east Gungahlin. Our government has increased the funding to Canberra schools. This funding is providing a wide range of services for all Canberra school students. This includes upgrades to school buildings across Canberra to ensure the students have the best learning environments possible.

There is more money for equipment upgrades, more funding for administrative staff so that teachers spend more time teaching, and \$3 million extra to support students

with disabilities, just to name a few. Not only do we need to build more education infrastructure to keep up with a growing population but we need to ensure that Canberra schools are delivering world-class education outcomes. Our schools must be able to prepare students for opportunities that the future will bring.

Maintaining Canberra suburbs may not be the most exciting topic to all, but it greatly affects the general livability of our city. Every year the government makes over 6.8 million household rubbish collections and 3.5 million household recycling collections. The recently rolled out container deposit scheme will encourage more Canberrans to recycle and keep our city clean, and they get 10c per deposit. This means we are on track to meet our target of 90 per cent resource recovery by 2025. As part of this, the government is rolling out green bins across Canberra. As Canberrans are such avid gardeners, this service will ensure that green waste is being disposed of in a more efficient way that is ultimately better for the environment.

Each year, the ACT government mows 30,000 hectares of grass across our suburbs and along arterial roads and maintains around 2,500 kilometres of footpaths. The government also manages our increasing stormwater levels, particularly from our new suburbs—approximately 4,000 kilometres of stormwater pipes in total. The recent flooding events in Canberra's north shows the vital importance of this infrastructure and the importance of its development as our population grows.

It is important that all Canberra suburbs have convenient local shops. I am glad progress has been made on the development of the Giralang shops. This has been something constituents have been calling for for a long time. It is good to see the developer, the community and the government are working together to fix this issue.

Part of what makes Canberra such a livable city is our beautiful open spaces. These open spaces require maintenance to keep them looking good in vital public areas. In Canberra's urban forests, over 760,000 trees are maintained and over 1,300 new trees are being planted over the next three years to replace diseased or dangerous trees and in new green areas. These trees provide shade, habitat for our native wildlife and help make Canberra the beautiful city that it is.

Our government manages a huge range of public services and spaces: 507 playgrounds, 280 irrigated sportsgrounds, nine public libraries, 112 urban lakes and ponds, and 79,000 street lights. As a local government, we believe in funding public goods. All these amenities ensure Canberrans enjoy public spaces that are clean and safe. Encouraging active Canberrans who are engaged in their local communities could not occur without usable public spaces, so the importance of this work cannot be overstated.

Canberra is becoming a tourist destination for domestic and international visitors. Initiatives by our government will ensure tourism to our city continues to grow, bringing with it a huge boost to our economy. The upgrade to the Canberra Airport has created more choice for visitors and Canberrans. Tiger Air, Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways all fly out of Canberra Airport, allowing for cheaper domestic flights and direct international ones as well. These services will boost Canberra's

economy and make it easier for Canberrans to travel. As our city grows, more and more people will make use of these services.

Government services must be available for people when they need them most. As Canberra grows, more people will need access to these front-line services. That is why our government is continuing with the biggest renewal of our public housing in Canberra's history. This means replacing 1,288 public housing units across the territory with modern homes for some of Canberra's most vulnerable people.

The government is also funding outreach services for at-risk kids and young people to ensure proper support so nobody falls through the cracks. Our government believes in supporting those in our community who need a helping hand. Renewing our public housing was an overdue project as many of the current ones are not fit for purpose. Investing in good public housing is vital for any government that cares about vulnerable people in their community.

I call on the government to continue to invest, expanding a wide variety of essential services right across Canberra—in particular, community, social, education, transport, health, and emergency services. Canberra is such a livable city partly due to the high quality services that are provided by the government. I call on government to further invest in these services to ensure they are more accessible and sustainable, particularly as our city's population continues to grow.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (11.59): Regrettably, I cannot start my speech without addressing some of the comments of the opposition leader, but I will try to keep it brief. The opposition complains about these motions, but I helpfully suggest that they should look at some of their own topics for private members' motions and MPIs—that is, when they can be even bothered to submit an MPI. Indeed the opposition leader might want to review the topics put forward by his own deputy before he considers himself to be in a position to act as a martyr on motion topics and content.

The theme we constantly hear from the opposition leader is that he can only criticise because, just like the rest of his shadow ministers, he has nothing substantive to offer: no policy, no ideas, no creativity. And they are behaving like it is something to be proud of. They have no plan for our city; just criticism.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS CHEYNE: No wonder they hate these motions so much. It is because they expose that the opposition can barely call itself an alternative government.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS CHEYNE: It speaks for itself, doesn't it? They just keep interjecting. You are just proving my point.

Members interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Ms Cheyne, resume your seat. We will have order here. Ms Cheyne.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I think that has well and truly proven my point.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order, Mr Hanson!

Mr Hanson: Knock-out speech, knock-out speech!

MS CHEYNE: Do you actually have anything substantive to offer?

Mr Coe: A point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Ms Cheyne. I call the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Mr Coe: Talking about the lack of relevance of the opposition is not included in the motion; so her accusations about relevance are a little bit rich, given she has spent the best part of—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I think Ms Cheyne is responding to issues that you have raised in the debate—

Mr Coe: Am I allowed to raise a point of order or not?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: so I do not think that there is a point of order, Mr Coe.

Mr Coe: I have not actually raised the point of order yet.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Cheyne, the question is that the motion be agreed to.

Mr Coe: Can I have a point of order or not?

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I said that there is no point of order, Mr Coe. You will resume your seat and Ms Cheyne will address the question. Thank you.

Mr Coe: Okay.

Mr Hanson: On a point of order—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, what is the point of order?

Mr Hanson: The point of order relates to standing order 42. Ms Cheyne is not addressing the chair. She has been addressing members of the opposition. That is not

in accordance with standing orders. It is very distracting for us trying to listen to her speech. If you could address that, that would be great.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, there is no point of order.

Mr Hanson: It is clearly a point of order.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I have been calling for order and there have been clear distractions from the opposition during Ms Cheyne's speech. Ms Cheyne, would you please address the chair? Thank you.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I flag that I might need to seek an extension of time to speak, given most of the last four minutes have been taken up with my waiting for the opposition to be silent when the clock was not stopped.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS CHEYNE: I think my point is well and truly underlined. We have heard that Canberra is growing, and it is growing fast. We have committed to catering for this growth. We as a government have continued to invest strategically in core social and economic services to meet the demands of our growing city. As our population grows, naturally we produce more and more waste. It becomes ever more important that we invest in proper waste management. This includes the proper disposal of garden waste.

Even though it may seem harmless, not separating garden waste from household rubbish is very harmful to both the environment and to our health. We also have the healthy waterways project encouraging people to dispose of their leaves properly so that they do not end up in our sewers, rivers and lakes.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS CHEYNE: One of the key issues that I talked about during my election campaign was green bins. It came out repeatedly in my conversations with Ginninderra residents.

Mr Wall interjecting—

MS CHEYNE: Many respondents to my community survey—

Mr Gentleman: A point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker. You have called the opposition to order a number of times. They continue to cajole from the other side. I ask that you call them to order and take some action on their interference.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Gentleman. I have called for order a number of times. I do not want to have to name someone. It is getting to that point; so please have some respect for members who are speaking. Ms Cheyne.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Again, I think that goes to the Chief Minister's point before that the opposition has no respect for private members' days or the motions that members raise in this place. Many residents responded to my

community survey. They nominated green bins as one of the services that would make a significant difference to their lives. It is still a topic that many residents continue to raise with me. I know how delighted they will be to be able to access the service in September this year.

I was very pleased yesterday to see the recommendations from the waste feasibility study that organic waste should be considered to be part of the kerbside pick-up. This is something I have been asked about regularly as well. I wholeheartedly endorse this recommendation, combined with a broader education campaign, especially when considering the amount of waste and the environmental issues that organic waste can cause if not disposed of properly. It is another way that we will be able to provide services to continue to enable a sustainable city.

Another initiative making Canberra an even greater place to live is the age-friendly suburbs program. We know that seniors have a lifetime of experience, skills and abilities to offer and plenty of capacity to improve their community. By making it easy for seniors to get around and stay involved, we are delivering benefits for our entire Canberra community.

This is a project that was initially piloted in Ainslie and Weston. As you know, Mr Assistant Speaker, it is now underway in Hughes, one of your suburbs, and Page, one of mine. I know that it is going to make a real difference to those communities. People have responded very favourably to it.

My colleagues have also talked about the nurse-led walk-in centres. As Mr Pettersson flagged, they constantly receive extremely good feedback. Since 2014 residents in my electorate have been able to access the Belconnen nurse-led walk-in centre when they have minor illnesses and injuries. I am one of those 36,000 patients every year who have made use of this service. Very soon the service will be accessible to Gungahlin and Weston Creek residents as well. These healthcare facilities will meet the rising demand for cheap, convenient and accessible health services while also reducing the pressures on the primary healthcare service.

When a city is this beautiful, vibrant and welcoming, despite the best efforts of those across the chamber, it comes as no surprise that Canberra is becoming the place to live, work and play. To meet these demands we are improving the transport network across the ACT. The new integrated public transport network will be here soon, with light rail from Gungahlin to Woden and more buses being provided more often.

The Belco bikeway is also a key part of active travel. This system will ensure that despite our rapid population growth, the ACT is kept as pollution and congestion-free as possible and caters for the active lifestyle that we enjoy while better meeting the needs of Canberrans everywhere.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the government is committed to improving—

Ms Cody: A point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Ms Cheyne, resume your seat. Ms Cody on a point of order.

Ms Cody: Mr Assistant Speaker, I believe we have anterooms if people want to have a conversation. This is getting ridiculous now. Mr Coe spoke throughout the duration of my speech and the speeches of the Chief Minister and Minister Gentleman. They are continuing to speak and interrupt Ms Cheyne while she is speaking.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Cody. Resume your seat. Please, keep it down—Mr Hanson and Mr Coe in particular. Ms Cheyne.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I am getting quite the workout. This government is committed to improving and increasing services to meet the needs of our growing city, whether it be introducing new waste disposal schemes, improving accessibility for elderly residents or providing more conveniently accessible healthcare services or transport services. I implore the opposition, instead of criticising these motions, maybe to pay some attention to them and realise how devoid of policy they are as a party.

Where are their alternatives? Instead of just criticising the amazing things that we are doing in this city, what is their alternative policy? What is it? I would be delighted to know, Mr Assistant Speaker. I will conclude there. I have done the best I can in reducing the length of my speech given the four minutes of interruptions I received from the other side. I ask, through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, that they reflect on their appalling behaviour today.

MS CODY (Murrumbidgee) (12.09), in reply: I would like to thank everyone who spoke to my motion this morning. It is a very important motion that calls on the Assembly to continue to invest in the city in which we all live and work daily. As noted in my motion, my speech and in the speeches of many of my colleagues this morning, Canberra is growing. It is growing by 7, 000 people a year. That is a lot of people for this city to continue to educate, to continue to provide healthcare services for, to continue to provide jobs for, and to continue to provide the wonderful experiences that this city offers on a daily basis.

The fact that major international companies continue to come to Canberra and to invest in the ACT is also a credit to this Barr Labor government. I spoke about a few of those in my opening speech. I have to agree with Ms Cheyne's final point. It is that those opposite have spent all morning—during this debate in particular—having private conversations. So I am very surprised that Mr Coe was able to raise any points when he rose to speak because, to be perfectly honest, I am not sure he heard anything I had to say.

As we have all noted this morning, Canberra is a growing city. Canberra needs ongoing, long-term, strategic investment in services and infrastructure to keep it moving and productive. I note that Mr Coe this morning suggested that I had not called on the government to do anything. I have called on the government to continue to invest in this wonderful city that we have here in Canberra, to continue to invest in

expanding our core community, social, health, education, emergency services and transport services to cater for our growing and thriving city for the benefit of its residents, as well as its visitors.

We heard in Mr Pettersson's speech that international air services to this town are growing and expanding. Singapore Airlines are expanding their international services. We have seen services return to Canberra. Tigerair is flying to and from Canberra. This allows other people around Australia and internationally to come and experience what Canberra has to offer.

The Chief Minister briefly touched on age-friendly cities and accessibility for residents in Ainslie, Weston, Kaleen, Monash, Page and Hughes. Of course, Weston and Hughes are in my electorate. I am glad to see that we are doing more to help the residents of those suburbs to be able to access them better by providing footpaths and better opportunities.

I love what I do. I love standing here on private members' days and being able to talk about the wonderful things this government is doing. We need to do more and we will continue to do more. We have been re-elected by the people of Canberra to provide services for this growing city. I am so proud to be able to move motions in this place that talk about the investment and the work that we are doing to provide for the residents of the ACT.

I have a couple more points I want to make. Mr Gentleman mentioned in his speech that we are providing more police and more emergency services personnel to keep this city safe and to make it one of the safest communities in Australia. I applaud the minister for his efforts on those fronts and I look forward to his continued commitment to doing those things.

Finally, I would like to thank the people of Canberra for putting their trust in this government to allow us to continue to deliver better services and better infrastructure for the people of Canberra. It is a very important job. I think we are doing it well. I call on the government to continue to invest in those things that I have already mentioned to provide for the people of the ACT.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Transport—connectivity

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (12.14): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) Canberra is a modern city of over 400 000 people;
- (b) many Canberrans rely on public transport to get home safely at night; and
- (c) low-income Canberrans are disproportionately impacted as they are the ones who work the late night hospitality and other shift work and currently cannot rely on public transport to get home safely;

- (2) further notes that:
- (a) interstate bus services arrive at the Jolimont Centre until 1.30 am;
 - (b) the last bus services on weeknights leave Civic for Belconnen at 11.45 pm, for Gungahlin at 11.00 pm, and for Woden and Tuggeranong at 10.43 pm;
 - (c) the last bus services on Sunday and public holiday nights leave Civic for Belconnen at 7.46 pm, for Gungahlin at 6.59 pm, and for Woden and Tuggeranong at 7.26 pm;
 - (d) the last train services arrive at Kingston at 10.03 pm on weekdays and 9.43 pm on weekends and public holidays; and
 - (e) interstate travellers must rely on family, friends, or on-demand transport services to get home from Civic and Kingston when bus services are not available; and
- (3) calls on the Minister for Transport and City Services to report to the Assembly by Thursday, 23 August 2018 on plans to:
- (a) extend bus services in the evenings; and
 - (b) extend bus services on Sundays and public holidays.

Many Canberrans continue to suffer the inconvenience of inadequate bus services in our city, particularly on weekends and public holidays. Canberra is a modern city but our bus timetable has not kept pace with our changing needs.

At present on Sundays and public holidays the last bus services leave Civic for Belconnen at 7.46 pm, for Gungahlin at 6.59 pm, and for Woden and Tuggeranong at 7.26 pm, while many other local services conclude by seven. This significantly limits the transport options available to Canberrans who rely on buses to get around and has a disproportionate impact on Canberrans who have no other affordable means of transport.

Late night and weekend services are particularly important for low income Canberrans, young people and our many tertiary students who are all more likely to be engaged in part-time or casual employment and shiftwork during the evening and on weekends. The reality is that many minimum wage jobs require working evening and weekend shifts; yet our bus services do not adequately run services during these times.

The current Sunday timetable is much more limited than weekday or Saturday timetables. However, it is this Sunday timetable which runs on public holidays. A large number of Canberrans travel interstate around public holidays, with many using interstate bus and train services at the Jolimont Centre and Kingston station respectively. The lack of public holiday services makes it particularly difficult for Canberrans to connect with interstate transport options.

Mobility impaired people have reported that one of the most common reasons they do not use public transport is the fact that it is not available and does not suit their needs. Many mobility impaired people use taxi services in the evening because local bus

services simply are not available. However, the high cost of taxi services also has an impact on low income people, making them unaffordable for those who need them most.

The lack of adequate transport presents barriers to participation for people who are transport disadvantaged. In some cases, this is reported as limited opportunities to engage in everyday activities in local communities. In others, it takes the form of limited opportunities to travel further afield to participate in work or recreation.

Access to affordable transportation for low income Canberrans, students, mobility impaired and the elderly fosters self-sustainability, promotes independence and permits spending on other household essentials. Thus having adequate evening and night bus services, especially on weekends, is indispensable to these Canberrans.

The lack of weekend services also has economic implications for our small businesses. It has been noted in other places where public transport has been increased that there are significant efficiency gains for businesses such as restaurants, bars, theatres and cafes, which all employ shiftworkers. Recruitment is enhanced because of the increased accessibility, a major reduction in time lost in home to work journeys and improvement in employees' overall health and wellbeing as a result of lower absenteeism. Workers benefit from safe and convenient public transport because they can get home safely after long shifts.

These businesses also rely on their customers being able to get home safely, quickly and conveniently. Customers who walk, cycle or use public transport to get to recreational activities in the city contribute significantly more trade than many realise. We want to make sure that we give local businesses every chance to prosper.

Canberra is often the butt of jokes when it comes to our nightlife. We have seen in other states such as Victoria, where there are more evening and night-time services available, more people are likely to travel into the city. As a result nightlife in those cities has flourished. If Canberra is serious about growing its night-time economy it desperately needs to provide more public transport options.

Increased public transport also has a positive impact on public safety. The absence of evening and night-time services means that, for people who wish to have a couple of drinks out with friends, plan B does not exist. Without alternative transport options, people are more likely to be tempted to risk drink-driving instead of paying for a costly taxi or Uber. In 2017 we saw the number of motorists apprehended for roadside drink-driving rise for the first time since 2013. Of course there are also those who may be somewhat closer to home who will opt to walk rather than pay for a cab or Uber. Many Canberrans have expressed concern about encountering crime and antisocial behaviour on the way home after dark. This is, of course, an additional personal safety risk, especially for young women.

Where other Australian cities have been steadily improving their after-dark public transport options, they recognise the important economic, social and cultural benefits that these services provide. Meanwhile Canberra's have been steadily declining.

Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney have all introduced bus services that run until the early hours of the morning, either all week or over the weekend.

For example, in Melbourne the night network operates on weekends, with regular services from the CBD and metro stations. On Sundays buses to outer suburbs run until 10 pm. In Sydney a number of bus routes operate 24/7. Some regular bus routes run services after midnight on weekends. In both cases we can see that the government has placed an emphasis on the importance of public transport options, especially on weekends and after dark.

The government has at times provided Nightrider services here in Canberra. During the Multicultural Festival this year we saw routes 200 and 300 depart the city every 20 minutes, with the last bus departing the interchange at approximately 2.30 am on Friday and Saturday nights. This also occurred in December 2015, 2016 and 2017. Indeed in all those years ACTION has recorded significant increases in patronage across the network. What this demonstrates is that evening bus services are in demand in Canberra and they will be used.

The fact is that no matter where you are in Canberra, when the clock strikes 7 pm on a Sunday there is no public transport. We can see, in other cities where public transport is available on Sundays, night life continues to thrive all weekend long. Here Sunday night life and businesses are hindered by the lack of public transport.

The other problem many Canberrans have raised is their inability to connect with interstate transport services. Every day, including Sundays, interstate bus services arrive at the Jolimont Centre hourly until 1.30 am. The last train service arrives at Kingston station at 10 pm. Interstate travellers must rely on family, friends and on-demand transport services to get home from Civic or Kingston when bus services are not available.

Unlike what those opposite would sometimes have us believe, not everybody lives in the inner suburbs and can therefore simply wheel their suitcases home. There have been stories of travellers visiting family and friends in Sydney and arriving here by bus on a Sunday evening ready for work the next day. One person, who had arrived at 7.30 pm on a Sunday, was told by a bus driver that there were no more buses to Woden. As a result, with no other options, he walked from Civic all the way home to Mawson and arrived home two hours later. Close to six out of every 10 people who move to the ACT are former residents of New South Wales. This means that close to six out of 10 people have the potential need for connected interstate and local transport options.

In Sydney and Melbourne, where interstate transport operates from main central stations, there are evening services as long as the interstate services operate. In Canberra many interstate travellers must plan in advance to arrive before 10.30 pm during the week or before 7.30 pm on Sundays if they wish to get home by public transport. This means either sacrificing time spent with family or friends to spend more time travelling home, having to come home early or spending unnecessary money on cab fares.

Extending bus services would allow better coordination between interstate transport options and ACTION bus services. It would also have the effect of encouraging people to use public transport to get to and from the Jolimont Centre and the Kingston station. Travellers would no longer need to worry about relying on family and friends or on-demand transport to get home at odd hours, providing accessible and flexible means of getting in and out of Canberra. If the government is serious about encouraging more Canberrans to use public transport we need extended bus services in the evenings, on Sundays and public holidays. If the government is serious about supporting our local businesses we need extended bus services to support both employees and customers in Canberra's night-time hubs such as Kingston, Braddon and Civic.

Canberra's public transport network needs to ensure that low income Canberrans, students, the elderly and those who are mobility impaired are not disadvantaged by the lack of accessible and flexible transport options. Canberra needs to keep up with other cities if we are going to be a competitive tourist destination. Extending bus services will help Canberra thrive and grow into the cosmopolitan city that we all want it to be.

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

Sitting suspended from 12.24 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Senator for the Australian Capital Territory—casual vacancy

MR COE: My question is to the Chief Minister. On 25 March 2015 in this place you proposed a motion that the Assembly choose Ms Katy Gallagher to fill a casual vacancy in the Australian Senate. In that motion you stated that Ms Gallagher was “a person who is eligible to be a senator”. Today the High Court ruled that Ms Gallagher, in taking her position as a senator following her election at the 2016 federal election, was ineligible to do so under the Australian Constitution. It follows that she also was not eligible to fill the casual vacancy in 2015. Chief Minister, what process did you follow to ensure the statement you made in your motion was accurate and, given the High Court ruling, will you now correct the record?

MR BARR: I relied upon past practice in relation to such vacancies; and, in light of the High Court's determination today, I will take advice on the second matter.

MR COE: Chief Minister, when and how were you first alerted to the fact that the statutory declaration that you tabled may be wrong?

MR BARR: That matter is not one that I have information available on at this time. I will take it on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Chief Minister, have you received any legal advice on this issue?

MR BARR: I cannot comment.

Emergency services—communications

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for emergency services. It relates to the practice of discontinuing the landline service—discontinuing, in fact, the whole operation of the landline service—in properties in the area where NBN is supplied. How is this practice going to impact on our emergency communications system in the event of widespread power outages and mobile telecommunications outages?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question. What I can say is that the ACT ESA is working across directorates to ensure that we have the appropriate and sufficient responses to emergency calls throughout the Canberra region when we have particular outages such as the one that occurred just the other week.

In regard to planning for the future, we ensure that we work with our telcos to have the opportunity for mobile towers where appropriate. We continue to work with them and the community to ensure communications across the territory.

MS LE COUTEUR: What is the current practice for contacting residents in the event of either power or mobile phone outage?

MR GENTLEMAN: I am sorry, Madam Speaker; I missed the first part of the question.

MS LE COUTEUR: What do you do at present in the event of either phone or electrical outage? How do you contact people?

MR GENTLEMAN: ESA has an SMS policy for contacting people regarding outages, particularly in regard to notifications about fires. But in regard to the technical aspects, I would have to take that on notice and come back to the member.

Light rail—stage 2

MR STEEL: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Can the minister update the Assembly on the next steps for light rail stage 2 from the city to Woden?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Steel very much for this question and his keen interest, particularly in investment, in Woden.

As promised, this government is building light rail stage 1 and is continuing to develop plans for a city-wide light rail network, starting with light rail stage 2 to Woden. Transport Canberra and City Services is currently undertaking detailed planning for the design, development and approvals for the city to Woden light rail route for our preferred route through Parkes and Barton. These activities include the completion of a precinct approach for refining the design for the diverse urban environments along the preferred alignment; lodging a referral of a proposed action

with the Department of the Environment and Energy to confirm the appropriate pathway for assessing impact on matters of national environmental significance and achieving commonwealth environmental approval; continuing to work closely with the NCA to progress a design solution that aligns with commonwealth planning requirements; and the development of a concept design for the preferred alignment.

It is clear that Canberrans support light rail stage 2 to Woden, with the *Canberra Times* reporting on 9 April that half of all Canberrans support the expansion of the city's light rail network from Civic to Woden. The UnionsACT poll of 2,044 people found that 51.5 per cent supported the second stage of the light rail project, 41 per cent were against it, and 7.5 per cent were undecided. I look forward to continuing to develop our plans for light rail to Woden.

MR STEEL: Minister, what are the benefits of the preferred route through Parkes and Barton?

MS FITZHARRIS: The preferred route was subject to quite significant consultation over a period of time. It provides a number of benefits over the other option. This includes providing the best access through the parliamentary zone to employment hubs, cultural institutions and other places of interest, including Manuka Oval.

The proposed route also allows people living in the city-to-Gungahlin corridor to access reliable, frequent public transport to work in Barton or Woden. There are also fewer technical challenges associated with the alignment than the alternative route around Parliament House or any alternative routes considered earlier in the corridor selection process.

Finally, and importantly, there was very strong support for that route during community consultation last year. Further technical assessment of the route has resulted in adjustment of the indicative bus stop locations on London Circuit to better serve the proposed West Basin precinct and New Acton, in addition to an extra stop in Barton to better serve the significant employment hubs in this area.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call the supplementary, members on my left, this is question time. If you want to have a conversation during question time, can you take yourselves to the antechamber? I am finding it hard to listen to the question and to the answer. I call Ms Cody.

MS CODY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was about to ask the same thing. Minister, what are the challenges to delivering this stage of the city-wide light rail network?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Cody for this question. I thank very much our members for Murrumbidgee for these terrific questions. Of course, any large-scale infrastructure investment such as light rail presents some challenges. But the government is focused on planning for the future growth of our city, so we are tackling these challenges head-on.

Unlike those opposite, we know it is important to meet these challenges now for the benefit of future generations. Due to the location of the route, the heritage and

national significance of the area, it will be necessary for commonwealth government approvals to be obtained, as well as commonwealth parliamentary approvals. We want to enhance the public realm and ensure light rail integrates seamlessly into a changing urban environment shaped by future development.

The alignment requires a number of new structures to be built, including new bridges potentially on Commonwealth Avenue, at Adelaide Avenue over State Circle, Hopetoun Circuit and works under Kent Street and Yarra Glen. A number of existing utilities will also need to be assessed for potential replacement or relocation to avoid conflicts with the alignment.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to the next stage of light rail is not technical at all; rather it comes in the form of Liberal Senator Zed Seselja. He is determined to block this city-building project. He failed to stop light rail when he was in the chamber. His colleagues failed to stop light rail nearly two years ago. Now he is having another crack.

Perhaps the opposition could comment and reflect on their position, confirm their position, on this significant city-shaping project for the benefit of the Canberra community. They have been silent and appear therefore to support the senator's position. I would ask them to clarify this for the Canberra community and ask whether they will back this city-shaping project for our community.

Roads—Ashley Drive

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, during the 2012 election Katy Gallagher promised to duplicate Ashley Drive in Tuggeranong. At the 2015 election the Barr government again promised to duplicate Ashley Drive.

Mr Barr: I think you'll find the election was 2016, actually.

MS LAWDER: I think you might have said it—never mind. During annual report hearings in November 2017 your directorate promised that the duplication would be completed in February 2018.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, please! Mr Wall, thank you.

Mr Hanson: And Mr Barr, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: I was about to go to Mr Barr as well. Can I ask you, Ms Lawder, to start again?

MS LAWDER: I would love to. My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services—again. During the 2012 election Katy Gallagher promised to duplicate Ashley Drive in Tuggeranong. Prior to the 2016 election the Barr government again promised to duplicate Ashley Drive. During annual report hearings in November 2017 your directorate promised that the duplication would be completed in February 2018.

In March 2018 in this place in response to a question you promised that the duplication would be finished by April 2018. We are now in May. Minister, when will this duplication of Ashley Drive finally be finished?

MS FITZHARRIS: We are pleased to be duplicating Ashley Drive, and the works are proposed to be opened to the public in the second quarter of this year. There has been recent progress, including most recently a road closure on 28 and 29 April between Erindale Drive and Isabella Drive to allow the final asphalt to be placed on this section of the road. The traffic lights at the two intersections at Statton Street and Bugden Avenue under this section of the works will be operational from this week. I am not sure if that has occurred yet. Additional road closures to complete the new road between Isabella Drive and Johnson Drive are being planned as well.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what is the reason for the delay, with completion being promised in February and now occurring in the second quarter of the year?

MS FITZHARRIS: As members will know, major infrastructure projects such as this one, which is a \$24.6 million investment in the Ashley Drive duplication, can at times experience delays. I am very confident that that work is very close to being completed, as are other major works, notably soon the Cotter Road.

Ms Lawder: A point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to relevance. I asked what the reason for the delay was. The minister has failed to address that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister has 1½ minutes.

Mr Parton: Madam Speaker—

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order?

Mr Parton: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: There was a point of order. The minister now has one minute and 19 seconds left. Do you have anything to add?

MS FITZHARRIS: If there is anything further I can add, I will take that on notice.

MR PARTON: Minister, what other infrastructure developments in your portfolios are currently running behind schedule?

MS FITZHARRIS: There are literally dozens of infrastructure projects underway in my portfolio. The one that comes most immediately to mind is Gundaroo Drive, which is causing considerable frustration. It is a very difficult project that has faced a number of significant challenges. I will take the rest of the detail on notice. I also note that we very much look forward to the opening of Cotter Road in the imminent future.

Trade unions—influence on government

MR WALL: My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, documents released under freedom of information show you had a meeting with the secretary of the

CFMEU on 22 January this year. Given the reported influence of the CFMEU in removing the previous Attorney-General, will you now give a full explanation as to the nature, purpose and outcome of that meeting?

MR RAMSAY: The meeting in January, along with my colleague Minister Stephen-Smith, was in relation to WorkSafe practices in the ACT.

MR WALL: Attorney, did you make any promises or undertakings of any sort to the secretary of the CFMEU, given the reported influence that that union had in removing your predecessor?

MR RAMSAY: No, I did not make any promises to the member in that meeting. It was an open meeting about WorkSafe practices in the ACT.

MR PARTON: Attorney, did the discussion with the secretary of the CFMEU include anything on the Tradies selling poker machines or the bid of the Canberra casino?

MR RAMSAY: No.

Trade unions—influence on government

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to the meeting that you held on 14 March with representatives of United Voice, the Health Services Union, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, UnionsACT and the Community and Public Sector Union. Minister, did any of the union representatives present at this meeting raise with you concerns about senior management of ACT Health?

MS FITZHARRIS: I certainly welcomed the opportunity to meet with a number of unions representing a significant proportion of the ACT health workforce which, as was discussed yesterday, of course, the opposition are very much behind, and I do welcome that. It was a great opportunity to talk to them about a number of issues. I do not recall specific mention of any individuals but I did discuss with them recent changes in ACT Health and discussed with them the welcome that they gave to changes that had previously been announced.

MRS DUNNE: Did any of the discussions held at this meeting on 14 March contribute to your decision to restructure the Health Directorate, which you and Mr Rattenbury announced on 23 March?

MS FITZHARRIS: No.

MISS C BURCH: Were any members of the union movement involved in the planning of the restructure?

MS FITZHARRIS: No.

ACT Health—proposed organisational changes

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, on 19 April 2018 the media reported comments by Dr Stephen Robson of the AMA regarding your planned restructure of the Health Directorate. Dr Robson said:

My concern at the moment is it's not well understood. The nurses, doctors, everyone needs to understand who they are working for.

Certainly with director general leaving suddenly and unexpectedly it engenders concern with everyone.

Minister, why have you failed to explain the proposed restructure to doctors, nurses and other stakeholders?

MS FITZHARRIS: As I indicated on a number of occasions yesterday, I attended ACT Health last week with hundreds of members of ACT Health staff present. I discussed with them a range of issues. One of the most important was indeed the separation of ACT Health. I also had a very constructive meeting last week with the Australian Medical Association and continued that discussion with them last week.

MR PARTON: Minister, why did the former director-general of Health leave suddenly and unexpectedly?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Parton for the supplementary question. As I said at the time and have subsequently said, she decided to pursue other options.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why did you make the sudden and unexpected decision to restructure the ACT Health Directorate without consulting stakeholders?

MS FITZHARRIS: I have spent significant time, since coming into the position of Minister for Health and Wellbeing, consulting a range of stakeholders on a range of matters, including the structure and governance of ACT Health. I indicated when I met with hundreds of staff last week that they would have a very good opportunity to contribute to the design of the two new organisations. There will be a very comprehensive consultation approach with staff. That is very important. I made that point very clearly to staff directly last week, with every stakeholder I have met. I made it very clear yesterday.

What I indicated to them was that I was not going to put to staff a final view on what those organisations should look like, precisely because I wanted to include them in the process of that work in the lead-up to the beginning of the two new organisations on 1 October this year.

Women—government support

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Women. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the latest government initiatives to further support women's participation and safety in the ACT?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the question. This year's theme for International Women's Day was "press for progress", which I interpret as a way that we can keep the momentum going to drive real equality in the ACT. One way that the ACT government is committing to do that is through the women's grants program. These grants have a specific focus on the prevention of violence against women and also on projects to increase women's participation in our community. The total amount available is \$180,000 to community not-for-profit organisations, who are able to apply for up to \$20,000 each. Applications are encouraged from consortiums as well, which will increase the grant entitlement for each additional organisation.

Grants rounds such as the women's grants program are an important opportunity to turn little ideas into real change on the ground. Every one of us has the responsibility to find ways to drive gender equality and provide opportunities to provide a safer and more inclusive community for all of us. The women's grants program is just one way to do that.

MS CODY: Minister, how have these grants been used in previous years?

MS BERRY: Last year there were some great projects that received funding across a wide span of organisations, cultures, issues and ideas. Last year I joined with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service to launch the Aboriginal women's safety program. Legal Aid ACT was funded to develop a suite of resources to raise awareness of the experience of older women subjected to family violence in the ACT, as well as offering practical information to women, support workers and family and friends.

The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Inc was funded to deliver the CALD women's consultation initiative for domestic and family violence. This project will examine the accessibility, effectiveness and cultural relevance of service delivery in relation to domestic and family violence and look at new ways to consult and engage with CALD communities on this important issue.

There were many other funded projects which included: increasing sexual health testing among young women in the ACT; development of an integrated service which includes legal advice, financial counselling and capacity building targeted to women experiencing severe financial stress as a result of domestic violence; and a program to enhance culturally and linguistically diverse women's safety following separation due to domestic violence.

MS ORR: Why are grants such as the women's grants important for the Canberra community, and how can the community contribute to this important work?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. Although women have achieved many things over the last century, such as the right to vote and the right to access equal pay, we continue to face barriers and challenges to fully and equally participate in our community.

In terms of violence, one in four Australian women—2.2 million women—have experienced violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15. So it remains critical that, where possible, support is available in the form of either funding or policies that can allow individuals, collectives or organisations in our community to develop and run programs to make a difference for women and girls.

Even small ideas can lead to significant and real change. I hope that the ACT women's grants can make a real difference for women in our community. I encourage members to support the program by encouraging community groups that they know to apply for the grants.

ACT Health—proposed organisational changes

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, did anyone, including the former director-general of your directorate, counsel you against splitting the Health Directorate in half?

MS FITZHARRIS: No.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, who did you consult about this decision before it was announced?

MS FITZHARRIS: A range of different people.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, will staff continue to be consulted on the restructure?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Cheyne for that question. Absolutely. As I indicated previously, that decision was taken by me precisely because it provided close to six months of consultation with staff about how they would like to be engaged in this process, and also because many staff felt like they had not been engaged in processes in ACT Health. My belief is that they welcome this. I really look forward to working with them over the coming months about these two new organisations, which I believe will improve the performance, the governance and the delivery of health services to our community.

Canberra Hospital—accreditation

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to comments made by the president of the ACT AMA, Dr Robson, on 19 April 2018 about the accreditation problems facing the Canberra Hospital. Dr Robson said:

When the governance is wonky it sends ripples through the entire organisation ... There's been a huge upheaval at ACT Health recently and a lot of balls in the air.

Their accreditation runs out in July, unless they meet that, it would be a bit of a disaster.

Minister, what contingency plans have you made in case the Canberra Hospital fails to gain accreditation?

MS FITZHARRIS: That work is progressing and there are a number of options available to the government should that not occur. I stress that there has been significant planning since the “not met” report was received. A leadership committee is being chaired by the interim director-general to make sure that every core “not met” item is being very methodically and thoroughly addressed. There is regular reporting to the interim director-general and to me. The interim director-general has also had conversations with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and the national safety and quality commission. Copies of the action plans to address the accreditation criteria have been provided to both organisations. They have provided positive feedback on all of those. It is something that is of the utmost priority for ACT Health now.

MR HANSON: Minister, what impact would a loss of accreditation of the Canberra Hospital have on its status as a teaching hospital?

MS FITZHARRIS: It is my understanding that it would have no immediate impact, but I will take the specific question on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what impact will the ongoing problems in our hospital system and accreditation in particular have on our ability to attract doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and other health workers to Canberra?

MS FITZHARRIS: That is a concern for me but, as I indicated, ACT Health continues to attract specialists, doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health staff. Indeed, earlier this year a number of interns, most notably from the ANU, were welcomed into ACT Health. It is very clear that there is a focus on meeting accreditation. But it is also the case that there is a very good story to tell about the future of ACT Health and the opportunities for health professionals right around the country to join ACT Health.

Housing—housing choices

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the consultation underway on housing choices in the ACT?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Orr for her continuing interest in good planning for the territory. The Canberra community has always shown considerable interest and involvement in the planning of our city. Housing policies have again come to the fore, with considerable interest in housing choice.

Last November, I was pleased to announce the start of the consultation on the housing choices discussion paper. The discussion paper aimed to find out more from the community about the type of housing they would like to live in. The broader community, including the industry stakeholder groups, were invited to provide suggestions for improvements to housing choice.

I want to thank everyone who got involved in the conversation. I am pleased to report that we received significant feedback from the community, with 600 surveys completed, more than 340 people engaged at community kiosks, and over 150 written submissions received. An engagement report with a full summary of the feedback received has been published on the your say website, along with all of the individual submissions.

This report will inform the second stage of community engagement, the collaboration hub, which will run from May to July this year. A number of key themes or topics have been identified, including but not limited to ageing in place and ability to downsize; housing design quality; bush capital and garden city; climate and environment; community engagement; neighbourhood amenity, character and design; the planning system in general; and the Territory Plan codes and zoning.

What we have heard so far in the process is that there is a wide range of housing types desired and needed to suit the needs of the diverse members of our community.

MS ORR: Minister, can you further explain how the government is consulting the community on the housing choices project through the collaboration hub?

MR GENTLEMAN: The next part of the housing choices consultation is the collaboration hub. Launched on Saturday, 5 May, it will explore issues such as what zoning should allow, and what provisions and principles Canberrans agree are important to deliver the housing we want and to plan for future needs. The next three months will see these 38 participants discuss ideas, opportunities and challenges and explore how our housing needs might be met in future.

In March invitations to participate in the collaboration hub were sent to approximately 15,000 randomly selected households. Of those that responded, 38 were selected by newDemocracy Foundation independently of government to represent a broad and representative cross-section of Canberrans.

The housing choices discussion paper issued in November last year was a helpful way to outline a number of topics around housing and to engage with the community. The feedback that followed from a broad range of submitters provided an excellent basis for the collaboration hub to take a deep-dive examination of housing and will identify recommendations on what the government should consider.

There is no one right answer, of course, to this problem. We have to respond to the diversity of the community and its needs now and into the future. This is a genuine opportunity to influence the range of housing choices and future development in our city.

Five in-depth hub sessions will be held over three months to immerse the participants in all aspects of housing and planning and development in the ACT. These selected participants represent a wide cross-section of the community and will bring their own perspectives and ideas. Throughout the process they will have access to a range of experts from industry and government to cover specific topics such as housing affordability and land use zoning.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how does the recently released expression of interest for demonstration housing projects support the housing choices project?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Cheyne for her interest in this topic. The next important part of the housing choices consultation is a demonstration housing project. Last month I announced a process inviting the Canberra community and industry stakeholders to submit an expression of interest to deliver best practice and innovative planning and design projects across the territory.

The ACT government is committed to the planning and delivery of housing that supports a vibrant, compact and sustainable city while also providing a wide range of housing options. The demonstration housing project is a sign of this commitment and forms one part of the government's approach to planning for the future housing needs of Canberrans and the housing choices consultation that I have outlined.

This project will provide an opportunity for architects, builders, residents and social housing providers to showcase innovative design and delivery of real-world examples that are not currently available in the ACT, including small houses, co-housing and carbon neutral buildings.

It is anticipated that the demonstration housing project will deliver built outcomes highlighting how innovative planning design and delivery can benefit Canberra's future through a more compact and vibrant city while delivering a greater choice of housing to the Canberra market.

The first stage expression of interest will assess market interest, capability and the experience of suitably qualified proponents. Proponents will have the chance to identify existing planning constraints that may need to be changed to enable the delivery of their proposal. Successful first-stage applicants will then be invited to refine their proposals further and submit more detailed design concepts during a second stage.

Light rail—stage 1 construction

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, my office has received numerous complaints from Gungahlin businesses about the level of noise in the town centre resulting from light rail construction. In fact yesterday one business owner recorded noise at over 100 decibels that lasted the entire business day. Minister, how do you expect business owners and employees to operate under these conditions when they cannot conduct a conversation, serve customers, take phone calls or conduct their daily business?

MS FITZHARRIS: I do not expect that that sort of noise level would be part of the construction, particularly during business hours. I will take specific advice on whether that was the case yesterday. It is clear that there is a lot of construction, which actually means a lot of investment in the Gungahlin town centre. I am aware it is having an impact on businesses.

I am pleased that the Gungahlin bus station has now opened. With some final work to be completed on the landscaping of that project, there were recent quite extensive discussions. There are discussions ongoing all the time between TCCS, Canberra Metro and the Gungahlin businesses, particularly at Gungahlin Village and across the road adjacent to the light rail site. There was an extended working day recently approved after significant consultation with local residents and businesses. I will take advice on exactly what was happening yesterday that apparently may have caused significantly increased noise levels.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, will you commit to the light rail project abiding by the usual noise restrictions that apply to construction projects?

MS FITZHARRIS: I can certainly commit that the light rail project is conducted within the framework of the approvals that it has. I expect that that is the case. If it is not, I will be following it up.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, is stage 1 of the light rail project running on time?

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, it is.

Schools—Weston preschool

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. In answer to a question in the Assembly last September you said that a decision on the future of Weston preschool would be determined after discussions had been concluded with the community. Since then your Labor colleague Mr Steel has written to constituents stating that Weston preschool is not closing. However, parents have informed us that Weston preschool has not taken any enrolments this year. Minister, is Weston preschool open or closed?

MS BERRY: To provide some clarity around the situation, the school has not been closed as in shut down completely. There were only a very small number of enrolments at that school, so they have been redirected to another preschool. I think that is what you are inquiring about, Ms Lee. I will double-check that that is the case. If it is different to what I am informing the Assembly of, I will correct the record.

MS LEE: Minister, if the school is not shut down, why have staff been told to remove anything of a personal nature and equipment identified for disposal?

MS BERRY: I suspect, if it is the case that I have just referred to with that school, it is not actually being used at the moment, so it is empty. I will double-check that that is the case for that school, and if the situation is different, I will let the Assembly know.

MR HANSON: Minister, could you provide advice for Weston parents on what options they now have for preschools in their area?

MS BERRY: I understand that that advice has already been provided by the directorate, but I will make sure, if it has not, that it is provided.

Casino Canberra—development proposal

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney-General, how does the government's announcement on 13 April 2018 regarding the Canberra casino relate to previous legislation on the possible redevelopment of the casino?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. At the time the Assembly passed legislation to allow the Canberra casino licensee to have electronic gaming machines, I did foreshadow that there would be more work underway to make the legislation that governs our casino even more transparent and focused on securing benefits for Canberrans.

The focus of that legislation was to promote economic development and renewal in our city whilst also delivering robust protection against the harms of problem gambling. That legislation demonstrated that this government's decisions about the casino and about the gaming industry as a whole are and will continue to be focused on what is best for our community.

The government's announcement of 13 April represents the next step in creating an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability in decisions about the Canberra casino. We will do this by introducing legislation that provides for an independent panel to evaluate and to report on decisions about licensing and about redevelopment. The government's policy will continue to be transparent and transparently focused on maximising the benefits to our whole community in our decisions about gaming.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how will the harm minimisation framework that the government requires as part of the redevelopment benefit the ACT community?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the important supplementary question. The legislation that was passed in November sets up the core framework for the casino licensee, irrespective of who holds the licence, to acquire and to operate electronic gaming machines. That can only happen if the licensee commits to redeveloping the casino precinct and meets some of the strongest harm minimisation criteria in the country for operating electronic gaming machines.

The harm minimisation measures set in place for EGMs at the casino were based on the latest research about how to prevent gambling harm. We legislated to require the casino to introduce mandatory pre-commitments. We also legislated for a \$2 per spin bet limit, which is the lowest in the country.

These new regulations will help to ensure that economic development and revitalisation in the casino precinct come forward in a way that takes the risks of gambling harm seriously. The government does not trivialise the impact of problem gambling by comparing it to chocolate addiction. Gambling-related harm has real consequences for people and for families, and we will continue to take it seriously across the community.

MR PARTON: Minister, why did the government take 17 months to give advice to Aquis after they lodged their detailed business case in June 2016?

MR RAMSAY: Noting that those matters do not fall within my portfolio, the conversations with the current casino licensee have been taking place for some time. The information requested was requested a number of years ago. We have been waiting for that ever since.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assault allegations

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, we have been informed that the investigation into the 6 May 2016 incident at Bimberi has been concluded, with the government having reached a financial settlement with staff involved. Minister, does this mean the government has accepted full responsibility for this outbreak of violence that resulted in Bimberi youth workers being sent to hospital?

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

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, have staff members agreed not to speak about this incident as part of their settlement? Is this standard procedure in such cases?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I forgot to thank Mrs Kikkert earlier for her first question. I understand that non-disclosure is a standard part of a number of agreements, but I will take the question on notice. I do not know what I can say on that.

MR WALL: Minister, has the Human Rights Commission concluded its review of this incident? If so, will the review be tabled or made public, and what conclusions did it reach?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Wall for his question. I think he is referring to the Human Rights Commission's self-instigated inquiry into a number of allegations that were raised last year. My understanding is that the commission has not completed that review. I look forward to receiving it when it is completed.

Federal government—budget

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. What is the impact of last night's commonwealth budget on the ACT?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. The short answer perhaps reflects where we are at in terms of commonwealth budgets—that is, the impact of last night's commonwealth budget on the ACT was minimal. There was not much bad news which we have become used to receiving; there was not a huge amount of good news either. But to the extent that there was some new infrastructure investment proposed for the ACT, that infrastructure investment is in two areas potentially inside the borders of the territory as it relates to the Monaro Highway and the duplication of—

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms Orr: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please. I think I can anticipate the point of order, Ms Orr.

Ms Orr: Sitting behind the Chief Minister, it is very hard to hear his response when those opposite are making considerable comment.

MADAM SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. Please, Mr Hanson, let the Chief Minister answer in peace.

MR BARR: An unlikely scenario, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, the commonwealth budget identifies two pieces of road infrastructure physically located inside the territory for some further business case development—namely, the Monaro Highway and Pialligo Avenue for duplication, with a capped commonwealth commitment and with the bulk of that funding coming outside the forward estimates period—heading into the mid-2020s.

The ACT government will certainly consider those projects that the commonwealth has suggested. They are not new; they have been suggested previously and we have put them forward. We are happy to undertake some further work on those projects with a view to bringing the actual construction into the forward estimates period. That would be a useful thing so that the works would be completed within the next four years rather than some time beyond the forward estimates period, in the mid-2020s. There is also a positive in that the commonwealth has established a new major projects fund that will enable business cases to be developed. (*Time expired.*)

MR PETTERSSON: What does the commonwealth budget mean for ACT jobs?

MR BARR: It would not be a Liberal budget if there were not some job cuts in Canberra, and we see our national institutions are again in the firing line with job losses, particularly at the National Library and the National Archives, which is of course disappointing.

One area where it would appear there could be bipartisan agreement is the disappointment at the continuation of the decentralisation agenda that appears to be driven principally by the National Party, seeking to move jobs and agencies out of the ACT. That process has continued. It was ironic, I thought, that fully one-quarter of the ACT's total infrastructure allocation, around \$25 million, was set aside to get the APVMA out of McDonald's, Armidale, and into some new building. They have lost most of their staff. It has been an abject failure as a policy direction. It should be abandoned, and I think those opposite actually agree with me on this point.

MR STEEL: Chief Minister, how will the forthcoming ACT budget differ in approach from the commonwealth's?

MR BARR: The ACT budget will invest in Canberra. Madam Speaker, I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Transport—connectivity

Debate resumed.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.18): I welcome this opportunity to speak once again about our plans for more buses more often, and I thank Miss Burch for raising this issue today.

As members will be aware, in progressing the government's delivery of an integrated transport network, an initial phase of community engagement for the redesign of the public transport network was undertaken late last year. The first phase of consultation provided Transport Canberra officials with an opportunity to speak directly to the community about the new integrated public transport network for Canberra, including the introduction of more rapid bus routes as we move towards a seven-day network.

A total of 678 people filled in the online survey, with 82 per cent of respondents saying they currently use public transport. Canberrans told us that their top three priorities for encouraging more people to use public transport were faster trips and more direct routes, more frequent and reliable services, and increased services at both peak and off-peak times such as during the weekend, during the evening and on weekends.

The first phase of consultation told us that as we move away from a nine to five lifestyle, people want more services at all times of the day and week. This is what the government will be delivering. We can achieve this by reducing duplication across existing routes, freeing up more buses and providing more frequent services in line with the community's expectations. Integrating light rail with our bus network will also free up buses and provide more direct services to key destinations.

The consultation last year found that 62 per cent of respondents said they would use public transport more often if services were more frequent, while 54 per cent said they would like it if journeys were faster. More than 60 per cent said they were keen to see more flexible bus services for residents with limited mobility, and 50 per cent said they were interested in demand-responsive services for residents who cannot access regular bus services. People said they want to get information about planning their transport journey increasingly through digital displays and mobile apps.

Canberra's population is projected to increase significantly over the next 20 years, from just over 400,000 today to nearly half a million. This next network update will really be the first step in ensuring our public transport system meets the needs of our growing city. I am confident that the more we provide frequent direct bus services across Canberra, the more people will choose to leave their car at home and catch public transport. We have certainly seen this with the introduction of network 17 last year, with significant uptake, particularly of the new green and black rapid services.

The new network is now being developed, and we have committed to a second phase of community engagement prior to the implementation of this network. While the final network will be subject to further feedback from our community, Canberrans should expect to see a new bus network that reflects the input they gave to the government last year and that delivers on these priorities.

The government is working hard to design a network with faster and more direct bus routes as well as a network with more frequent and reliable services at all times of the day and week, a truly seven-day-a-week network. The government knows that with fewer people now on a strict nine to five schedule, there is a greater need to provide more services to help people travel in the evenings and at weekends. That is why we are designing a public transport network that will move Canberrans on all days, seven days a week.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that our new integrated network will provide access and equity for people to get home safely at night seven days a week. We are looking to expand the hours of operation, with the initial light rail timetable running until 11.30 pm Monday to Thursday, 1 am on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, and 11.30 pm on Sunday night. Likewise the new Transport Canberra bus network rapidis will run to midnight Monday to Saturday, and we are looking to run them to 10.30 pm on Sunday nights.

The Labor government are expanding our bus network based on what people told us they wanted: more buses, more often. We are delivering on these commitments to provide more rapid bus services for Canberrans, and record patronage growth shows that they are voting with their feet. We are on track to exceed this year's patronage target of 18.4 million customer boardings, and my focus is on ensuring our new network encourages even more Canberrans to use public transport. I look forward to providing a further update to the Assembly about the government's plans for our public transport network in August.

I move the following amendment to the motion:

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

"(1) notes that:

- (a) Canberra is a modern city of over 400 000 people; and
- (b) the ACT Government is focused on getting more Canberrans to use public transport and ensuring access and equity so that people can move around our city and get home safely at night; and
- (c) the new integrated light rail and bus network will assist in overcoming challenges for people with low income and those who work in late-night hospitality and other shift work seeking to travel home using public transport. This will assist in addressing disadvantage, especially for low income Canberrans, who may be disproportionately impacted;

(2) further notes that:

- (a) interstate bus services arrive at the Jolimont Centre until 1.30 am;

- (b) the last bus services on weeknights leave Civic for Belconnen at 11.45 pm, for Gungahlin at 11.00 pm, and for Woden and Tuggeranong at 10.43 pm;
 - (c) the last bus services on Sunday and public holiday nights leave Civic for Belconnen at 7.46 pm, for Gungahlin at 6.59 pm, and for Woden and Tuggeranong at 7.26 pm;
 - (d) the last train services arrive at Kingston at 10.03 pm on weekdays and 9.43 pm on weekends and public holidays;
 - (e) interstate travellers often rely on family, friends, or on-demand transport services if bus services are not available;
 - (f) the ACT Government has committed to delivering a better seven-day bus network as part of building an integrated public transport network for Canberra, including introducing light rail;
 - (g) this new integrated public transport network will add five new Rapid routes to the four current Rapids, which will operate seven days a week and continue into the late evening; and
 - (h) the ACT Government undertook phase one of public consultation in 2017 on the new bus network and will soon commence phase two of this extensive public consultation, which will help shape Canberra's future public transport network; and
- (3) calls on the Minister for Transport and City Services to report to the Assembly by Thursday, 23 August 2018 on:
- (a) plans to extend bus services in the evenings;
 - (b) plans to extend bus services on Sundays and public holidays; and
 - (c) plans to get more Canberrans using public transport.”.

I particularly note the clarification in this amendment about the times that existing bus services are available, which was not correct in the original motion that was circulated. Also, I look forward to reporting in August on how the government is proposing to extend bus services in the evenings, on Sundays and on public holidays, and on our plans to encourage more Canberrans to use public transport.

I particularly note efforts the government is already making to increase access to public transport, particularly for low income Canberrans. I note that free off-peak travel for those on concession cards has been an incredibly popular and well-used service from the ACT government. I am very pleased to have reports from people throughout our community about how much they are valuing this ready access to free public transport right across our territory in off-peak times, including noting that that includes in the evenings, which was the subject of the original motion.

We also look forward to the new network providing more frequent services more often and providing more rapid routes. I particularly note that this will increase access for low income Canberrans and those potentially facing disadvantage in our community. It is a core principle of a Labor government and one that we are keen to pursue through a more integrated, more frequent public transport network.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (3.25): As a frequent bus user, I very much thank Miss Burch for her frequent bus motions, and I hope she can keep up the good work. It is great that this Assembly is looking at our public transport system, in particular our bus system, because that is what serves most people—or does not serve most people—in Canberra. I very much welcome the Liberals' support for public transport, which has not always been quite as enthusiastic in the past.

People who were paying attention to my speech this morning on Ms Cody's motion—and I am sure you all were—would have heard me say that I intended to support Miss Burch's motion. I certainly support the intention behind the motion 100—200—per cent. Since then there has been a lot of toing and froing with a government amendment, which I saw just before lunchtime today. As Minister Fitzharris noted, she had one version and then has come back with another.

In the spirit of doing what I hope will happen, unanimous agreement of this Assembly that we need to do better with late-night buses, I am hopeful that all of this will go through. Basically, it adds more information that the minister has to report on, which has to be a plus. And the bit at the beginning, new paragraphs 1(b) and 1(c), are not particularly different from Miss Burch's except that they are longer, more complicated and harder to understand—which could be counted as a difference, I guess. I am really not quite sure why we need them, but this became a sticking point in terms of negotiating to try to get something that looked as though it was going to be acceptable, so this is where the Greens thought we would land.

I do wish to make it very clear for the record that, of course, I agree with Miss Burch's statement: low income Canberrans are disproportionately impacted by public transport. If you are someone who washes dishes in a restaurant, you are probably not going to be able to afford to take a taxi home. If the restaurant closes at 11 o'clock, you will still be there at 12 o'clock. The patrons might be able to get home on the bus, or they might not, but you certainly will not be getting home on the bus. On the other hand if you are a senior medical specialist doing a night shift somewhere, you are going to be able to afford a taxi or an Uber home or whatever.

Public transport is significant. After-hours, non-commuter, non-peak-hour public transport is significantly more used by disadvantaged Canberrans and low income Canberrans. We need to put their needs front and centre in those hours. We have not paid enough attention to them.

It is not just for people's working life. A couple of months ago, I spoke to a friend of mine who recounted how he had an invitation to a dinner on Sunday night which he would have really liked to go to. He is a socially isolated person because he is not in a position to afford his own car; he uses public transport. This was on a Sunday night. He had to refuse the invitation to dinner because there was no possible way he could get home and there was no possible way he could afford a taxi. This is the sort of thing that happens every day in Canberra to low income, disadvantaged people.

While it is low income people in particular, it is not only low income people. There are a significant number of people who do not drive cars, often because of their age.

They are either too young, and we have laws about that, or they are too old, and we even have laws about that. Over age 75 you will have a medical test every year. If you are in the age group between those, even if you have the means to have your own private car, which you might not, you might have a disability. You might think that you do not feel that you are that safe a driver and you wish to not be part of the road toll or not cause anyone else to be part of the road toll. All of these are quite good reasons. Being a greenie, I could also talk about the climate change and environmental impact reasons why people might quite reasonably think they do not want to be driving a private car with one person in it but would like to take public transport and would like to see our city and our town centre not filled with parking for private cars.

I should possibly get off my hobbyhorse and stop raving so much about the big advantages of public transport, but let me just say that there are big advantages, and there are big advantages for people outside peak hours. They are really important.

I will start with the Sunday and public holiday services in terms of the evening services. When I grew up in Canberra, nothing much happened in Canberra on Sunday nights and there were not many people who used buses on Sunday nights. The services stopped at 5 pm, and that was fairly boring but possibly reflective of Canberra. As Miss Burch explained in her speech, Canberra has changed. There are things that you can do on Sunday nights apart from stay home and have a Sunday roast. Now the 5 pm to 7 pm time on Sunday is quite busy on some routes. In fact the whole weekend is quite busy on some routes. I catch the 300 bus; it is great to have the numbering the same at weekends as during the week. I catch that bus quite frequently on the weekend, and I usually find that it is at least half full.

Operating hours clearly need to be extended. In my electorate on Sundays, the last blue rapid departs the city to Woden at 7.26 pm, but there are no connecting suburban services. The last 983 departs Woden for Lyons, Wright, Coombs, Duffy and Holder at 6.30 pm and the last 921 departs Woden for Chifley, Pearce and Torrens at 5.28 pm. The last 962 departs Woden for Kambah at 6.20 and the last 934 departs Woden for Canberra Hospital, Garran and Hughes at 6.13. These are significantly earlier than the last blue rapid at 7.26, which is not really good enough.

One of the interesting pieces of information—I do not think we called for it in this motion but it would be very interesting to get it—is how much Uber is being used for the last mile or the last kilometre of service. When Uber started in Canberra, my understanding is that one of the things that they said to government was, “We expect the vast majority of our trips will be quite short. People will get the bus to their local town centre, particularly after hours on a Sunday evening or a Saturday night—they will do the main trip on the bus to Tuggeranong, Belconnen or wherever—and then just get the Uber for the last few kilometres home.” It would be really interesting to find out if, in fact, that is the sort of traffic that Uber has. We should have asked for it, but I only just realised it.

Miss Burch talked about this a bit. She talked about the Nightrider service and the service that we have at the Multicultural Festival. It is obvious that there is the need for this service, at the very least, over a quite long period of time, to get out to at least the town centres for longer periods.

For the weekday bus services, with the possible exception of Friday night, there is probably not as much work to be done. The major thing is that the bus services finish a lot later than on weekends. For example, the blue rapid departs the city for Woden at 10.43 and the 182 departs the city direct for Molonglo and Weston at 9.36. The 3 departs Woden for Canberra Hospital, Garran and Hughes at 9.39 pm. But for most suburbs the issue is not so much when the last bus is during the week but how early in the evening the services drop down to being hourly. Hourly gets really tough if you miss that hourly bus.

While I see the point of Miss Burch's motion, I do not think it is really possible that we are going to run a full ACTION but network until 1.30 am for a small number of Murray's bus passengers—unfortunately, I do not think that is really going to be viable—but we do not have to stop as early as we do at present, particularly on Saturday and Sunday.

Another thing I would like to highlight is the plight of people trying to catch the train service. We have a small train service to Canberra. Unfortunately, it is not what you might call a super reliable service. While the train service is mentioned, it often does not even turn up at the times it is said it will. There is a train service that arrives during the day; again it does not turn up at the time it is meant to. It would be great if we could have one bus which commits to meeting the train so that if you are catching the train from New South Wales, and I think there are only two that arrive during the day or during a 24-hour period, you could say, "Yes, there will be a bus that will at least take me in to Civic, where, if the timing is right, I might be able to catch part of the ACTION bus network." It is unfortunate that train users cannot rely on any sort of bus interconnection.

While I could rabbit on about this forever, I am very pleased to support the motion. I do have a slightly different emphasis from Miss Burch on this. She talked a lot about the night-time economy. That is really important, and it would be great to support that, but we also need to support normal day-to-day social access for people who do not own cars and/or do not drive cars around our city.

This morning in the debate on Ms Cody's motion, I spoke at some length about the need to look after the lower income, poorer and more vulnerable members of our community. Our public transport system is one of the real ways in which we can do that.

Minister Fitzharris talked about the free off-peak bus service. That has been a great addition for concession cardholders. It would be great if the government could look at the impacts of extending the free off-peak service to all bus users and try and get people out of their cars and into buses, and get them to leave their cars at home. It would be better for the environment and better for their health if they were doing a bit more walking.

I will be supporting Minister Fitzharris's amendment. I am very pleased that this Assembly is supporting more buses, and in particular more late-night buses.

There is a petition on the subject of Sunday buses on the Assembly's website. I urge all of you who are supporting the thrust of this motion to tell your friends and family about the petition. Please sign it so that when it is finally presented it can be a large petition.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.38): It is an excellent suggestion from Ms Le Couteur regarding the information about bus services and Uber services. It is something that unfortunately we do not have a lot of information on, unlike the information that we are seeking about the bus services. People write to us as members in this place all the time about bus services and the type of information they would like to see. Weekends and weeknights are the subject of the most common complaints we hear. For example, in my electorate, someone I know who lives in Bonython writes to me frequently about the difficulties he faces in getting a bus home from Raiders matches at the stadium at Bruce. It takes him a reasonably short time to get to the match but a very long time to get home. In another instance one of my constituents talks about a bus that goes straight past his suburb. If it was able to go into his suburb, he would be able to get to where he works much more quickly.

We often talk in this place about evidence-based policy—having the best possible evidence available to us to enable us to make decisions, and information on things like the take-up of Uber is an example of that. Having said that, I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Insert new paragraph (3)(a):

“(a) information on take-up of Uber in Canberra;”.

I am in agreement—and I always find it difficult when I come to this point—with Ms Le Couteur's suggestion that we seek information about the take-up of Uber. My amendment seeks to get that information included in the amendment circulated by Ms Fitzharris, and for the government to provide whatever information it can. I understand it may be somewhat of a challenge, but this is the type of information about Uber that would feed in to the decisions she makes as the minister for transport about bus services. The government must have some form of information about Uber services and their take-up in Canberra, and I urge members here to support my amendment.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (3.42): I thank Miss Candice Burch for bringing this important motion to the Assembly. It is a great start towards securing better public transport for Canberra. As a member for Yerrabi I know constituents in my electorate are crying out for more public transport options in our suburbs. Already this year we have seen the introduction of a new bus timetable that has, in effect, punished the people of Gungahlin. The approach was to train people to be light rail ready, and in doing so they have actually made the daily commute for many of my constituents longer and more disconnected. I am here to call out that false promise that light rail will provide a one-stop solution for all Canberrans, despite the grand promises made by this government.

Even for those on the north side of town, if you are not located near a light rail stop the lack of late-night and Sunday services, the lack of adequate parking and the lack of integration across the network mean that you will be still left waiting on the side of the road in the dark. Worse still, some in my electorate, like the residents in the suburb of Moncrieff, are still waiting for a bus service, despite having the largest population increase in the ACT during 2016-17. I cannot believe this government continues to ignore the obvious needs of the residents it is meant to serve.

Extending bus services on weekdays after 10 pm would enable many of the shiftworkers in my electorate to use public transport to get from and to work. Not everyone in this town works nine to five, Monday to Friday, but it seems this government does not appreciate the demands of modern life. It would also open up opportunities for Canberrans to undertake shopping after work, perhaps complete extra studies, meet up with friends for a meal or, one of my favourite pursuits, participate in sport and recreation. It is unacceptable that Canberrans who do not own a vehicle or perhaps those experiencing short-term difficulties accessing a car cannot enjoy these types of activities after certain hours.

In the same way, it is out of date that public transport in Canberra ceases to operate at 7 pm on a Sunday. I know there was a time in Australia when Sunday was a day of rest, when shops did not open, restaurants did not trade and businesses shut down. But that stopped in the 1970s, and Canberrans cannot afford this luxury. Many mums and dads juggle working hours around child care, school pick-ups and normal family chaos. The average person in the street is working hard and trying to get ahead, perhaps taking on an extra job to make ends meet. A struggling student is juggling part-time work and studying whilst also trying to enjoy some kind of social life. This is how we live now. It is fast and it is furious, and the current bus timetable just does not reflect that reality.

As Miss Burch has highlighted, we want the public transport to be available to all Canberrans. We hear the stories from our constituents, from residents who are frustrated with the current system and fed up at not being listened to by this government. We want you to take into consideration the needs of all Canberrans. It is time Canberra caught up with other capital cities and provided an integrated, efficient and modern public transport system. As a member for Yerrabi I wholeheartedly support this motion and commend Miss Burch for advocating for the needs of all Canberrans.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.46): Regarding Ms Lawder's amendment, I am not entirely sure what she is seeking from this. I am happy to support it but note that there is very limited information given the regulation regarding Uber, which the ACT was the first in the world to implement. I note it is not normally the practice of the Assembly to seek specific information from private sector entities. I think that would be something the Canberra Liberals would be the first to defend. So with the caveat that we can provide what information is available to the government currently on the operation of Uber, I am happy to support the amendment.

I will make a couple of comments on Mr Milligan's contribution. He asked for an integrated, efficient and modern transport network. That is exactly the type of network that was the subject of considerable public debate in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, and subsequent to that. I am curious to note that Mr Milligan is still running the same line about light rail in our shared electorate of Yerrabi, which clearly was not a view the majority of members of Yerrabi supported just 18 months ago. The support from the Yerrabi electorate for light rail was fairly overwhelming. I also note that we are not ignoring Moncrieff. That is something I am working on as we speak, and I look forward very much to continuing to deliver an integrated, efficient and modern public transport network to all Canberrans.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (3.48): I stand today to speak in support of the motion brought forward by Miss Burch. Canberra is indeed a modern city, but too often it does not feel like one. In a city of only 400,000 people, too many parts of everyday life just do not seem to work right. This definitely includes our transport network. On more than one occasion, I have stood in this place and spoken at some length about the inconveniences faced by schoolchildren, seniors, shiftworkers and the mobility impaired as they seek to get from point A to point B in a timely manner in this city of ours.

Complaints about public transport options are common from my constituents, and the impossibility of travelling in the evenings and on the weekends is frequently brought up as well. Recently a senior resident of Page who regularly takes the train to and from Sydney shared with me his frustrations that when his train arrives in Kingston, there is no bus to meet it. This problem confronts all interstate commuters who arrive on the evening train seven days a week. Clearly, we do not need a bus to stop by the train station repeatedly throughout the day, but it seems it is such a small but very important thing to make sure that those who are already reliant on public transport for interstate travel can expect service once they arrive in Canberra. This cannot be hard; there are only three train arrivals each day.

Similarly, many residents in west Belconnen have repeatedly spoken to me about their frustrations in not having access to a rapid bus on the weekends. I note that a new rapid route, R2, has been proposed to come online later this year that will fix this problem by operating seven days a week at both peak and off-peak times. I assure this government that the residents of west Belconnen are expecting this promise to be fulfilled.

In conclusion, our public transport network needs to be better in serving Canberra residents, especially those who rely upon it for their daily travel. For this reason I support Miss Burch's motion.

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (3.50): I thank all members today for their contributions. While I appreciate Ms Le Couteur's support for my original motion, once again we have seen a lot of toing and froing today on various amendments that have been circulated by the minister at very short notice. Again they add very little value to the original intent of the motion. The minister spoke a lot about moving to a seven-day network, and while that will certainly go a long way to address the lack of

Sunday services, she largely ignored the significant concerns I raised about the lack of public holiday services. I look forward to hearing back from the minister on what the government is doing to make future improvements around public holiday services.

I also note that the minister's amendment talks about phase 2 of the government's public consultation on the new network. This phase 2 consultation was initially announced to be in early 2018. However, we are still yet to see it commence, and it is not clear when that is going to begin. I know we have had a lot of feedback from residents wondering when that is going to take place.

I thank Ms Lawder for her amendment. To clarify the point the minister raised, we are certainly not after private company data around Uber but an understanding through consultation and other data the government has of how people are using it in terms of the first mile and last mile as part of the public transport options that are available.

We talk a lot about the environmental benefits of public transport and providing access for those who do not otherwise have access to private options. Ms Le Couteur talked about that a lot today as well. But we also often ignore the many economic benefits of public transport, whether we are talking about small businesses or the productivity benefits that come from reduced congestion, and that is really important to acknowledge as well. I thank all members for their contributions today and urge them to support the motion.

Ms Lawder's amendment to **Ms Fitzharris's** proposed amendment agreed to.

Ms Fitzharris's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Animals—dangerous dogs

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.53): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) in 2016 the number of people presenting to ACT public hospital emergency wards as a result of dog attack was 155 meaning that, in effect, a serious dog attack occurred every two days;
- (b) the former Member of the Legislative Assembly, the late Mr Steve Dospot MLA, organised a concerted campaign in 2017 to make the Government act on serious deficiencies in ACT laws and administration relating to the management of dangerous dogs;
- (c) on 25 October 2017 a Watson woman, Ms Tania Klemke, was killed in her house by a dog that on at least two previous occasions in 2017 had previously come to the serious attention of police and Domestic Animal Services (DAS);
- (d) in October 2017 Minister Fitzharris announced that staffing of the DAS would double;

- (e) on 23 November 2017 three dogs entered the private property of Ms Colless of Banks and killed her pet cat;
 - (f) on 22 March 2018 Minister Fitzharris stated that the Government was “in the process of increasing the number of Domestic Animal Services rangers”;
 - (g) on 29 March 2018 with the case of the attack on Ms Colless’s cat still unresolved, I wrote to Minister Fitzharris concerning the lengthy delay in resolving the case, correspondence that has still not been answered; and
 - (h) on about 20 April 2018 DAS wrote in an email to a member of the public who complained about a dog issue that DAS was “understaffed”; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to provide the Assembly with a report on the staff configuration engaged in the Licensing and Compliance Branch (branch or equivalent) of Transport Canberra and City Services including the DAS, City Ranger and Licensing Sections (section or equivalent) in:
- (a) each of the past three financial years to 30 June 2017, broken down by:
 - (i) staff levels for each section;
 - (ii) the classification levels of these positions in each section; and
 - (iii) the status of these positions including permanently occupied; and occupied by short term or contract person in each section;
 - (b) the period 1 July 2017 to 30 April 2018, broken down by:
 - (i) staff levels in each section;
 - (ii) the classification levels of these positions in each section; and
 - (iii) the status of these positions including permanently occupied, occupied by short term or contract person in each section; and
 - (c) the process of currently being engaged in the period 1 May 2018 to 30 June 2018, broken down by:
 - (i) staff levels in each section;
 - (ii) the classification levels of these positions in each section; and
 - (iii) the status of these positions including permanently occupied, occupied by short term or contract person in each section.

I am quite happy to repeat the fact that the Labor-Greens government have for years been reluctant to address the serious and growing issue of dangerous dogs in Canberra. They have seriously underestimated the impact that uncontrolled and dangerous dogs have on our community. Last year they were dragged kicking and screaming by my colleague the late Mr Doszpot to make even minor changes to dangerous dog legislation and make commitments to properly resource patrols and investigations. Now the government have had to deal with the tragic results of their disregard for this issue.

It is now 2018 and almost every day we on this side of the chamber hear of more tragic stories caused by uncontrolled and dangerous dogs. And we continue to hear about maladministration by the government in managing the issue. Last year Minister

Fitzharris failed Canberrans by not taking decisive action on uncontrolled and dangerous dogs and she continues to fail Canberrans on this issue.

The motion today calls on the government pretty modestly to provide the information on something they said they would do. I do not expect there to be any objection to the motion today. But I will come back to that later. First, let me recap why we on this side of the chamber took up the case of dangerous and uncontrolled dogs.

The government's own dog attack figures are telling: 85 dog attack investigations in 2012-13, 93 dog attack investigations in 2013-14, 245 dog attack investigations in 2014-15 and 360 dog attack investigations in 2015-16—an increase over three years of about 400 percent.

In the face of this dramatic escalation of the dangerous dog situation in Canberra, early last year Mr Doszpot and the Canberra Liberals took action. After a period of genuine public consultation Mr Doszpot, in March last year in the Assembly, said:

From figures given to me by the government, a person presents to hospital emergency departments in Canberra because of dog attack every three days and this rate is increasing and it is unacceptable.

Later in the year the government confirmed what Mr Doszpot had said. The problem increased to 389 attack investigations in 2016-17 and the issuing of 14 dangerous dog licences—an increase of over 4½ times or 450 per cent in only four years in dog attack investigations. Mr Doszpot went on to warn in the Assembly:

The government has obviously lost control on this issue and something needs to be done before more innocent pets are injured or killed or a human tragedy occurs from dog attack.

These words have come back to haunt us. Since we took on this issue of uncontrolled and dangerous dogs, dozens of innocent pets have been savaged, mauled and killed by roaming dogs. Sometimes the attacks occur in the owner's own home. The animal suffering, let alone the human suffering, is immense. Heartbreakingly, within months of Steve's warning, a human tragedy did occur in Canberra from a dog attack.

In a motion in the Assembly on 29 March last year Mr Doszpot called on the government to:

(1) allocate more resources to investigate serious attacks by dogs ...

In answer to that call Minister Fitzharris changed the motion to read "consider allocating more resources". The minister also said:

I am pleased to advise that in the past 12 months there has been a renewed focus of Domestic Animal Services staff on customer service and communication, especially the importance of keeping victims of dog attacks informed on the progress and outcomes of investigations.

We needed more staff; we needed more commitment from staff. Later, in a ministerial statement on the management of dogs, the minister referred to the resolution of the Assembly in March 2017 to consider allocating more resources to investigate attacks by dogs. She still did not strongly commit to it at that point.

After a tragic death due to a dog attack in October, Minister Fitzharris said on radio:

I've spoken to the directorate and we will get more rangers.

She said in a media release that as previously announced there would be a doubling of the number of animal rangers and that they would introduce new roles into domestic animal services. She also said that the government was doubling the number of rangers, providing additional resources for DAS and an additional eight rangers were being recruited. Unfortunately, as recently as 20 April this year—20 April 2018, just a few weeks ago—a DAS employee wrote in an email to a member of the public who had complained about a dog issue, saying, “We are understaffed.” That was said about three weeks ago: “We are understaffed.” We continue to get reports of lack of response times from DAS. And now we see that the staff themselves are complaining about being understaffed. They are under enormous pressure.

Let me take you through one very sad case. On 23 November last year three dogs entered the private property of Ms Robyn Colless in Banks and killed her pet cat. Ms Colless said:

As her owner, not only am I mourning the loss of my beloved companion but I am also dealing with the traumatic experience of being the one that found her in the gruesome state she was left. Finding her in the state that three dogs left her after the attack has been one of the most painful and distressing experiences of my life. Since this event I have found it hard to leave my house without imagining the dogs returning to my property.

One can only imagine the trauma experienced by Ms Colless. We all find it difficult when we lose one of our beloved pets. Imagine the additional trauma of finding your beloved pet mauled on your own property, in a terrible state. I will not go into the terrible details. Ms Colless deserved to have a quick resolution of this matter so that she could move on. But this was not the case.

She repeatedly contacted DAS asking for the results of the investigation into the attack on her cat on her property. In frustration Ms Colless wrote to the minister on 20 March this year, a few weeks ago. In her letter to the minister, Ms Colless said:

This incident occurred nearly 4 months ago, and since then I have made contact with your investigator at least 3 times. With each call I have been given many excuses as to the delay of this investigation including, we are short staffed, we are recruiting, this has been passed to an investigator and the investigator who has that case is on leave ...

This incident has been so traumatic for me, that I have had hypnotherapy in an attempt to dull the memory of my poor pet's torn and tortured body, and I am still on medication to try and help me sleep at night and yet still no action by your investigating officers!

Ms Colless also contacted my office and I wrote to the minister on 29 March asking about urgent finalisation of the investigation and why there had been such a delay in responding to Ms Colless.

It would come as no surprise to anyone on this side of the chamber that, after our motion referring to Ms Colless appeared on the notice paper, yesterday at 4 pm Ms Colless was called by an employee of DAS. Ms Colless tells me this is the first time DAS has initiated a call. She was told that two of the stray dogs that had entered her property and killed her cat had been put down. The DAS member could not tell her when that had happened or what else would happen but that the owners would “probably be fined”. The DAS member could not say why she had not been informed earlier. As of close of business yesterday, 8 May, over five months after the attack, there had been no letter to Ms Colless or to me from the minister. Ms Colless was told on the phone by DAS yesterday, when asked about the letter, “We could probably manage that.”

I am reminded of these comments by the minister in this Assembly on 29 March last year in response to Mr Doszpot:

I am pleased to advise that in the past 12 months there has been a renewed focus of Domestic Animal Services staff on customer service and communication, especially the importance of keeping victims of dog attacks informed on the progress and outcomes of investigations.

It has been over a year since that assurance in this place to Mr Doszpot, and it was five months after the attack on this poor women’s cat that this victim was informed of the progress of the investigation, despite the minister’s assurances that there was a renewed focus on customer service and communication, especially the importance of keeping victims informed.

It is important that none of what I have said should be taken as a criticism of the hardworking staff of DAS. In fact we regularly get very positive reports about their compassion, their professionalism and their empathy for victims. It is a tough job. These hardworking public servants have to deal with gruesome and distressing scenes. They have to console grieving pet owners. They have to deal with their own emotions when animals have to be put down. They have to deal with the owners of those pets being put down. They will also be grieving. It is not a job many of us would seek out or be happy to do. This is hard. It is a tough job.

My concerns here are not anti dog. I am a dog lover and a dog owner. I know most dog owners love their pets and are responsible, and I would suggest that there are probably no bad dogs, just a small number of thoughtless and perhaps irresponsible dog owners.

The point of this motion is that we believe that, despite many platitudinous speeches the minister and the government have made, they still have not taken the matter of dangerous dogs seriously. We see there are lengthy delays in addressing dog attack issues. We see that victims of dog attacks will wait ridiculously long times for

information from DAS. We hear the minister commit to additional resources but we hear from DAS themselves that they are understaffed and under-resourced.

The “calls upon” of this motion are really quite simple. It calls upon the minister to tell us what she said she would do and says she has already done. It asks her to provide the cold, hard facts of what she said she would do and what she says she has done.

Given the community’s and our legitimate concerns about the real commitment of this minister and this government to properly support domestic animal services in their tough job, we simply ask for the Assembly to be provided with this information about properly resourcing DAS, for the benefit of our entire community, who do not want to see these tragic events continue to happen without resolution. I urge you to support this simple and straightforward request for information that I have put to the Assembly today.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (4.07): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing forward this motion. It is an opportunity to talk again about the important work that domestic animal services does in our community and the importance of pet owners acting responsibly in our community with their animals. Certainly, it is the case that the management of dogs and prevention of dog attacks have been, and remain, of interest and concern to me, to the government and to our community.

I can assure the Assembly and the community that over the past 18 months, the ACT government has prioritised attention and taken a very proactive approach to identifying and implementing changes to policies and procedures in relation to the management of domestic animals, including dogs. As I have said many times, this government is committed to best practice in how we manage pets in our community. That includes raising our expectations for responsible pet ownership. As part of a best practice approach, it is important to continuously review and improve our laws around dogs and make changes where they are needed.

I note the broad support in this Assembly last year for changes to dangerous dog laws, which are, in a significant way, a legacy of the advocacy of the late Steve Doszpot. But, as noted during that debate, and many others prior to it, laws alone are not the solution to preventing dog attacks. The government is taking a holistic approach to this issue.

For example, we have developed and finalised the animal welfare and management strategy, a cornerstone of our proactive approach to ensuring best practice in animal management and welfare, provided additional funding to the domestic animal services for upgrades to facilities and equipment and for additional staff, and made fundamental improvements to our compliance systems and processes to bring an unprecedented level of rigour to the investigation and decision-making process undertaken in relation to dog attack incidents.

TCCS has rolled out PinForce, an app-based tool on mobile electronic devices, to enable efficient and effective compliance activities by DAS rangers. TCCS has implemented a public education campaign around responsible pet ownership, and commissioned an independent expert to review 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.

Last year the government announced additional positions for domestic animal services to further enable them to effectively administer and implement the law. This demonstrated our commitment to this issue. This strengthening of the capacity will enable DAS to take a proactive approach to ensuring that all dog owners behave in a responsible way, and those that do not are held accountable for a failure to manage their dog appropriately.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that recruitment for the additional domestic animal services positions has been completed, and new staff are on board. The field of applicants was especially strong. It is notable that the successful candidates included a high proportion of women. Gender diversity within DAS is now fifty-fifty, which is very pleasing.

The team now consists of 10 field-focused rangers, along with additional office and pound staff who are supported by four investigation rangers. While the government has delivered on the commitment to increase the number of rangers, more importantly the real benefit is that the capacity of DAS has been increased to respond to the full range of incidents that occur in our city.

The mix of staff allows field rangers to focus squarely on responding to dog incidents, including harassment, complaints and attacks. As well it gives them the ability to take a proactive approach to engaging with and educating the community about responsible pet ownership. Where an attack is of a more serious nature or recidivism is identified, the attending field ranger refers the case to the dedicated investigations team for further action and follow-up.

The government's focus on improving dog management and educating the community about responsible pet ownership is proving successful. But this is a long-term strategic approach and, while we have many runs on the board, it will take time to achieve the ultimate goal. Training of new staff has commenced, with further specialised training planning to commence in June. Due to the specialised role of DAS rangers, achieving full proficiency in their new roles will take time and experience.

The ACT wishes to be a world leader in animal welfare and management. We have the necessary arrangements in place through updated contemporary legislation, extra staffing resources, and comprehensive and rigorous governance processes. We are in the process of building the capacity and capability of the DAS team.

The challenge now is to continue to engage the community to ensure all pet owners are aware of and compliant with their obligations to be a responsible pet owner. In addition DAS has a clear and unambiguous approach to how it allocates its resources.

The top priority is responding to reported dog attacks and dog-related incidents that have the potential to cause harm.

This focus means that lower priority or less serious concerns may not be able to be addressed immediately. This is not a reflection of resourcing or staff capability. Rather, it is an indication that the government is taking its responsibility seriously by ensuring that the highest risk activities are managed appropriately.

I can assure members that DAS is acutely aware of the need for timely and accurate communication with the community, particularly in relation to complaints and requests for service. In the vast majority of cases, members of our community understand that it may take some time to address lower priority issues. In these cases people are comfortable with that, provided that they are kept informed. This customer focus is a key component of the ongoing training being provided to DAS staff, and a central part of a positive and engaged workplace culture.

In relation to the incident that Ms Lawder has outlined, it is certainly the case that there was a complex investigation behind this. I do not want to go into details in the chamber, to protect the identity of all those involved. It is often the case that there are quite complex investigations behind each of those. It is correct that the attacking dogs in Ms Colless's situation have both been euthanised. I also note that this attack happened prior to the new legislation coming into force. The new legislation, since coming into force, has enabled DAS to have more effective mechanisms to investigate dog attacks.

In closing, I consider that DAS is currently operating in a sound and well-managed way, and has adequate resources to fulfil its functions. I am confident that, in the coming months and years, DAS will continue to make solid progress towards making the ACT a leader in animal welfare and management, and ensuring Canberra remains a livable and pet-friendly city. I certainly am able to provide further information, as Ms Lawder has requested. I have circulated an amendment to the original motion, and I now move that amendment:

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

"(1) notes that:

- (a) the management of dogs and prevention of dog attacks is of interest and concern to the ACT Government and the community;
 - (b) the Government takes the regulation of dogs, particularly dangerous dogs, very seriously with heavy penalties available where people do not follow the rules;
 - (c) following a concerted campaign from the late Steve Dospot MLA, on 29 November 2017, amendments to strengthen the Domestic Animals Act 2000 (the Act) were passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly;
 - (d) the amendments focus on responsible dog ownership and public safety, whilst also considering animal welfare outcomes and recognising the benefits that owning a dog can bring to individuals and the community;
- and

- (e) further to these amendments, on 25 October 2017, the ACT Government announced additional resources for Domestic Animal Services to enable them to effectively administer and implement these new laws. This included the doubling of the number Domestic Animal Service Rangers; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to provide the Assembly with a report on the staff configuration engaged in Domestic Animal Services in the following timeframes:
 - (a) prior to October 2017, broken down by:
 - (i) staff levels;
 - (ii) the classification levels of these positions; and
 - (iii) the status of these positions including permanently occupied, occupied by short term or contract person; and
 - (b) as at 9 May, broken down by:
 - (i) staff levels in each section;
 - (ii) the classification levels of these positions in each section; and
 - (iii) the status of these positions including permanently occupied, occupied by short term or contract person in each section.”.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (4.14): I support Minister Fitzharris’s amendment to Ms Lawder’s motion, which I think will better deliver the intention and spirit of Ms Lawder’s motion. I thank Ms Lawder for the motion and her continued passion for animal welfare in this territory. Ms Lawder’s work in progressing the late Steve Doszpot’s campaign on dangerous dogs is admirable, and I look forward to working with her on future animal welfare issues where she will no doubt take them on with as much passion as she has this one.

The “calls on” in this motion look awfully like a question on notice. If the opposition is struggling for ideas for their many private members’ motions, the ACT Greens would be more than happy to take a few of them off their hands. Now on to the motion itself: the ACT Greens firmly believe in protecting our community and animals, and we recognise the government’s role is in helping people navigate the inherently unpredictable and chaotic relationships between people and planet. Part of that is providing frameworks to protect vulnerable people from animal attacks, but the flipside of that is protecting animals from people encroaching on their space and recognising when an animal is reacting instinctively to threats.

So much of the narrative around dangerous dogs is about how dogs are inherently dangerous and punitive action needs to take place against both the dogs and their owners to make a change. This completely misses the point that dogs are fundamentally dangerous but so are humans, and doubly so for both species when threatened. We are the peak predators.

I appreciate Ms Lawder is following up with the government on the implementation of their commitment to increase staffing levels in domestic animal services due to the debate on last year’s dangerous dog legislation. I actually asked a question on notice

to this effect in January after the *Canberra Times* reported that domestic animal services rangers would be operating in pairs from that point onwards. I will just put a big plug in: the Legislative Assembly's portal has been talked about at some length over a period of time and I hope we have it soon so we can easily see answers to questions on notice. Ms Lawder would then have had the benefit of being able to see the answer to what I think is a quite relevant question.

The answer to my question noted there were currently eight rangers in DAS, with another eight being recruited at the time. The *Canberra Times* report on pairs came as quite a shock to me given that the purpose of increasing staffing levels in DAS was to improve operational capacity. The answer further noted that the requirement to operate in pairs had been in place for two years for safety reasons since, as Ms Lawder points out, dangerous dogs are dangerous and unpredictable by their very nature. This means the additional eight staff, in effect, doubles the capacity of DAS to respond to front-line animal welfare issues. It is amazing the sorts of useful information you sometimes can get out of a simple, friendly question on notice.

I note as well that Minister Fitzharris has kindly answered in her speech the "calls on" in her own amendment, which is possibly the fastest turnaround on a motion I have ever seen. Now that Ms Lawder's questions have, I hope, been answered and the Assembly has taken on board Mr Doszpot's campaign to reform dangerous dogs legislation, hopefully we can now turn our minds to animal welfare issues in the territory.

I apologise if I have not heard all of the answers because, sitting here, I often find it really hard to hear what people are saying. As per standing orders, members direct their statements to the chair, who is on the other side of the chamber from here. So I apologise if I have missed something.

Hopefully, the Canberra Liberals will join my call for the ACT government to have a clear policy to allow pets on buses, which will create a tangible betterment of animal welfare by allowing people to take their animals to the vet, to the park and to visit their friends when they might not otherwise have been able to if they did not have a car. This might possibly be one of our next motions in the continuing saga of improving the bus service in the ACT.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.19): I will repeat what I finished with last time: this motion has a call that is quite simple and quite modest, and I see no reason to simplify the call for information as in the amendment circulated by Ms Fitzharris. Given the community's legitimate concerns over the real commitment of this minister and the Labor-Greens government to properly support domestic animal services and to support action on dangerous dogs, we have simply asked to be provided with information concerning resourcing of DAS. We have made this call because the Labor-Greens government has for years been reluctant to take strong steps on this matter.

I will mention a couple of points raised in the comments made by the minister and Ms Le Couteur. We asked for information. It might be detailed information, but realistically, there is no particular format in which motions have to appear. Scrutiny of

government decisions and government information is a legitimate, expected, important and crucial role in any Westminster parliament. We call on the government all the time to provide information. Questioning that approach and implying that the information called for must be simplified is hypocritical at best and perhaps petulant as well.

We continue to be told that DAS is understaffed, including by DAS employees themselves. We have been told that people take months to get responses to letters. We have been told it has taken a long time for the government to take action on resourcing in DAS. In fact the minister herself mentioned the need to go through the recruitment and the training and that it will take time. Of course it will, and that is why it should have been done back in March last year when Mr Doszpot first called for it, instead of being watered down by the minister to “consider” providing more resources, thus adding extra time to that entire process—the process that the minister today said will take time. Imagine if she had started that process back in March last year, as called for in the original motion. Wouldn’t that be the thing?

Once again I find myself lectured to by members on the other side about what is the real intent of my motion. I am sorry, but surely I am best placed to understand the intent of my motion. I think Ms Le Couteur referred to the intent and spirit, in fact, of my motion. Perhaps that was an attempt at a little dig at me. I had this during the last sitting from Mr Gentleman, who told me that his amendment better reflected my intent. What that actually shows is a patronising attitude—patronising, condescending and snobbish. For those opposite, many of whom probably do not own a dictionary, “patronising” means to treat with apparent kindness which betrays a feeling of superiority. Thank you so much for telling me that your amendments better reflect the intent and spirit of my motion. I feel so much better for having you tell me what I really mean.

Let me go back to the unfortunate death of a woman as a result of an attack by a dog. This was part of the original motion. It had to be part of the motion; the government has made it so. This minister has consistently refused to commit to extra resources for DAS to manage uncontrolled and dangerous dogs. Eventually action by the minister was triggered only by the death of a woman from a dog attack.

I remind the minister that in a motion to the Assembly on 29 March 2017 Mr Doszpot called on the government to allocate more resources to investigate serious attacks by dogs. In her response Minister Fitzharris changed the motion to read “consider allocating more resources”. On 21 September, in a ministerial statement on the management of dogs, the minister still did not commit to more resources. Sadly, that commitment to more resources was only triggered by the death of a woman in Watson later that year.

I do not wish to be lectured to by Ms Le Couteur—I hope she can hear me, even though I am addressing the Speaker—on our action on the issue of dangerous dogs. Mr Doszpot’s bill last year proposing stricter action and penalties on dog management included that, in the event that a dog causes serious injury or death to a person or death of a domestic animal, the registrar must seize the dog and must hold it until the completion of investigations, must make an investigation into the incident, must

destroy the dog subject to strict exceptions or in exceptional circumstances declare the dog dangerous, and must impose control orders on the owner of the dog. In justifying her position in voting against Mr Doszpot's bill Ms Le Couteur said:

What is going to be the real-world impact on a family whose dog escapes their yard and attacks someone? What happens to them if they are suddenly hit with a \$20,000 or \$40,000 fine? Are they going to lose their home? What is the actual impact?

Well, if you have not worked out for yourself what the actual impact, the real-world impact, of supporting Mr Doszpot's bill in 2017 would have been, I can tell you: in March 2017 a dog seized by DAS officers in Watson would likely have been put down. In August 2017 a dog seized by DAS officers in Watson if not previously put down in March would likely have been put down. If Mr Doszpot's original bill had been supported, perhaps the tragic events in Watson of October 2017 would not have occurred. That is the real-world impact of not dealing with dangerous dogs.

Many dangerous dogs might have already been destroyed, many innocent pets, such as Ms Colless's cat, might still be alive and many owners would not have been traumatised as they have been. Instead, since we have taken on the issue of uncontrolled and dangerous dogs, the government play politics with it because they do not want to admit that the opposition might be right. Their inaction has seen dozens and dozens of innocent pets savaged, mauled and killed by roaming dogs. It has seen unmeasurable suffering and grief by owners across the city who have lost their pets or seen them terribly injured.

I remind people in this chamber that there are real-world impacts of the things that you say and do in this chamber beyond politics, and you would do well to remember that. They affect the lives of Canberrans. I call on the Assembly to support my motion and reject Ms Fitzharris's amendment, in order to provide the information that is requested. There is nothing wrong with that "calls for" motion, and the patronising watering down to say it better reflects the intent and spirit of my motion is revolting, reprehensible and absolutely repulsive. I call on you to reject the amendment.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Noes 10

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mr Barr | Ms Orr | Miss C Burch | Mr Milligan |
| Ms J Burch | Mr Pettersson | Mr Coe | Mr Parton |
| Ms Cheyne | Mr Ramsay | Mrs Dunne | Mr Wall |
| Ms Cody | Mr Rattenbury | Mr Hanson | |
| Ms Fitzharris | Mr Steel | Mrs Kikkert | |
| Mr Gentleman | Ms Stephen-Smith | Ms Lawder | |
| Ms Le Couteur | | Ms Lee | |

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Energy—efficiency

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.34): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) climate change is a challenge we must respond to through moving to renewable energy while improving energy efficiency of our built environment;
- (b) the transition to a sustainable future is beneficial to everyone in our community but must also be accessible to everyone in our community; and
- (c) the ACT Government is already undertaking a range of initiatives that improve the sustainability of our community and also assist more vulnerable people within our community, including:
 - (i) achieving higher energy efficiency for public housing dwellings through the Public Housing Renewal Program;
 - (ii) funding the Low Income Home Energy Efficiency Program which supports 1 000 households per year through draught proofing, in-house education and projects such as the Curtain Retrofit Project and appliance replacement programs;
 - (iii) a pilot program in 2017 which gave 200 public housing tenants access to more efficient heating and cooling systems under the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme;
 - (iv) supporting the current trial of a 400-home “virtual power plant” in the ACT and investigating opportunities to create a larger virtual power plant in the future;
 - (v) the Solar for Low Income Program which supports vulnerable households to install rooftop solar panels through a subsidy and interest free loan. In 2017-18 over 200 households will receive solar panels and an average household receiving solar will reduce energy costs by up to \$900 per annum; and
 - (vi) Actsmart Home Energy Advice Service workshops which provide tailored support for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) continue to support everyone in our community particularly the most vulnerable Canberrans by improving energy efficiency in lower income and public housing; and
- (b) explore further measures which could improve the sustainability of our city and enhance the wellbeing of our community.

This motion calls on the ACT government to continue to improve the sustainability of our city by supporting everyone in our community to reduce their energy consumption. In particular, though, this motion asks that we make sure that as we transition to a clean energy future we include everyone, and not just those who are best able to afford it. In short, this means we must make sure the most vulnerable Canberrans, such as lower income households, are included in our efforts.

I spoke at length on the dangers of climate change last sitting period when I moved a motion on virtual power plants. It is important that we as a government continue to take action to address global warming and continue to talk about why its remediation is such a priority. The last five years have been the hottest on record. The 2016-17 Australian summer broke 205 climate records, and the 2017 winter broke 260 heat and low rainfall records. Once considered an ever-enduring heat sink that could help regulate the human impacts on climate, our oceans, we now realise, are suffering from unprecedented high sea surface temperatures. With the data we are collecting, we are beginning to learn more about how it all fits together: how, despite Australia's relative size, being assessed as having the highest level of climate pollution per person can and does impact on the global climate; and how Australia increasing its greenhouse gas emissions for the third consecutive year in 2016-17 needs addressing through meaningful reform and strong leadership.

I spoke last sitting period about the remarkable weather pattern that took place globally earlier this year. The UK experienced freak snowfalls and temperatures about seven degrees lower than the historical average while the Arctic Circle experienced unseasonably warm weather at 10 to 20 degrees above average. This resulted from warm air entering the Arctic displacing the freezing air that usually sits above the North Pole. This was due to huge thunderstorms in the Pacific a month earlier, which in turn came about because of well above average temperatures warming the surface of the Pacific Ocean. The thunderstorms also resulted in Cyclone Gita, which caused flooding on New Zealand's South Island in February, capping off a remarkable chain of events.

The decisions we make—as individuals, as communities, as cities, states and territories and as a country—feed into this chain of events and influence the climate both here and abroad. We can no longer hide behind the fact that we only contribute 1.24 per cent of the world's greenhouse gases. Set against the fact that Australia only makes up 0.32 per cent of the global population, this should ring alarm bells for us all.

We know better than this. We are every day learning more and more about the interrelatedness of the global climate and the role each and every one of us plays in the system. That is not some ideological premise; rather, it is the findings arising out of scientific research.

We are seeing the impacts of global climate change here in the ACT, with changes to weather patterns becoming more and more apparent. The changing climate means more extreme weather, with higher highs and lower lows. And, given the ACT is in one of the most divergent climate zones in Australia, reaching highs of 35 degrees Celsius plus and lows in the minuses, we will have a significant task to cool and heat

our buildings in order to maintain a reasonable level of comfort during these highs and lows.

There is a lot we can do to improve the energy performance of our buildings to assist with meeting this demand. But one of the barriers levelled at climate action and renewables is the cost incurred in their take-up, particularly for those who can least afford it. This motion calls on the ACT government to support everyone in the community, particularly our most vulnerable, by improving energy efficiency in lower income households and public housing stock. We have already made inroads into this through the energy efficiency improvement schemes, by replacing inefficient heating systems. The pilot was a partnership between ActewAGL and the ACT government to help low income households reduce their energy consumption. In six months, this program has already exceeded its target of 200, helping 211 public housing tenants to replace their old, inefficient heaters with electric reverse-cycle air conditioners. The change helps households reduce their energy bills in winter and improve their comfort in summer.

The energy efficiency improvement scheme also requires electricity retailers to provide energy saving equipment to households and businesses, including targeted assistance to prioritised low income households. Under this program, over 1.1 million energy efficiency items have been installed in over 70,000 ACT households. This includes 17,800 priority low income households. To ensure low income households benefit from the scheme, retailers are required to deliver to priority households a certain proportion of energy savings. It is estimated that by 2020 the program will save ACT households \$3.20 a week on average.

Since starting on 1 January 2013, the energy efficiency improvement scheme has provided draught proofing, replaced inefficient ducted gas systems, replaced inefficient water heaters and replaced inefficient fridges, to name but a few initiatives delivered under the scheme.

The ACT government has aimed at providing additional access to solar power generation through a trial on a virtual power plant. The trial links more than 400 Canberra households to a solar battery system as part of Evoenergy's demand management program. Early reports suggest households in the trial have reduced their power bills to just \$1 a day. The benefit of creating a virtual power plant is that hundreds of household batteries work together to provide a stable, cheap and reliable power source to households that are part of the system.

In addition, the solar for low income households program offers subsidies of up to 60 per cent to eligible participants, as well as a three-year interest-free loan to pay off the difference. This program will again act to reduce power bills for low income households by helping to install a solar power system and reducing reliance on the grid for energy.

The Public Housing Renewal Taskforce has been another example of the ACT government investing in energy efficiency improvements for our most vulnerable. The Minister for Housing and Suburban Development will probably talk

about how we have replaced the 1,288 inefficient dwellings with modern energy efficient homes, so for now I will just note it.

When I sit down, it will no doubt cue the broken record that is the soundtrack to the Canberra Liberals as they complain that we are once again highlighting the positive policies the ACT government is pursuing to address climate change. However, it is important to note that this motion calls on the ACT government to continue to do more in this space. That is why it is necessary to discuss what we have already been doing.

Low income households pay the highest proportion of their incomes on energy bills, so the ACT government's investment in improving energy efficiency for these households is essential to improving their cost of living. The ACT government has already taken steps to assist not just the most vulnerable but all households to reduce their energy consumption. The return on this to the Canberra community is lower electricity bills and a healthier environment. This motion calls on the ACT government to continue down this path and, in doing so, create a more sustainable Canberra for current and future generations.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (4.42): It seems that this motion is almost a carbon copy of what was moved by Ms Orr in the last sitting. The Canberra Liberals' position remains consistent with the views that we had in April. Energy sustainability, of course, is absolutely vital, and we have to make sure that our city is doing all it can to ensure that we have sustainable energy supplies. But we also have to always weigh this up with affordability and whether people can actually pay the bills that they are receiving.

We have seen the cost of living rise to unprecedented levels over the past few years. Utility prices are very much a part of that equation. Whilst housing and other components do play a significant role, electricity prices take out a huge part of many people's budget. We have seen a 60 per cent increase in electricity prices since 2008. Attempts to lessen the burden of these high prices on Canberra households are clearly not working. Whilst we may be able to say that we are getting considerable power from sustainable sources, we also have to be mindful of the impact that it is having on Canberra households, especially those that cannot afford the ever-increasing cost of living in the city.

Ms Orr makes a point in her motion about how a transition to a sustainable future must be accessible to everyone in our community. This is, of course, very important. But we cannot forget that when we talk about things in the framework of just a cup of coffee a day or just a few dollars here or there, they do very much add up and they have a disproportionate effect on people on a lower income.

An obvious example is the cost associated with the government's large-scale feed-in tariff program. Mr Rattenbury confirmed in an answer to a question on notice that the full feed-in tariff cost of \$240 million will be wholly passed on to ACT electricity consumers, driving up the price of power in the ACT even further. Again, whilst it is all very well to look at this in the macro, and that is what we need to do, we also need to make sure that we are having a good look at the household impact.

I note that Ms Orr's motion asks this Assembly to support the trial of a virtual power plant program and investigate opportunities to create a larger program in the future. Surely it is common sense to wait for the outcomes of this trial before investigating opportunities for a larger program. That is why you do the trial in the first place. We must be careful that we do not, in effect, pre-empt the results of that trial. We have to be objective about that trial. If a trial is genuinely informative, we will analyse the results with objectivity rather than with a bias. It is common sense to wait for the outcome of a trial before investigating implementation of a larger scale program in the future. It seems that the government has already decided on the outcome of this program and that the virtual power plant is really just a soft opening for a larger program in the future.

I very much believe that, whilst the government has put a huge amount of work into sustainable energy sources, not enough work has gone into the impact on struggling families, in particular families struggling with power bills. The government has already scaled back various concession programs, especially with regard to rates and other fees and changes. We have to be very careful that we do not further burden families.

We do not object to what has been proposed by Ms Orr. However, we have to make sure that families with low incomes are front and centre in our consideration of these policies.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.47): I welcome Ms Orr putting this motion on the agenda today. I take this opportunity to discuss some of the matters raised in that motion. I am pleased to speak in support of the points that she raises and add some information to that which has already been brought forward, both in the motion and Ms Orr's speech.

Canberra is a young city which continues to grow. This places increasing pressure on government to facilitate the growth and infrastructure, create economic opportunities and continue to provide the quality of life that earns Canberra this reputation as the most livable city in Australia.

Climate change is placing an increasing pressure on all sectors of our society. There is a call from our community to ensure not that social, environmental and economic outcomes compete with each other but rather that government take action to support all three. This is known as the triple bottom line approach. That is the discussion we are having as part of this motion.

The effects of climate change are being felt locally, and more so by the vulnerable in our community. It is expected that by 2030, just over 10 years away, here in the ACT we will have at least an increased number and severity of fire danger days and nearly double the number of days over 35 degrees Celsius. Not only does extreme heat cause great discomfort to us all but also heat stress can be deadly, especially for those already vulnerable.

Negative health is one of the worst impacts of extreme heat, but its impact filters through into the local community in many ways. Increasingly we are seeing sporting events cancelled or postponed due to heat and bushfire risk. Public infrastructure is damaged by heat. For example, road surfaces are damaged, buses are more likely to break down and trees are more likely to die. Energy infrastructure is under pressure from the increased energy use in heatwaves, primarily from people turning on their air conditioners on these extremely hot days.

And of course climate change is costly—costly to governments and costly to households and individuals. One thing that is very clear is that, even though it costs money to mitigate climate change and to adapt to climate change, it is cheaper to do that than not address climate change at all. This has been well established in many economic reports. I think Professor Nicholas Stern was the first to distil this in the 1990s. It has continued to be well understood by people who study these things. Rampant climate change will cost governments and individuals billions of dollars and it is a recipe for economic as well as environmental disaster.

This is one of the terrible ironies in the approach of our federal coalition government, which claims to care about the cost of living and about struggling families. But the federal government is simply letting those families down. By failing to address climate change, by continuing to pursue highly polluting fossil fuels projects, by failing to acknowledge the importance of transitioning to renewables and a zero carbon future, and by implementing policies that will actually delay or stymie the transition, such as the national energy guarantee, the federal coalition is condemning this country to a future of economic stress and higher costs. The people who are already struggling the most and are already the most vulnerable will be hit the hardest under these scenarios.

The federal government's approach to energy, climate change and cost of living is full of ironies. It would be funny if it were not so tragic. The grid instability and blackouts that have occurred in recent years have largely been caused by failing coal plants. Coal-fired electricity generators have a tendency to fail when the weather becomes too hot. The irony is that the weather is getting hotter and hotter, largely due to the emissions spewed out of coal plants. The plants are now failing in these heatwaves, putting extended pressure on the electricity grid, helping to spike the wholesale costs of electricity. Then, of course, all of these costs are passed through to consumers.

Members may recall we spoke recently about the national energy guarantee in the Assembly. I outlined the significant detrimental cost impact it could have on ACT residents. As I said at the time, these are issues I am taking up at the national level with my energy minister counterparts. I hope we can reach a situation where these serious concerns are resolved.

Currently in the ACT we are on our way to 100 per cent renewable electricity, as has been touched on in the discussion already today. This has been achieved through our large-scale feed-in tariff scheme resulting in the construction of various new renewable energy projects in the ACT and around the country.

I would like to touch on some of the points that Mr Coe made. The cost of achieving 100 per cent renewables is expected to peak at less than \$4.90 per week per household in 2020. The most recent estimates are lower than the government originally anticipated for this scheme. I am pleased about that. This is a decline over time as the wholesale market price has risen. At the same time, participants in the ACT's energy efficiency improvement scheme save on average \$5 per week. For those households participating in that program, that is a net gain—a small but nonetheless net gain; certainly not an imposition.

Mr Coe did speak of the fact that power prices have increased significantly since 2009. This is absolutely true. We have all seen it. We have seen the very significant energy price rises. It is worth reflecting on what has driven those. Reports from the ICRC, the ACT's independent price setting authority, are very clear that prices in recent years have been driven by two things: those two things have been what is colloquially referred to as the “gold plating of the grid”, overinvestment; and having to invest heavily in the grid to cope with peak demands, which is driven by those really hot days in Australia.

Again, it comes back to the ironies here. The cost of electricity has been driven up by that, and it has been driven up by a spike in wholesale electricity prices. Particularly last year, when we saw an 18 per cent increase in electricity prices in the ACT from the ICRC, that was sheeted home to those two causes predominantly. The big increase last year was driven by the closure of the Hazelwood coal-fired power station. That was done because its French owners simply decided it was too expensive to upgrade. And they just got out. There was no orderly transition here. There was no strategic decision about when to close Hazelwood. It was a travesty the way that Hazelwood closed down. It had a terrible impact on the local community, whose jobs were just dropped like that, and it had a terrible impact on the national energy market in terms of no clear transition plan.

But as more renewables are coming into the grid and replacing the lost capacity from Hazelwood we are seeing those wholesale energy prices come down. We will start to see that flow through in energy price decisions over the next couple of years. It is important to reflect on what has driven this. Mr Coe is right: it is significant increases that have really put pressure on households. But it is actually the renewables in the grid that are starting to help bring those prices back down.

One of the features of the large-scale feed-in tariff auctions has been the 20-year price contracts and the contract for difference process. That will certainly continue to protect ACT consumers into the future. Increased energy use precipitated by climate change, combined with high and, at least for the next few years, increasing energy prices, has prompted a call from the community to assist in making houses more energy efficient and more livable.

As Ms Orr highlights in her motion, the ACT government is undertaking initiatives that support all Canberrans to think and to live sustainably. From the energy we use to the products we throw away, we have various programs that encourage us to be more sustainable; programs to help us manage and improve accessibility to efficient,

renewable and sustainable energy. Importantly, these programs include initiatives to help save costs for individuals and households.

I will touch just briefly on a few of the programs. I know Ms Orr mentioned a few of them. The ACT government's Actsmart programs support households, schools and businesses to become more environmentally sustainable. The services offered through Actsmart household programs provide households with practical advice and incentives to save money through lower utility bills while maintaining the comfort levels in their home.

In addition, there is further support provided to the more vulnerable householders through the Actsmart low income programs. These low income programs completed their first installation of a rooftop solar PV system in December 2017, with a hundred systems installed since then. The savings to householders are expected to be up to \$900 per year. Incorporating solar energy into households provides several benefits, the most notable being decreased utility expenditure and associated greenhouse gas emission reduction, and increased penetration of renewable energy into the electricity grid.

While there has been a large uptake of residential solar within the ACT, low income households do need support with the purchase and installation of equipment to take advantage of this technology because of that issue of up-front cost. The program provides a subsidy of up to 60 per cent to install rooftop solar, removing the barriers for low income households to benefit from solar energy, enhancing social equity and the capacity to respond to increasing energy prices.

The program supports a limited number of householders, with a full subsidy for an installation, focusing on those in greatest need. This can include those on life support using essential medical equipment or those in greatest financial distress. The government is working with ACAT to identify those in greatest need and those identified through the hardship programs of energy retailers in the territory.

The solar for low income program will install over 450 rooftop systems over the four years of the program. The services and support available through the Actsmart low income home energy efficiency program include individual in-house energy assessment, education, draught proofing and referral to a range of programs. For example, householders can be referred to receive thermally efficient curtains through the curtain program. Curtain materials and rods provided through government funding are customised and installed by St Vincent de Paul volunteers to reduce heat loss through windows and improve privacy, security and comfort.

Due to their low income, some householders are having to use inefficient fridges or freezers. This adds to their ever-increasing utility bills. During their energy assessment households may be referred to receive a more energy-efficient fridge or freezer. Better refrigeration means householders can reduce their energy bills, save money and also potentially reduce food spoilage, which is obviously a benefit as well.

Households are further supported by a referral to the no interest loan scheme, which can provide a subsidy funded by the ACT government for split systems, fridges,

freezers or washing machines. This loan helps householders to have a choice about purchasing a more energy-efficient appliance, which will further benefit them through a decrease in the running costs of the appliance long-term.

The Actsmart home and energy advice team and St Vincent de Paul have been working closely with members of the culturally and linguistically diverse groups in our community, providing tailored information on improving the energy efficiency of their homes and understanding energy bills. Culturally appropriate information is being provided through workshops. These have been extremely popular, providing information to over 600 householders just this financial year.

Many of us take these things for granted, but for the most vulnerable in our community these basic bits of information and the provision of curtains or good appliances are not a given. By providing these services and programs we are working towards future proofing these vulnerable members of the community against energy price increases and helping them to be more adaptable to climate change.

Ms Orr spoke about the EEIS, and she gave some of the numbers. I think it has been a very successful program. The program is currently being reviewed because it is legislated until 2020. I look forward to providing the details of that to members when that review is available. With energy prices on the rise, it is worth reflecting the impact this scheme has had. It has installed over 1.2 million energy saving items, saving households and small businesses \$240 million off their energy bills, which is a staggering achievement for a small jurisdiction like the ACT.

I think it is worth reflecting on the virtual power plant. I do not have a lot of time left. The key point—and it goes to observations Mr Coe made; I want to assure the Assembly—is that this came about because the government created an enabling environment which has encouraged innovation. This is being done through the private sector. ActewAGL and our friends at Reposit have essentially partnered up.

In terms of Mr Coe's observations about whether it should be expanded or not, the reality is that it will expand because people in the community are taking it up through this private sector initiative, which has been enabled by the work of the ACT government in bringing renewable energy to Canberra, in rolling out the large-scale battery program. We put those things in place. That is enabling others to innovate off the back of the work that the ACT government has put in place.

I will close by underlining the fact that the ACT government has demonstrated it is possible to get great environmental outcomes through our 100 per cent renewable energy program. We can do it—in a way not only that minimises the costs but also that protects those in our community who need support—by putting in place parallel and supportive programs both to deliver energy efficiency and to work with those who perhaps are not as literate when it comes to energy policy so that they can manage their own households and overcome some of the financial barriers they might face to becoming more energy efficient and reducing their bills. I am pleased to support Ms Orr's motion today.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (5.02): I rise today to speak in support of Ms Orr's motion regarding energy efficiency improvements in the ACT to improve the sustainable of our city. The ACT government is focused on improving energy efficiency in the ACT, particularly for more vulnerable and low income households, to ensure that all Canberran citizens are supported to make their homes more efficient. This is part of our approach to make sure that the ACT is taking responsible steps to manage climate change and to sustain our environment.

Improving energy efficiency is part of the ACT's climate strategy for net zero emissions under the Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living Improvement) Act 2012. Reducing energy consumption reduces greenhouse gas emissions, which in turn supports the ACT government's target of reducing greenhouse emissions by 40 per cent by 2020, based on 1990 levels. Energy efficiency is part of the responsible steps we are taking to manage the reduction in our emissions here to support the environment and also households to reduce their energy costs.

The ACT government's major program in the area, as has been mentioned, is the energy efficiency improvement scheme. The scheme is a compulsory scheme for electrical retailers in the ACT. It is established under the energy efficiency improvement act. The scheme operates by placing a requirement on all electricity retailers to achieve energy savings in households and small to medium businesses.

The scheme reduces the energy use and costs of household and businesses, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and encourages the efficient use of energy. The scheme has already provided energy and cost savings to over 17,000 lower income priority households. It has installed over one million energy efficient items, with savings of around \$5 a week for households.

Indeed, it has improved over 70,000 households and businesses in the ACT. The EEIS activities include sealing, exhaust fan sealing, and the installation of thermally efficient windows and glazing. Among these installations, the scheme has also delivered central space heaters, efficient heaters, and low energy lighting. I know that part of the scheme is now closed to some households. As Minister Rattenbury has mentioned, I look forward to the evolution of the scheme in the future.

The ACT government are also replacing ageing public housing stock with more efficient housing as part of our public housing renewal program. We are more than halfway through that program at the moment. It is a priority to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community have safe access to secure housing.

While electricity prices in the ACT remain the lowest in the country, prices in the national market have increased. We do have very cold winters. This was highlighted in a recent 2016 UnionsACT report which showed that the ACT is the most energy-intensive area in Australia.

The new public housing stock was designed to match the look and feel of surrounding suburbs, with greater energy efficiency providing lower costs and energy consumption for residents. This includes a minimum six-star energy rating and energy efficient

equipment and fittings. The design also takes into account natural resources such as taking advantage of natural sunlight and ventilation. Care was also taken to ensure that new public housing stock would particularly support older tenants and tenants with a disability.

As part of our government's responsible steps to manage climate change and the environment, the ACT government is developing options to provide prospective tenants with the information to make informed decisions regarding energy efficiencies in their properties, particularly those properties that are newly purchased.

Of course, in the ACT there is a mandatory requirement to disclose energy efficiency ratings for all homes. This disclosure is useful for prospective tenants and buyers. It allows them to understand the energy efficiency of homes that they are looking to purchase but also to look at the steps suggested to improve the efficiency rating of their homes through retrofitting.

As we improve energy efficiency through our public housing renewal program, the ACT should continue to investigate ways to improve housing stock across the territory in terms of energy efficiency. One of the key areas of focus in the energy sector under the ACT's climate strategy to a net zero emissions territory 2017 is deep retrofitting of housing stock. This is the addition of new technology or features to older systems to make them more energy efficient. That includes stopping leaks in seals, reducing draughts and adding insulation. Looking at window treatments like double glazing is also another example.

When speaking to a previous motion moved in the Assembly by Ms Orr, I suggested that residents should act to shop around for better energy plans. One thing I failed to mention then, which I want to mention today, is encouraging people to go to the energy made easy website, where they can look at all energy plans across the ACT's major retailers and compare them very easily. It is energymadeeasy.gov.au.

As has been mentioned, another resource is our Actsmart website. It provides tips to households on how to reduce electricity and gas use. We know that standby power, or vampire energy as it is sometimes referred to, can account for up to five to 10 per cent of power use in the average Canberra household. Actsmart suggests many tips for residents to reduce energy consumption without forgoing comfort, such as installing standby power controllers or energy saving boards to use with electronic devices. Consumers can also compare different products for energy efficiency before they purchase them.

Another really important program that the ACT government is involved in, together with our colleagues from the states and the commonwealth, is the E3 program, the equipment energy efficiency program. It places star ratings on appliances used in households. I was really pleased to see that the E3 program is currently conducting a review of swimming pool pumps. Currently, they are not required to have star ratings. It is a voluntary scheme at the moment. That means that if you go to the pool section in your local Bunnings store looking to buy a pool pump, you actually cannot find a pool pump that has a star rating. That is a real problem when we are trying to encourage people to replace their appliances with more energy efficient ones.

However, there are a number of pool pump manufacturers that provide up to 10-star energy efficiency. We should require star ratings on all pool pumps, because a small capital cost up-front does not necessarily mean you are going to have a small ongoing operational cost. We know that pool pumps use quite a lot of energy. I certainly encourage the GEMS Regulator to continue to look at other appliances for which we should be applying a mandatory rating, such as ovens and other high energy use products, as has been done in Europe.

I was really disappointed last night to see in the budget that the Liberal federal government has decided to continue the cuts to the pensioner energy supplement, which will cost pensioners \$14 a fortnight. At a time when the Liberals are stripping back support for vulnerable Canberrans to deal with increasing energy costs, our government has increased the utility concession.

Our government will continue to take responsible steps to manage climate change in our environment, support energy efficiency in our homes and support those who need extra assistance to deal with energy costs. I really commend Ms Orr for bringing this motion forward today. I look forward to seeing the results of the continuing work we are doing in this space.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (5.10): I am very happy to be part of a government that is doing everything it can to reduce emissions to meet the challenge of climate change. The ACT will be the first jurisdiction in Australia to reach 100 per cent renewable energy by 2020, something we should all be enormously proud of.

It is important that the benefits of lower emissions and lower energy prices are accessible to the people who most need them. That is what the government has been doing in my portfolio. My portfolio of Housing and Suburban Development has been working hard to make sure that housing is provided to people who most need it but ensuring also, through our renewal program, that the homes are sustainable and best meet the needs of our tenants.

We are just past the halfway point. The next part of that program will mean that in the end more than 11 per cent of our public housing properties will be newer, more sustainable and cheaper to run—cheaper to keep cooler in the warmer months and cheaper to heat in the cooler months.

As I said, in the ACT we take as many steps as we can to improve energy efficiency in simple ways. These have been referred to in the debate. They include dual-flush toilets and water shower heads that reduce water use. In 2017 Housing ACT, in collaboration with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, entered into a partnership with ActewAGL to deliver energy efficient products to public housing. This has been a very worthwhile partnership. As a result, in December 2007 Minister Rattenbury and I launched a trial program to improve energy efficiency and lower utility bills for public housing tenants, under the energy efficiency improvement scheme.

This initiative will help public housing tenants to reduce their energy use and energy bills, as well as reduce emissions, by replacing over 200 old inefficient heaters with highly efficient systems. These will significantly reduce the energy costs of ACT residents who most need this help.

As of April 2018, 210 properties had had new appliances installed or will have them installed in the coming weeks. Mr Rattenbury and I were able to visit one of the first where the tenant had her heater replaced. She was excited at the prospect of having an efficient heating and cooling system in her home. But she was also excited that it would bring more comfort to her family and, in particular, reduce her energy bills. She was looking forward to using the savings to purchase Christmas presents for her family.

In addition, the energy efficiency improvement scheme trial in Housing ACT, through the Public Housing Renewal Taskforce, commenced in June 2017. It included installing window furnishings to newly constructed dwellings. This is a simple and effective way to reduce energy costs for tenants. New dwellings constructed for Housing ACT are built with a minimum six-star energy rating, with high-efficiency energy appliances installed. When purchasing existing properties, Housing ACT considers properties with an energy rating of at least three stars.

Madam Speaker, all the programs that the government has implemented demonstrate that you can improve outcomes for our environment while assisting the people who most need help. I look forward to continuing this work.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.14), in reply: In summary, I thank members for their contributions. Mr Coe made a few statements I would like to clarify. My motion today is not a carbon copy of the motion I moved last time. While they do both mention virtual power plants, this one is much broader than that. The focus is looking at making sure that the whole community is included in our transition to a sustainable climate future.

There are a range of actions included in this motion. I note that Mr Coe said he will not be opposing them, that the opposition supports everyone being included. But I must say that I am a little perplexed by the negativity in his speech. I hope he goes away and has a think about some of the things that have been raised in this debate. I think other members have put quite eloquently how this motion responds to quite a few of the issues that Mr Coe raised.

I think it is really important that as we transition to a climate sustainable future we include everyone in our community. I am proud to be part of a government that looks at including people and that is doing things. I call on the government to continue to take action and to identify new areas where this can be done.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—foetal health

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (5.16), by leave: I move the motion as amended:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, one in four women reported having consumed alcohol after becoming aware of their pregnancies;
- (b) alcohol exposure at any time during pregnancy can cause damage to the developing foetus. Evidence demonstrates that alcohol passes easily through the placenta within a couple of hours, giving the foetus a blood alcohol concentration nearly equal to that of the mother. Amniotic fluid retains alcohol, prolonging exposure to alcohol for the foetus. The foetus has minimal ability to metabolise alcohol and the ramifications of foetal alcohol exposure can produce lifelong harm known as foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD);
- (c) it is estimated that more than 500 000 Australians suffer from FASD;
- (d) research has shown that children and youth with FASD have a much higher risk of not completing their education, of falling into lower socioeconomic groups, of self-medicating with drugs and alcohol, of suffering from anxiety or depression and of ultimately coming into contact with the criminal justice system;
- (e) juveniles with FASD are 19 times more likely to be incarcerated and are far more likely to be recidivist;
- (f) 60 percent of the people with FASD over the age of 12 have criminal histories;
- (g) prisoners with FASD are prone to exploitation and higher rates of victimisation, as well as repeating the behaviour of their perpetrators to others in the community following their release from prison; and
- (h) the economic cost of FASD in Australia has been estimated to run into billions of dollars;

(2) further notes that:

- (a) the 2012 national inquiry into FASD found that there is a need for diagnostic tools and services, as well as capacity to provide them. Consequently in 2016, the *Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* was published as a national diagnostic and screening tool for FASD;
- (b) the 2015-17 Banksia Hill Project was the first initiative in Australia to assess and diagnose detainees in a youth detention centre for FASD, resulting in findings of 36 participants (over 33 percent) with FASD but only two who had been previously diagnosed; and
- (c) justice health services within the ACT, namely Forensic Mental Health Services and Primary Health Services, currently do not assess and diagnose detainees at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre for FASD in accordance with the *Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) assess and screen all detainees, including newly arrived detainees, at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre for FASD in full accordance with the

Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and develop treatment plans for ongoing care where diagnosed;

- (b) better support future detainees in Bimberi by practicing robust collection and sharing of data relating to the assessment and screening of detainees;
- (c) work with nationally recognised and accredited organisations to make sure best practice is reflected at each stage of the process and in all aspects of this work undertaken; and
- (d) provide specific training to all Bimberi staff on how best to work with and support detainees with FASD.

I am pleased to move this motion today and to address this very important topic. One of the key strategies in the blueprint for youth justice in the ACT is “providing intensive individualised support to children and young people”, including “recognising individual circumstances and responding appropriately”. This strategy acknowledges that kids who come into contact with the youth justice system or who are at risk of coming into contact with youth justice all have unique needs and equally unique risk profiles. As a result, effective responses will be carefully tailored to each child’s or young person’s particular circumstances. This requires that a young person’s unique needs are known.

Unfortunately, some risk factors are frequently unknown. One of these is foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, FASD. This disorder is characterised by severe pervasive neurodevelopmental impairment due to prenatal alcohol exposure. In the health community, it is “well recognised that FASD is underdiagnosed”.

Research that was published in the *British Medical Journal* only three months ago highlights this problem. Researchers recently assessed 99 children and young people in Western Australia’s Banksia Hill detention centre. Like our Bimberi, Banksia Hill is the only detention centre in WA. The published findings are staggering. Thirty-six per cent of the detainees who were assessed were diagnosed with FASD. Out of these 36 children and young people, only two had been previously diagnosed. This means that out of 99 kids screened in Western Australia’s youth detention system, more than one-third had a serious disorder that had not previously been identified.

I suspect this problem is not limited to Western Australia. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommend against drinking alcohol when pregnant, planning for pregnancy or breastfeeding, because evidence clearly shows that no amount of alcohol during pregnancy is safe. In many cases, alcohol consumption occurs unintentionally during the first few weeks of an unplanned pregnancy. However, the latest national drug strategy household survey conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that one-quarter of women reported having consumed alcohol after becoming aware that they were pregnant.

It is known that when an expectant mother drinks, the alcohol passes easily through the placenta within a couple of hours, giving the foetus a blood alcohol concentration that nearly matches their mother’s. Amniotic fluid retains the alcohol, which prolongs alcohol exposure for the foetus, which has minimal ability to metabolise it. Alcohol has potent effects on foetal brain development, the result being some form of FASD.

The latest national action plan for FASD notes that the extent of the disorder within Australia is not known, owing to a lack of data collection. For example, our hospitals here in the ACT have not consistently recorded alcohol use during pregnancy, which complicates diagnosis in our local community. Regardless, a very conservative estimate is that 500,000 Australians may suffer from some form of FASD.

FASD manifests primarily as behavioural problems and learning difficulties. People who suffer from FASD make up a vulnerable part of our population, particularly where undiagnosed and unmanaged. Research has shown that children and youth with FASD are at a much higher risk of not completing their education, of falling into lower socio-economic groups, of self-medicating with drugs and alcohol, and of suffering from anxiety or depression. Furthermore, the Australian Medical Association has stated:

The symptoms and behaviours relating to FASD increase the likelihood that impacted individuals will come into contact with the criminal justice system (particularly those that are undiagnosed).

And because FASD is not easily identifiable, it frequently remains undiagnosed. People with FASD often do not realise they have broken the law and often do not comply with court orders, which can lead to imprisonment. A chief justice of Western Australia has observed that FASD:

... is an increasing problem in our courts. It is one of those conditions that are almost certainly chronically underdiagnosed ... It is a condition that is inherently likely to put them in conflict with the justice system.

Statistics reveal that juveniles with FASD are 19 times more likely to be incarcerated and are also far more likely to be recidivists. Sixty per cent of people with FASD over the age of 12 have criminal histories. Research has shown that prisoners with FASD are prone to exploitation and higher rates of victimisation, as well as repeating the behaviour of their perpetrators to others in the community following their release from prison.

A national inquiry into FASD was held in 2012 and found a need for diagnostic tools and services as well as capacity to provide them. Consequently, in 2016 a national diagnostic and screening tool for FASD was published. It is now available nationwide in the hope of learning more about the prevalence of FASD in Australia and enhancing the necessary lifelong service provision by educating health professionals to better equip them with the necessary tools to assess, diagnose and manage FASD. It was this diagnostic and screening tool that was used in the Banksia Hill detention centre study.

The Children and Young People Act already requires that each young detainee admitted to Bimberi Youth Justice Centre be assessed within 24 hours to identify any immediate physical or mental health needs or risks and that any such needs or risks be addressed. I understand that the Bimberi mental health service is a cross-disciplinary team comprising a psychologist, an occupational therapist and a psychiatrist. This is a good start but does not go far enough. Considering the established links between

FASD and contact with the youth justice system, it is essential that young detainees be screened for foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Management of FASD is most effective when diagnosed as early as possible. Our young people at Bimberi are particularly vulnerable and belong to a population that is at high risk of suffering from undiagnosed FASD. A positive diagnosis will help explain certain behaviours and capabilities, which can then be followed up with a plan to manage a detainee's condition and, in turn, help him or her to live a better life.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today I ask this Assembly to call on the ACT government to do four things. The first is to assess and screen our young people in Bimberi for FASD, in full accordance with the Australian guide to the diagnosis of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and then to use results from such screening to help develop truly individualised case management plans. In doing so, the ACT will become a world leader in this area. According to the recent report in the *British Medical Journal*, the Banksia Hill study was the first of its kind in Australia. Other studies have been completed in Canada, where the prevalence of FASD in youth detention centres ranged from 11 per cent to 23 per cent. I have no way of knowing if similar numbers of young people in Bimberi will be found to have FASD, but the only way to find out is to assess them.

Second, I call upon the government to practise the robust collection and sharing of data relating to the FASD assessments and screening for our young people at Bimberi. As I mentioned earlier, we simply do not have enough data available to us yet, and this is another opportunity to lead the way in collecting and sharing this information.

Third, I call upon the ACT government to work with nationally recognised and accredited organisations to make sure that best practice is reflected at each stage of the process and in all aspects of the work undertaken. After all, as the blueprint for youth justice states, individualised support needs to be based on evidence and best practice.

Lastly, an important part of fully meeting the needs of young detainees found to have FASD is to guarantee that the youth workers and other staff who daily care for these kids have appropriate training. Some might suggest that this point goes without saying, but the importance of it is made clear by means of my amendment to my motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have the resources. We have a national diagnostic and screening tool for FASD. We have evidence showing the lifelong impact of FASD on young people, especially when left undiagnosed, and about the strong presence of affected young people in youth detention or in other contact with the youth justice system. I have spoken in this chamber before on youth recidivism. This is one significant action we can take to seek to reduce youth recidivism.

We have existing services that can be trained and equipped to assess, diagnose and provide ongoing care and management of FASD for our young people in Bimberi. We have recommended screening tools such as AUDIT-C that our local hospitals can start using consistently to keep better records for alcohol use during pregnancy. We have

what we need. We just need to do it. I call on the government to provide this vital service.

FASD is a lifelong disability that is 100 per cent preventable yet common enough to pose a significant burden on our society when left undiagnosed. Today I urge this Assembly to call upon the government to look after our young people in Bimberi. Every person, including a person with FASD, has the right to health, education, employment, quality of life and happiness. For the sake and safety of our entire community, let us find out what our young people in detention really need and then make sure that they get it. Madam Deputy Speaker, I commend this motion to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (5.29): I would like to thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or FASD, is an important issue both in our juvenile detention system and in the broader community. I agree with the intent of Mrs Kikkert's motion and I am proposing an amendment that commits to further work in the space. Let me speak to some of the details of that amendment.

As members may be aware, the effects of FASD are lifelong and can vary considerably from person to person. There is a lack of accurate data about the prevalence of FASD across all population groups, but there is general agreement among researchers and practitioners that rates are underreported. Because it often goes undetected, it is sometimes referred to as the invisible disability. Because of the complexity in detecting and diagnosing FASD, we suspect there are many children and young people whose condition goes untreated, and these children can experience significant social disadvantage as a result.

Unfortunately, many of the impairments associated with FASD can easily be misattributed to other causes, which is why the condition is so hard to detect. Some of these impairments include development delay, low IQ, poor language and communication skills, poor memory and short attention span, and poor judgement and an inability to understand cause and effect. These are just some of the long list of potential issues that can be caused by FASD. The range of impairment is quite broad because the effects of brain damage caused by foetal alcohol exposure can manifest in many different ways.

Another challenging aspect is that many of these characteristics will not be apparent at birth, with the exception of specific facial and growth factors that are only seen in a minority of cases. For most people with FASD it is unlikely to be noticed until the child reaches school age and their behavioural and learning difficulties become more apparent. The flow-on effects for many of these children are not just medical but also social. Many will experience issues at school, involvement in the care and protection system, reduced self-esteem and depression, problems with alcohol and drugs and involvement with the justice system.

A recent study from Western Australia, which Mrs Kikkert has referenced in her motion and in her speech today, found much higher rates of FASD amongst juvenile detainees as well as low rates of detection of FASD in that environment. This raises an important question about our processes for assessing and detecting FASD in our juvenile justice system in the ACT. As the minister with responsibility for justice health, I am keen to work with Mrs Kikkert and other interested stakeholders to see how we can improve our processes in line with the national guidelines.

However, I do want to put on the record some of the work that is currently occurring in this space, and part of the reason I am proposing the amendment is that I believe it sets out some of this information. I can advise the Assembly that justice health services do have a process in place to screen for key behavioural and clinical indications that can be found in young people with FASD. As a first step, in accordance with section 161 of the Children and Young People Act 2008, a young person must have a physical health assessment and a mental health check within 24 hours of entering Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

A separate mental health induction check is also undertaken by staff from forensic mental health services. If FASD indicators are identified as part of this check, a referral is made to a paediatrician for assessment and diagnosis. Justice health, in conjunction with ACT youth justice, then develops a plan to provide ongoing care for the young person to manage their symptoms while the formal diagnostic process is occurring.

It is also important to note that the Australian guide to the diagnosis of FASD does not include a standardised screening tool for FASD, though it does provide a diagnostic instrument to assist with this process. Internationally there is no validated standardised screening tool for FASD, which is one of the reasons why the detection is so difficult.

In accordance with the Australian guide, diagnosing FASD is complex and requires multiple assessments of a range of impacting factors over a long period. This can include assessment of a young person's obstetric development records, maternal pre and postnatal alcohol and substance exposures and known genetic syndromes and may extend to genetic testing and involvement of the young person's mother for vital clinical information about the pregnancy to inform the assessment.

Following those assessments, the outcome of the prenatal alcohol exposure is determined, which then informs the treatment plan for ongoing care. Given this extensive process, the reality is that in some cases a definitive diagnosis is not possible. In all cases, whether diagnosis is possible or not, ACT Health works with ACT youth justice to support the young people in Bimberi who may be impacted socially and behaviourally by FASD. I am advised that most young people with FASD also have a diagnosis of a mental illness or disorder for which additional care is often needed.

Justice health provides care and treatment for all young people in Bimberi with a mental illness and organises follow-up in the community when the young person is

released. But I recognise that, despite these current processes, we can do better, and that is why my amendment commits to look at the national guide to identify areas where we could improve. New evidence and tools are emerging all the time and we must be prepared to adopt new approaches where they are clinically supported.

It is also important to recognise the work that is currently happening nationally to improve the evidence base for the diagnosis and treatment of FASD. The commonwealth Department of Health is currently leading work to develop the national FASD strategic action plan 2018-28. This plan is expected to be released by the end of this year and the ACT is participating in its development. I am hopeful that the outcomes of this work will help improve the processes for FASD assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

I anticipate that a number of the actions will be in line with the objectives in Mrs Kikkert's motion, including those relating to early assessment and appropriate referral pathways. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that work and incorporating the relevant actions into our justice health processes and systems at Bimberi.

I am also pleased to support the sections in Mrs Kikkert's motion relating to data collection and sharing and working with nationally recognised organisations to deliver best practice. These are things ACT Health has done historically and is committed to continuing into the future. Some examples of organisations we work with currently include the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, on national prisoner data collection and reporting, the ANU National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health and the ANU College of Health and Medicine. We also welcome advice from other organisations and research bodies who are developing evidence in this space.

I also note the point that Mrs Kikkert has made about training for staff and I have sought to address that point in my amendment. FASD is one of a number of conditions that young people in Bimberi can experience, and it is important that the training for staff at Bimberi prepares them to respond to the kinds of challenging behaviours that they can encounter. Staff at Bimberi do currently receive training on how to understand the needs and address the offending behaviours of young people. However, I accept that as our understanding of FASD improves there may be opportunities for different or more specific training to better understand this condition, and this is something the government is prepared to look at.

While the issues of FASD assessment, diagnosis and treatment are important, I also want to take a moment to speak about prevention. We know that alcohol consumption during pregnancy can affect the unborn baby and is associated with a range of adverse consequences, including FASD. For these reasons, Australian health guidelines recommend that not drinking alcohol is the safest option while pregnant. There are a number of organisations that promote this message, including NOFASD Australia and the pregnant pause campaign run by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. We also need to improve early diagnosis and intervention supports so that children with FASD can be better supported at a young age to reduce the likelihood that they will end up in the juvenile justice system. Research suggests that the later

these issues are detected the harder it is to respond to the symptoms and provide appropriate supports.

FASD is an important and complex issue and I am pleased to have the opportunity to have this discussion in the Assembly. While justice health does provide some preliminary screening and assessment for detainees who present with indications linked to FASD, we are committed to continuing to improve this process. I am hopeful that we will soon have better screening and diagnostic tools and that the actions coming out of the national action plan will help us to improve current practices.

I therefore move my amendment as circulated:

Omit all words after paragraph (2)(b), substitute:

- “(c) in the ACT, while Justice Health Services (JHS) does not specifically assess young people in Bimberi for FASD on induction, JHS does undertake a screen for key behavioural and clinical indications that can be found in FASD, and if identified, a referral is made to a paediatrician for assessment, diagnosis and treatment recommendations;
- (d) the *Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* does not include a standardised screening tool for FASD, but instead provides a diagnostic instrument for FASD which is complex, and requires multiple assessments of a range of impacting factors over a long period of time;
- (e) internationally, there is no validated standardised screening tool for FASD; and
- (f) the Commonwealth Department of Health is currently leading work to develop the National FASD Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028, which is expected to be released by the end of this year, and the ACT is participating in its development; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) continue to work with the Commonwealth Government and other jurisdictions to identify new best practice approaches and tools for the diagnosis and treatment of FASD, both in juvenile detention settings and in the community;
- (b) consider how the current behavioural and clinical screening practices used at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre could be enhanced in line with the *Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* to improve the detection of FASD amongst current and future detainees;
- (c) continue to support detainees in Bimberi by practicing robust collection and sharing of data relating to the assessment and screening of detainees;
- (d) continue to provide detainees in Bimberi with individualised, trauma-informed supports that address the behavioural, clinical and other issues identified in screening;
- (e) continue to provide training to all Bimberi staff, and consider future opportunities for additional training, on:
 - (i) understanding the needs of young people who offend;

- (ii) addressing offending behaviours; and
- (iii) the delivery of a trauma informed service; and
- (f) work with nationally recognised and accredited organisations to make sure best practice is reflected at each stage of the process and in all aspects of this work undertaken.”.

I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (5.39): I also want to note the significant impact that foetal alcohol syndrome disorder, FASD, can have on an individual’s life outcomes and thank Mrs Kikkert for raising this important matter in the Assembly. However, as others note, this is only one part of a more complex picture, particularly in the context of youth justice. For this reason, I will be supporting Minister Rattenbury’s amendment, which reflects the status of national work on FASD and the support provided to young people in Bimberi.

The effects of alcohol and other drug use by a mother during the gestation of a child can affect a person for life. Many of the effects of maternal alcohol use are multifactorial and may be associated with poor nutrition, infections and other environmental factors. All of these can combine to adversely affect the growth and development of a child. It is important, as others have said, that we therefore act early to support mothers during pregnancy and work with women during the prenatal period. Good prenatal care and support for mothers and their children from birth are a vital step in ensuring the healthy growth and development of a child. An important part of this is community awareness of the potential dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. As Mrs Kikkert noted, there is a simple but critical message to promote: there is no safe level of drinking during pregnancy.

For vulnerable children and their families, including those at risk of or affected by FASD, early intervention is fundamental. The ACT government’s three child and family centres in Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and west Belconnen provide a one-stop shop for supporting families during a child’s early years of life. This includes access to maternal and child health services. The child and family centres are staffed by highly skilled, experienced and qualified practitioners with social work, psychology, specialised nursing and other health, welfare and education qualifications. The staff at the centres work to provide a range of universal, targeted and tailored services based on the needs of children and their families, with a strong emphasis on providing outreach services in homes, schools and the community—going to where the people are, Madam Speaker. That includes strong engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partners.

For families living in the ACT who have concerns about their child’s development—as we have heard, FASD can manifest in behavioural and learning difficulties—the ACT government’s child development service offers assessment, referral, information and linkages for children zero to six years. The child development service has an

intake service and provides drop-in clinics, which provides a pathway for parents and other referrers to seek advice and to find out if further services are necessary and where these services are available. Community paediatric services are based at the child development service in Holder.

For children and adults living with FASD, diagnostic and support services are important. As others have noted, a diagnosis of FASD is complex, determined through a multidisciplinary team involving a range of health professionals, including paediatricians, clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and social workers.

Mrs Kikkert has today raised a motion asking the government to assess all young people entering youth detention in the ACT for FASD. I think it is important, in this context, to clearly state that FASD does not cause offending behaviour. However, we know that young people with FASD have specific impairments that may cause them to be at increased risk of offending behaviour, such as poor judgement, impulsiveness or the inability to predict or understand the consequences of their actions.

Young people in contact with the youth justice system are also impacted by a range of family, personal and environmental risk factors, along with trauma indicators. FASD is just one factor that may be present for a young person and just one factor that may need to be considered by child and youth protection services when working with a young person to understand their individual needs and address their offending behaviour. I note that Mrs Kikkert started her speech with a reference to the emphasis in the youth justice blueprint on the unique needs of each young person coming into contact with the youth justice system and the need to provide individualised support.

Young people who have been charged with or convicted of a criminal offence may be ordered by the court to be supervised in the community by the child and youth protection services or detained in the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. These young people are provided with support and supervision, the aim being to strengthen their supports and address the risks of reoffending. Each young person supervised on a youth justice order by child and youth protection services has a case manager responsible for working with the young person and their care team to assess their individual risks, needs and responsiveness to interventions, and the strengths that will assist in protecting them from future reoffending.

CYPS case managers conduct assessments on young people in order to guide service responses, inform case planning and/or obtain information that has been requested by the court. General assessments completed by the young person's case manager assist in understanding how biological, psychological and social factors combine and interact to impact on a young person's health, wellbeing and environment.

For young people who have been found guilty of an offence, a criminogenic risk assessment can be completed to assist CYPS to support effective case planning. The youth level of service case management inventory is a tool that surveys a young person's risk, need, responsivity and strengths and protective factors. The purpose of the tool is to assess these factors to identify areas of concern that may impact on a young person's likelihood of reoffending. This, in turn, assists with identifying

strategies to work with the young person, identifying relevant supports that might assist them and developing an informed and appropriate case plan.

CYPS uses changing habits and reaching targets, known as CHART, which is an offending behaviour program specifically designed for young people. CHART is evidence based and is a casework intervention tool. Again, I reflect Mrs Kikkert's comment that we must use evidence-based supports. I cannot agree more with that. CHART employs a skills-oriented and cognitive behavioural focus and participatory learning methods to address a young person's offending behaviour.

In supporting a young person, CYPS, including the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, works also with a range of government and community service providers. These programs and services target young people who have their own drug and alcohol issues, who are disconnected from education and training, who experience mental health issues and who have the need for accommodation, family connection and cultural support.

CYPS works closely with OneLink to ensure young people are provided with information about and referred to appropriate services. Again, that will address their individual needs. For young people in detention, CSD works closely with the Education Directorate, justice health, forensic mental health, drug and alcohol services, Gugan Gulwan and Winnunga Nimmityjah, as well as others, towards meeting the needs of young people.

A range of services are delivered to address the diverse needs and interests of young people in the centre. These programs and services assist young people to develop strong links to their family and community, address the drivers of offending behaviours and assist in their transition from the centre.

For young people with their own drug and alcohol issues, the ACT Health youth drug and alcohol program and Ted Noffs provide drug and alcohol services to young people in custody. Both services attend the centre at least fortnightly and see young people individually, and will provide group sessions where they assess this to be of benefit to the young people.

Justice health, forensic mental health and Winnunga Nimmityjah work with Bimberi to ensure that the general health and mental health needs of each individual young person are addressed and met. As highlighted by right No 6 in the Bimberi charter of rights, young people in Bimberi have the right to receive proper health care.

Mrs Kikkert's motion and the amendment touch on training for Bimberi staff. Community Services Directorate staff are well trained in understanding the needs of young people who offend, addressing their offending behaviours and delivering a trauma informed service. The Bimberi seven-week induction program, I understand, is unique in Australia. If not, it certainly is leading the way and has been of great interest to other jurisdictions. It includes training on trauma, informed practice, cultural awareness, emergency operating procedures and responding to critical situations, and it incorporates human rights throughout.

In relation to the motion before us, I note that training on how best to work with and support detainees with FASD should be part of the constellation of staff training on responding to trauma and mental health. I note, again, that it is a complex issue. The directorate seeks specialist expertise to provide components of the training from a number of external sources, such as ACT Health, to deliver specific training from the youth drug and alcohol program and the Australian Childhood Foundation. Staff are informed about the youth level of service case management inventory and the CHART program, which are delivered by the CYPS case managers.

As I informed the Assembly previously, the Blueprint for Youth Justice Taskforce that I established last year is specifically looking at some emerging challenges and the need to better support young people with disability and mental health concerns who come into contact with the justice system. This will be taken into account.

Madam Speaker, the staff at Bimberi work in a very complex environment with young people who have complex needs. There are no silver bullets, but CSC will continue to ensure that these committed staff have access to the expertise and training they need to support the best possible outcomes for young people at the centre.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (5.49): To those who have chosen to address this important topic today, clearly foetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a serious problem, one that we need to be aware of and respond to. This is a very large topic. It could easily involve education and other prevention efforts, our schools, our health system and so forth.

Today I have chosen to focus on some of our most vulnerable children, those who find themselves detained in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. As the research makes clear, kids with FASD are more likely to end up in a detention centre than their peers are, and the harm that can come to them whilst in lock-up is also greater. I would like to just reiterate what the chief justice said in Western Australia. He said that FASD:

... is an increasing problem in our courts. It is one of those conditions that are almost certainly chronically underdiagnosed ... It is a condition that is inherently likely to put them in conflict with the justice system.

It seems as though the youth justice system is a good place to start when it comes to addressing this issue.

I look forward to hearing back from Mr Rattenbury on how the current behaviour and clinical screening practices at Bimberi have been enhanced in line with the national guide to diagnosing FASD and how training Bimberi staff will include FASD as they work closely with Bimberi young people.

I assume that a future report will also let this Assembly know how this information is being used to improve detainees' case management plans. I look forward to seeing the ACT participate fully in the collection and sharing of data relating to FASD so that a more accurate picture can emerge not just from our territory but across Australia. I am also glad that we can soon expect a national FASD strategic action plan, and I expect

the full support of the ACT government when this is released. I likewise look forward to being updated on what training measures are in place to make sure that the staff at Bimberi have been well trained in how to work with and support kids with FASD in detention.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Christopher Latham—tribute

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (5.52): I want to take some time today to pay tribute to Christopher Latham for his latest work, *The Diggers' Requiem*. When I was on holidays in France recently—the principal reason for going to France was for the Anzac Day celebrations at Villers-Bretonneux—I received an invitation from Canberra's own Christopher Latham to attend on 23 April, in the Cirque Jules Verne in Amiens, the world premiere of his *The Diggers' Requiem*. As members would know, Christopher Latham is well known in music circles here in Canberra and has become the Australian War Memorial's first ever musician artist in residence. Part of his remit was to put together a piece of music or a concert of music, which became known as *The Diggers' Requiem*, which celebrates or commemorates the centenary of the Western Front in the First World War and the conclusion of that war.

The stunning performance provided, under Christopher's direction, by L'Orchestre de Picardie and Jenaer Philharmonie and Le Choeur Regional Hauts-de-France was stunning, and there were a number of Australian soloists who were funded by, amongst other organisations, the Australia Council: Paul Goodchild, the principal trumpeter from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra; the accordionist David Novak; Jordan Aikin, bagpiper from Newcastle; Canberra's own Christina Wilson and Alan Hicks; and not quite Canberra's own Simone Riksmann, although she has performed on a number of occasions at the Canberra International Music Festival and has won the critics' circle award for one of those performances.

On the night, to a packed hall—I do not know the occupancy of the large circular hall—there was a large orchestra and a large choir, and they performed, in addition to music from Handel, music by Australian composers Elena Kats-Chernin, Frederic Septimus Kelly, Nigel Westlake, Richard Mills and Graeme Koehne. This was an extraordinary performance which Canberra residents will have an opportunity to experience in October this year. I cannot quite remember the date.

I want to put on record my appreciation of the work done by Chris Latham and the fact that this has been funded through the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian War Memorial on the centenary of the First World War. I also put on

record—Christopher Latham actually asked me to put this on record, and I think it is the case—appreciation of the contribution that the ACT government will be making to the Canberra performance in October this year. The only thing I can do is encourage members of this place and members of the public to support *The Diggers' Requiem* when they have an opportunity to do so later this year.

Anzac Day

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (5.56): I rise this evening to look back on the ACT's Anzac Day commemorations last month. It is my great privilege as the Minister for Veterans and Seniors to represent the ACT government at a number of Anzac events, and I pay tribute this evening to all the participants and the organisers, as well as, of course, the service and sacrifice of those whose efforts were commemorated.

As Canberrans have come to expect, Anzac Day began as a chilly morning, slightly warmer than normal, but the dawn service was very moving. It had an address by Colonel Susan Neuhaus, who is the first female who has been afforded this honour. Following the service, I was honoured to be asked by DEFGLIS, which is a charity which supports and represents the Defence Force members who identify as LGBTI, as well as their families, to jointly lay a rainbow wreath at the stone of remembrance, with Kate McGregor, the most senior transgender member to serve in defence. Supported by members of each service, it was a simple but powerful ceremony in the early light of the morning.

Later that morning I returned to the Australian War Memorial for the national ceremony, which was ably watched over by ADFA's Foxtrot Squadron, which formed the royal guard, who were supported by the band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon. The ceremony commemorated both those who fought in Gallipoli and all those who have served Australia in its Defence Force. Of particular note was the address by Bob Semple, a former Rat of Tobruk, who told his story and shared his wisdom of 90-plus years. The ceremony also included one of the largest marches in recent years, with several hundred from the Australian Army Apprentices Association marching together on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Army apprenticeship scheme. I was delighted to have opened the anniversary gathering on the previous night.

After the conclusion of the national ceremony I was honoured to represent the ACT government at the French embassy and to lay a wreath on behalf of the people of the territory. The ceremony fell on the centenary of the second battle of Villers-Bretonneux, and the French ambassador spoke of the service and the sacrifice of those who served in France and in that battle in particular.

Finally on that day I attended the Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial to hear the story of Lieutenant Ralph Elsmere Claridge, who died in France in 1918 and to lay a wreath on behalf of the people of the ACT. The War Memorial's Last Post ceremony is simple and important. It is held at 4.55 every day to remember those

who have died in military service for Australia. I encourage all who have not been to this ceremony to attend one of these services.

There were many more ceremonies, both in the weeks leading up to and on the day. Unfortunately I do not have time to mention them all in this speech, but I do want to thank the various ex-service organisations and the other groups who have been working hard to make them all happen. In closing, I thank the ACT Branch of the RSL, the Australian War Memorial, the French embassy and DEFGLIS for organising the ceremonies on that day, helping those who have served, their families and the general public to pause and to reflect on what it means to serve in the Defence Force. I thank the members of the community who attended various ceremonies throughout the day. It certainly was an honour to be there to represent the people of the ACT.

Federal government—budget

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (5.59): I rise today to talk about last night's federal budget and its impacts for the ACT. Yesterday Mr Coe stood up in the chamber to oppose a vacancy tax. He said that it did not address housing affordability issues. Just a few hours later, Scott Morrison delivered a budget that taxed owners of vacant land and, again, did absolutely nothing about housing affordability. It is really amazing to me the difference it makes to hear a Liberal Treasurer in government versus a Liberal shadow treasurer in opposition.

Getting back to the budget, there was nothing on housing affordability. It all but abandoned renters and first homebuyers. But, of course, there were billions of dollars for more highways. There was no increase in Newstart. I must admit that I am shocked to see today that even former Prime Minister Howard thought there should have been an increase in Newstart. But tax breaks were given to the top 20 per cent of income earners.

The budget for fighting climate change was halved, but the government can find half a billion to apply band-aids to the Great Barrier Reef. Unfortunately, this will not stop it dying. There was no action on poverty, no action on climate change. The RET is not continuing. There are cuts to overseas aid, but plenty of tax cuts for the rich.

The Liberals' budget has left the task of transitioning to renewable energy entirely up to progressive states and territories like the ACT. Instead of working to save our one and only environment, the Liberals have once again cut funds to the department of the environment. Its budget is being halved between 2013 and 2022.

I could spend all day talking about this budget and what it is going to do, or not do, for Canberra. There will be job cuts. There will be lots of job cuts, despite what Senator Seselja may say. Over 2,000 public servants, many of them living right here, are going to lose their jobs as a result of this budget. Fifteen per cent of the ABS gone; history. Twenty per cent of AIATSIS gone. Who would care about them?

A total of 2,500 staff will go from DHS over two years because, again, who cares about poor people? Centrelink call times—clearly they are not an issue. Cut the jobs

and we can outsource what jobs there are left to private contractors because, of course, they will be more efficient than public servants.

But there are departments that are getting more public service jobs. Yes, it is home affairs, the AFP and ASIO. It is pretty clear that we are building a police surveillance state, so why would we need to look after Australians' wellbeing? We do not need to. We have this one sorted.

No wonder the national institutions inquiry, which does now look like a thinly veiled plan for the Liberals to privatise our national institutions, closed yesterday, before the budget. If it had not, people would have put in their submissions that 10 staff are gone at the National Archives and 12 staff are gone at the National Library.

What about the other stuff that Canberrans love—for example, the ABC? We all know that Canberrans love their ABC. Instead of supporting it, the Liberals are cutting the ABC's budget by another \$87 million. Instead, they are going to spend \$25 million on another statue of Captain Cook because, clearly, what Australia needs is more statues of colonisers.

Then, of course, there is the flat tax concept. I think that was borrowed from Pauline Hanson's One Nation 90s playbook. The entire budget is telling all of us—except, of course, people on Centrelink or people who may be suffering overseas—that we will all be richer. It is setting up a possible future Labor government to cop the failure.

This is going to be short-term pleasure for Liberal donors and Liberal supporters and it looks like long-term pain for the rest of us. It is a budget that fails young people, fails the environment and fails our most vulnerable. It fails just about everybody, except a small group of upper income earners.

I think this may finally be the budget which shows that the Liberals can no longer call themselves sensible economic managers. I do not know if any of you heard Dan Bouchier's show this morning on 666. He had a good call from someone saying that the situation was like someone who had won the lottery. Instead of using the money to pay off their mortgage, they gave it to their kids to buy lollies.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, before I call Ms Lee, I want to acknowledge that we are joined in the public gallery by Amaroo Scouts. Welcome to the Assembly. If you have not been here before, make sure you come back.

Adjournment Schools—visits

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (6.05): I rise this evening to talk again about another series of schools I had the pleasure of visiting in the last few weeks. First, I had the pleasure of visiting the Canberra Christian School in Mawson in April. I was delighted to see the approach that school has taken to its pupils. I met with the principal, Bree Hills, who

had a clear passion for education and a warm, welcoming nature. She made all the students, my staff and me feel very comfortable and welcome at the school.

Mrs Hills showed us around the school's six classrooms that cater for classes pre-K to year 6, their climbing wall, their kitchen garden where they grow their own veggies and later learn how to cook fresh healthy meals. As a small school with approximately 130 students, the tailored methods of education were fascinating. For example, the school uses information from a number of sources to tailor children's abilities to form small learning groups for core subjects like maths.

This year, Canberra Christian School was able to take on a deputy principal and wellbeing officer, Tanya Wells. Her role is pastoral, administrative and teaching some classes from time to time. The position is an important addition to the school's administrative capacity but also stresses the importance the school places on the wellbeing of its students.

I was also able to see the early learning centre, or ELC, which provides an early introduction to schooling for students as young as two. I saw some of the posters the ELC students had been working on around Easter time, motivated by the children's fascination for the development of chicken eggs to chicks.

One of the great takeaways from my visit to the Canberra Christian School was the way limited space and resources posed not a challenge but an opportunity for the school. The school's close relationship with nearby church communities has been a valuable resource, with the church facilities doubling as classrooms and an assembly hall, rather than lying dormant for five days of the week. Similarly, the Emmanuel Christian Assembly church building now doubles as the school's ELC.

The Canberra Christian School is a terrific example of how a successful school is not just a collection of buildings and people but a community—so much so that I am sure many parents will be particularly drawn to the school's monthly date night when parents are encouraged to drop off their kids at the school for activities and a movie while they go out on a well-deserved date.

I was also able to meet with the principal of Trinity Christian School, Mr Ian Hewitt, at their Wanniasa campus, in your electorate, Madam Speaker. It is appropriate that I talk about these schools together, as students at Canberra Christian College have an assured place at Trinity for year 7 and above.

Trinity is a Christian school that was established in 1977. It has grown steadily to its present size, occupying two campuses, in Isabella Plains and Wanniasa. In 2004 the school began taking students to year 12, and in 2016 it opened its ELC. This means that many of its students now have the opportunity to be at the same school for 15 years, from three to 18 years old. This stability and constancy in their lives does lead to a powerful and engaged student and parent community, which contributes massively to the school.

I was able to see the attention Trinity school puts into learning. Having met Mr Hewitt previously at a University of Canberra faculty of education showcase, it was like

seeing a familiar face on his home turf. We had a fascinating discussion about his previous teaching experience, when children were encouraged to engage in project-based learning, allowing a more holistic and real-life learning experience, rather than having silos of learning in separate and unconnected disciplines.

He showed me a book on birds that was produced by a former school he had been at in the UK. The students had worked on it from go to whoa. This covered developing the concept and engaging in brainstorming, teamwork and creativity. It included writing facts about the birds, the science aspect. It covered drawing the birds, which incorporated the art lesson, writing a creative story about the life of the birds—incorporating English grammar and creative lessons—all the way through to learning maths and economics by making the book a viable product to produce by calculating how many to print and how much to sell them for to make a profit.

It was a fascinating showcase of what project learning can look like in our classrooms. Mr Hewitt only commenced at Trinity Christian School this year, but I know that he has a big vision and big plans for his school. I wish him and the entire school community all the very best for this academic year. I do thank Mrs Hills and Mr Hewitt for their warm welcome to their schools.

Katy Gallagher—tribute

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) (6.09): Sadly, the High Court has made its ruling today and found that Katy Gallagher is no longer eligible to sit in the Australian parliament. I am so disappointed for her, and I know that I am not alone in that sentiment. She has been a terrific local representative for 17 years and it is no surprise that she is being given a massive virtual hug over social media by so many people from within our own community and beyond.

Not only has she been a great local representative; she is a decent and kind human, well like and respected by many. Katy's statement following the ruling today reminds us all of her continued integrity and grace. We would all expect nothing less from our Katy. Katy is too good to lose, and I offer her my continued friendship and support no matter what she decides to do from here.

Planning—Gungahlin

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (6.10): I rise to speak about the development of a linear park coming to Gungahlin town centre east. As members are already aware, Gungahlin is a rapidly growing area that will only continue to develop with the introduction of light rail. As is to be expected with a growing area, there is a lot of development being undertaken to provide the Gungahlin community with the facilities and infrastructure they need.

One example of this is the Gungahlin town centre east development. A development application for the Gungahlin town centre east development was notified in December 2016 and put forward a layout and zoning proposal for the area directly adjoining the

eastern side of the existing town centre. The proposal included land for commercial, residential and community facilities as well as roads and associated infrastructure. The DA was approved in early 2017, and infrastructure-enabling works have already begun.

Central to the proposal was a linear park that would run north to south between Anthony Rolfe Avenue and the Mulanggari grasslands. This park presents a great opportunity for a quality public space within the Gungahlin town centre. In my work as a member for Yerrabi, I have been heartened by the contributions our community can make to the development of their town centres when given the opportunity.

Most recently, in working with Giralang residents, I found that giving the community a say in what went into a park before a design proposal was developed allowed them to be included and ultimately more satisfied with the outcome. In speaking directly to many Giralang residents we were able to create a quality space that reflected the community.

While the Gungahlin town centre east development is a greenfield development, it is important to note that there is an established community surrounding the site. And one thing that I have come to appreciate in no uncertain terms is that, as a community, the people of Gungahlin want to have their say when it comes to the development of their town centre, and rightly so.

That is why I am ensuring the Gungahlin community can provide their views about what they want in their new town park. Over the coming months I will be talking with people from the Gungahlin community about what they want from the park, whom they go to the park with, how they will get there, what activities they want to be able to do in the space and much more.

In an effort to reach out and engage with as many people in the Gungahlin community as possible, I will be holding street stalls, knocking on doors of those who live near the proposed park and visiting community forums such as the Gungahlin Community Council. I will be collecting feedback from the people of Gungahlin to provide to the minister for suburban development. I am confident that an engaged and thorough community consultation process will give Gungahlin a quality public space that best reflects their ideas.

One thing Gungahlin residents have already made clear to me is their want of more green spaces within the town centre. Our natural environment is always a point of pride with Canberrans. I have heard time and again that, while understanding the needs for development, Canberrans fear the environmental impacts and the loss of green space. It is important that Gungahlin does not lose its green space or have its environment impaired in the process of development. I am pleased to say a commitment has already been given to develop this linear park in a way that incorporates climate adaptive features, and I am pleased that environmentalism is being given the priority it deserves in discussions about this park.

The climate adaptation focus for the park also gives us the opportunity to set new environmental standards for future development. And it is my hope that through

consultation and a climate adaptation focus this space will contribute greatly to the Gungahlin area. It will make Gungahlin town centre a more climate resilient town, as well as providing a great space for locals. It has been my experience as a member for Yerrabi that an engaged consultation process makes for a better quality public space. I am proud to be assisting the Gungahlin community in helping to inform the design of the park and look forward to hearing from them.

Homelessness—fundraising

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (6.14): I rise to speak about Dave's Camino de Canberra. Proud Canberran and CEO of Professionals Australia David Smith is currently attempting to walk 790 kilometres around the ACT to raise awareness and funds to tackle homelessness. Dave Smith is a regular participant in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout but wants to step up his efforts to raise awareness about homelessness, which affects hundreds of Canberrans, and to raise money for the St Vincent de Paul Society in Canberra. Currently he has raised \$3,600 of his \$4,000 goal. The money raised will go towards helping Canberrans facing homelessness by providing food, housing, education and health services, as well as counselling.

I was pleased to join Dave earlier in the year to walk a leg in my electorate. We started at Kambah village and walked along the Centenary Trail, up Mount Arawang and around Cooleman Ridge and back—around 13 kilometres in total—talking education, health, politics and also our mutual concern about homelessness in Australia and particularly in the ACT. According to Homelessness Australia, 50 out of 10,000 people experience homelessness in the ACT, with the major causes being accommodation, family breakdowns and family violence. We know from the 2016 census that the rate of homelessness has dropped in the ACT by 8.1 per cent, but there are still around 1,596 people experiencing homelessness.

Addressing homelessness is a major focus of the ACT government. Last year Minister Berry, the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, hosted the housing summit, and the ACT government is well on the way to finalising our new housing strategy. The new housing strategy will address and consider how to reduce homelessness in the ACT, strengthening social housing assistance and increasing housing affordability. The ACT government is also working with St Vincent de Paul to alleviate homelessness and provide services to those who are sleeping rough.

In conclusion, I commend all Canberrans participating in events to raise awareness and funds to address homelessness, including the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, which is coming up on 21 June. Dave Smith is also inviting Canberrans to join him on his walks and to share in ideas and good conversation along the way. Dave is well on his way to achieving his 790 kilometre milestone, and I encourage everyone to get involved.

Katy Gallagher—tribute

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) (6.15): I, too, want to raise my

thoughts for Katy Gallagher today; it is sad news that we have heard the High Court's ruling. I stand with my Labor colleagues in support for Katy Gallagher. She has been an incredible advocate for the Canberra community and, of course, for our Labor movement. She has helped me fantastically over the years, and many of our colleagues as well—too numerous to note. She has my full support, and I certainly hope that she continues in the Labor movement. As my colleague Ms Berry has said, the virtual hug that we have seen around the ACT and beyond today is fantastic, so #toogoodtolose.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 6.18 pm.