



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**NINTH ASSEMBLY**

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**Tuesday, 12 February 2019**

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

## **Leave of absence**

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

That leave of absence be granted to Minister Fitzharris for this sitting week on account of illness.

## **Petitions**

*The following petitions were lodged for presentation:*

### **Motorcycle parking in Forrest—petition 22-18**

*By Ms Cody, from 62 residents:*

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

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

This petition requests more motorbike parking spaces near the offices between Canberra Avenue and Sydney Avenue in Forrest. There are a growing number of individuals who choose to ride their motorbike to work as an efficient and economical mode of transport as opposed to driving their car.

This area comprises of 3,592 staff, of this, at least 292 ride their motorbike to work (Based on 2011 ABS Data). There is very limited motorbike parking in this area. This disproportionate number of motorbike spaces has caused some riders to resort back to driving their cars.

ACT Roads were informed of the issue previously (2014), but has not resulted in any action. From 2012 to 2017, motorbikes have increased by 2,000 riders in the ACT. In response to this demand, the ACT has increased motorbike spaces across the ACT, however not in this area.

Motorbikes are an efficient means of transport in comparison to a car: they have lower emissions, occupy less physical parking space (4 motorbikes can park in a single car spot) and reduce car traffic on ACT roads. One person cars are choking ACT roads during peak times.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call on the ACT Government to designate additional motorcycle parking near the offices between Canberra Avenue and Sydney Avenue in Forrest.

## **Light rail stage 2—direct alignment—petition 13-18**

*By Ms Le Couteur, from 132 residents:*

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that the light rail stage 2 alignment from Gungahlin to Woden (via Barton) does not provide a direct, fast service for residents from the south of Canberra.

The alignment is different to the network publicised prior to the 2016 election which provided a direct alignment from the south to the City and a different alignment servicing the Parliamentary Triangle, Manuka, Kingston and Fyshwick.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to call on the government to:

- Ensure public transport travel times are maintained for residents living in Canberra's south, should a light rail from Woden to the City be built.
- Commit to a direct alignment (using the west side of State Circle to link Adelaide Avenue to Commonwealth Avenue) and extension of the track to Mawson.
- Provide for express services by reserving room in the corridor for a future third track.

## **Canberra sexual health centre—petition 2-19**

*By Ms J Burch, from 44 residents:*

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that: Canberra Sexual Health Centre is a valuable community institution in an outdated building that is no longer fit for purpose or able to meet the current or future demand for services. Further we believe the Centre is under-resourced to meet Current demand.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to: Request ACT Health provide increased support for resource and infrastructure improvements at Canberra Sexual Health Centre. The undersigned urge the Government to undertake a needs assessment for a new Sexual Health Centre, with the possibility of a satellite site in the Gungahlin/Belconnen area, to meet the increasing needs of a growing Canberra population. Further we believe the Centre needs additional resourcing to meet current and future demand. This is imperative to support the community of Canberra.

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

## **Ministerial responses**

The following responses to petitions have been lodged:

### **Fenced play spaces—petition 14-18**

By **Mr Steel**, Minister for City Services, dated 19 December 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Le Couteur on 18 September concerning the fencing of play spaces.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 18 September 2018 regarding petition No 14-18 lodged by Ms Le Couteur MLA requesting more fully fenced play spaces. In response to the petition, I offer the following information.

Overall, Canberra has over 500 public playgrounds, all of which are maintained and inspected to ensure they are safe for use. The ACT Government is aware of a growing community demand for more relevant and appropriate playground facilities such as fully fenced play spaces. This has particularly come to light during the recent Play Spaces participatory budgeting pilot.

During this pilot, \$1.9m was allocated by community representatives to a range of playground related upgrades and improvements across the city. This included funds for fencing around some playgrounds. The full details of the allocated funding has been publicly announced and can be found at: <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/BetterSuburbs>.

I appreciate the effort these petitioning residents have made to provide evidence that fully fenced play spaces increase accessibility by a wider group of children and their families. Now, with some play spaces in Canberra being selected for full or partial fencing by the citizen panel, work will commence immediately to make these sites more appropriate for the changing needs of the community.

While I am not able to directly address the request to provide a plan for fully fencing 30 play spaces within a set timeframe and providing guaranteed recurrent funding, I can assure you that the government is listening to the community about their play space needs. This is evident by the adoption of this community-led approach to making funding decisions about play spaces. I can advise that as the selected playgrounds become fully fenced they will be listed on the Transport Canberra and City Services website to assist the public in identifying them easily.

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

### **Clubs community contributions scheme—petition 15-18**

By **Mr Ramsay**, Attorney-General, dated 14 December 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Mr Parton on 18 September 2018 concerning the ACT clubs community contributions scheme.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 18 September 2018 about petition number 15-18 lodged by Mr Mark Parton MLA on behalf of Mr Stuart Ramshaw, and received by the Assembly on the same date. This letter is my response pursuant to Standing Order 100.

The ACT Government has delivered measures to support our local clubs to more sustainable, diverse, and community focused. Reform of the community contributions scheme will support clubs to continue offering support to their members and local communities, while expanding the reach of our community contributions scheme even further.

The Government's announced community contributions reform package has been evidence based, following on from reports by the ACT Auditor-General, PWC, and Dr Charles Livingstone on the community contributions scheme. It has also been the product of thorough consultation across the industry and with community groups.

The new transparency and reporting requirements for the scheme mean that the community will have better information about where clubs' community contributions are going and who or what they are supporting. Clubs have well established relationships with charitable, sport, cultural and other community groups. Under the current reporting regime, it can be difficult to determine how much of a club's contributions support charitable, sporting, or other community activities. The Government's reform package strengthens transparency by more carefully defining allowed contributions, and requiring clubs to be transparent about how they seek applications and make decisions. These changes respond to the Auditor-General's and other findings about the scheme.

Clubs remain free to spend approximately 90 per cent of their net gaming machine revenue as they wish to support their objectives. But, as part of clubs' social licence in operating gaming machines, 8.8 per cent of net gaming machine revenue will go towards the community. The existing 8 per cent, as the Government announced, will remain for clubs to distribute.

The 0.8 percent increase announced in the Government's reform is about ensuring that money from gaming machines is getting to people and organisations in our community that need it the most. There will be more money that will be returned to the community to support the range of community purposes set out on the legislation, and those purposes will be more clearly defined to help ensure public confidence in the scheme.

The Government remains committed to ensuring that our regulation of the gambling industry has robust protections against gambling harm, and maintains a focus on delivering benefits to the community as a whole. We will keep consulting with clubs, with the community, and with community groups to ensure that our community contributions scheme serves those who need it most.

## **School bus services—petition 17-18**

By **Ms Fitzharris**, Minister for Transport, dated 2 January 2019, in response to a petition lodged by Miss C Burch on 23 October 2018 concerning proposed school bus services.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 23 October 2018 regarding petition No 17-18 lodged by Miss Candice Burch MLA requesting further public consultation on proposed school bus changes.

The ACT Government has designed a new bus network that will provide more buses, more often across the ACT. The new integrated public transport network will transform the way Canberrans move around the city and provide significant benefits for the community, including school students. Frequency, reliability and accessibility are the cornerstones of Canberra's redesigned public transport system.

In order to deliver this higher frequency network, dedicated school services have been redesigned or integrated to complement the general public transport network, particularly during the morning peak travel to school and work period.

In designing this network, the government undertook extensive consultation with parents, schools and students. The government received around 13,000 pieces of feedback, which included surveys completed by Canberrans online and on paper forms, Canberrans attending community council meetings, formal written submissions and individual meetings with key stakeholders such as schools or parent peak bodies. This included 2,832 surveys completed by parents of school students, as well as a further 432 surveys completed by primary and secondary school students.

As a result of community consultation, the government made significant changes to the draft network released for consultation in June 2018, including adding 78 more dedicated school services as well as changes to Rapid and local services that will reduce the need for students to change buses to travel to school.

The government has no plans to consult further on the design of the new public transport network, which is expected to commence on 27 April 2019. The new network will provide students across the city with more options to get to school by public transport.

While school buses play an important role in school travel, only a small minority of students use existing school buses. Around 80 per cent of primary school students are currently driven to school, and more than half of high school and college students also travel by car. The new network will give these students and their families more options to get to school by bus or light rail.

Further, almost 60 per cent of students who travel by bus to school today in the ACT are using regular bus services shared with the general public. The new

network will provide many benefits for these students as well as those who currently use school bus services with services that are more frequent, more reliable and simpler.

I would encourage parents and schools who continue to have concerns about the coming changes to the public transport network to find out more about the services for each school online at:

<https://www.transport.act.gov.au/getting-around/new-network/schools>.

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

### **International students—petition 19-18**

By **Mr Barr**, Chief Minister, dated 14 December 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Kikkert on 20 September 2018 concerning fair treatment for international students in Canberra.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 20 September 2018 regarding E-Petition 19-18 lodged by Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA regarding fair treatment for international students in Canberra.

In April 2017, Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs commenced a significant reform package for Australia's temporary and permanent employer sponsored skilled migration programs. The reduction of permanent pathways and tightening of criteria in other jurisdictions had the combined impact of increasing demand on the ACT subclass 190 pathway, which has been capped by the Department of Home Affairs at around 800 nominations per year.

On 29 June 2018, the ACT Nominated Skilled Migration 190 visa pathway was temporarily restricted, as demand for ACT 190 nomination was set to exceed the 2017-18 allocation. This was in line with established program practice; the guidelines for applying for ACT nomination clearly stated the program may be temporarily closed at any time without notice which is an accepted demand management measure.

With the likelihood of continuing high demand on ACT 190 visa subclass and a restricted cap, the ACT Government undertook a review of the policy and program settings of the program with the aim of better managing demand and stakeholders' expectations, while maintaining the program objectives and broad framework set by the Department of Home Affairs. The review, which involved significant stakeholder consultation - including impacted students, migration agents and education providers - has informed a new approach that will establish a fair and sustainable program into the future.

The ACT Nominated Skilled Migration 190 visa pathway reopened on 29 November 2018 with a merit-based assessment tool that replaced the former

‘first-in, first-served’ system. The rank and select merit-based application process was the preferred stakeholder outcome in the review of the ACT 190 nomination program.

The merit-based assessment system allows the ACT Government to better manage demand and select the most suitable applicants for nomination. It is now anticipated the program will no longer need to be closed, without notice, to manage demand.

Overseas and Canberra-based candidates, including international students affected by the 29 June 2018 program restrictions, may express their interest in ACT 190 nomination by completing a score-based Canberra matrix. Candidates accumulate points against the various measures of demonstrated economic contribution or benefit and/or a genuine commitment to be part of the ACT, and are then ranked. Candidates who were resident in Canberra on or before 29 June 2018 are allocated additional points in the matrix as a transitional measure.

On 16 November 2018 the Department of Home Affairs increased the 2018-19 national allocation for State/Territory 190 nomination to 19,600 places; with the ACT allocation increased by 600 to a total of 1,400 nomination places for 2018-19. With the increased 2018-19 allocation, there are now approximately 1,100 places available for the ACT 190 nomination in this financial year.

It is important to understand that international student visas for study at Australian institutions are aimed at supporting an educational outcome. Students who choose and pursue a course and place of study based on an intention to qualify for permanent residency do so at their own volition. The ACT Government does not actively promote the ACT Skilled Nominated 190 program to international students through any media or marketing campaigns, nor can the ACT Government be accountable for how intermediaries and interested third parties present this pathway to their clients.

The Government understands the uncertainty that the June 2018 program closure created for some international students, but we have re-set the 190 visa program so it is fairer and more sustainable.

### **Phillip precinct code—petitions 12-18 and 20-18**

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for Planning and Land Management, dated 9 January 2019, in response to petitions lodged by Ms Le Couteur on 23 October 2018 concerning amendment to the Phillip precinct code.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 23 October 2018 regarding petition Nos 12-18 and 20-18 lodged by Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA on behalf of 83 residents of the Australian Capital Territory, with the principal petitioner of petition 12-18 being Ms Fiona Carrick.

I understand the petition brings to the attention of the ACT Legislative Assembly concerns about the overshadowing impacts of the 'Wova' development (DA201833492) and requests the Assembly calls on Government to amend the Phillip Precinct Code. The requested amendments are to position buildings to remove overshadowing impacts to Bellerive Retirement Village, to reduce building heights to a maximum of 48m and to reduce the number of buildings.

While I appreciate the concerns raised through this petition, unfortunately this petition was lodged with the Assembly on 23 October 2018, after the development application for 'Wova' was approved with conditions by the independent planning and land authority on 28 September 2018.

The proposal for 'Wova' was initially presented to the interim National Capital Design Review Panel, which supported the design while raising concerns with the overshadowing impact of the proposal. The development application for 'Wova' on Block 17, Section 3 Phillip was lodged in April 2018, which proposed a building (Building 4) extending to 24 storeys fronting Melrose Drive.

Following the initial assessment, and having regard to the concerns raised through representations, an amendment was lodged which included a reduction in the height of Building 4 to 16 storeys, tapering down to 12 storeys. This substantially reduced the overshadowing of Bellerive.

Due to concerns with the building form, the development application was approved with a condition that Building 4 be reduced in height to 12 storeys. However, I am advised that a reconsideration application has been lodged by the applicant with regard to this condition.

Development within the Woden Town Centre is controlled by the Territory Plan, particularly the *Commercial Zones Development Code* and the *Phillip Precinct Map and Code*. During 2018, *Variation 344 Woden Town Centre* (V344) amended the *Phillip Precinct Map and Code*. This incorporated a range of planning control recommendations from the approved *Woden Town Centre Master Plan* and introduced a range of provisions to manage the built form within the town centre and protect solar access to dwellings within and surrounding the centre.

Prior to the introduction of V344, there were no controls in place to manage solar access impacts to surrounding dwellings from development within the town centre. One of the new provisions of the precinct code, i.e. Criterion 11, permits development up to 24 storeys on Block 17 Section 3 (the Wova site) provided the development does not significantly impact on the existing solar access of nearby residential development between 9am and 3pm on the winter solstice (21 June).

This provision was included in response to a recommendation by the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. The Draft Variation 344 was subsequently tabled in the Legislative Assembly for five sitting days and approved with no disallowance motions being made. The new provisions in the Territory Plan are considered to be appropriate to protect the amenity for residents of the area while facilitating development within the town centre.

Given that the approved development was amended to reduce overshadowing impacts, and the Phillip Precinct Map and Code already incorporates provisions

to reduce overshadowing impacts from development on Block 17 Section 3 Phillip, it is considered that no further action is necessary with regard to this petition.

### **Drone delivery trial—petition 23-18**

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries, dated 18 January 2019, in response to a petition lodged by Ms J Burch on 29 November 2018 concerning commercial drone delivery trials.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 29 November 2018 regarding petition No 23-18 lodged by Mrs Joy Burch MLA on behalf of certain residents of the ACT calling on the Assembly to cease the Wing Australia (Wing) drone delivery trial in Bonython ACT and any future drone delivery trials in the ACT.

The ACT Government has responded to many of the concerns identified in the petition previously. There has also been debate within the Assembly, and in November 2018 the Assembly resolved to hold an inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT.

Regarding the trial in Bonython, Wing are trialling an entirely new business model that utilises drones to deliver small parcels to residential dwellings. This trial provides an opportunity for the ACT and national regulators (including the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)) to learn about the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging delivery drone technology, including community concerns about noise, privacy and safety.

CASA is the entity responsible for regulating the safe operation of drones throughout Australia. CASA has provided Wing approval for the trial in Bonython under relevant Commonwealth Government aviation safety regulation.

The ACT Government's role in the trial has been to facilitate a temporarily licence for the use of a site in Greenway for the take-off and storage of drones. This licence was issued 20 February 2018 and expires 15 February 2019. Wing have paid a commercial rate for this service. Wing have indicated that their service will conclude on, or prior to, 15 February 2019 and no extension to the current licence will be sought.

The ACT Government provides this licence as a form of business support that would see increased business investment in the ACT as well as provide a range of other opportunities including:

- fostering innovation and new business models in the ACT that contribute to the technology innovation ecosystem in the ACT;
- promoting further business investment in Canberra;
- engaging with technologies that can reduce: transport carbon dioxide emissions, road infrastructure use and traffic congestion; and increase the access to services and independence of some members of the community and region; and

- building on the reputational advantages that come from being a city that engages productively with innovation and research.

Wing announced in November 2018 that it will be establishing an ongoing commercial drone delivery service from a commercial premises from Mitchell from 2019. Wing are able to purchase or lease premises suitable for its needs, like any other business. Regulatory bodies such as CASA will need to provide approval under Commonwealth Government regulations prior to Wing commencing operations from this new location. The ACT Government welcomes this business investment in Canberra.

In recognition that the service operates in a suburban area the ACT Government licence limits the operating hours of the trial to 7am to 8pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 8pm on Sunday. This is similar to restrictions placed on other activities that create noise in suburban areas like lawn mowing. I understand feedback from residents regarding noise has also led Wing to change their hours of operation, slow down their drones and trial new quieter drones to respond to community concerns.

The ACT Government licence for the trial is also subject to Wing complying with the Australian Privacy Act 1988. The Privacy Principles under the Act impose strict conditions on both the security and permitted use of personal information.

Wing have undertaken a range of community engagement activities prior to and during the Bonython trial. How Wing wishes to present the outcomes of their technology trial and its engagements with community is their business decision. The ACT Government has not and does not, intend on undertaking community engagement on behalf of Wing. It is not usual for the ACT Government to undertake community engagement on behalf of a private company.

Wing have maintained a comment to community engagement ahead of commencing operations in Mitchell presenting to local community councils and engaging community members at a range of locations in the Gungahlin area.

I trust that this information is of assistance to the Assembly and thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

### **Motion to take note of petitions**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Pursuant to standing order 98A, I move:

That the petitions and responses so lodged be noted.

### **Motorcycle parking in Forrest—petition 22-18**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (10.04): I would like to talk very briefly to the petition lodged in my name calling for additional motorcycle parking. As a keen motorcyclist myself, I believe that motorcycling is always a good option for people trying to reduce the congestion on our roads and to improve parking facilities. It is always a good look to try to find easier parking that takes up less room. I am working with the

ACT government to try to find better motorcycle parking across the parliamentary triangle. I look forward to hearing the results from the government on this petition.

### **Canberra Sexual Health Centre—petition 2-19**

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (10.05): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and welcome back. I want to speak briefly in support of the petition under your name regarding the Canberra Sexual Health Centre. The Canberra Sexual Health Centre is a valuable community institution. I think we could all be in agreement in this place that its staff are first rate. The care there is exceptional and the demand is increasing. There is major growth in walk-in clients and, scarily, STIs are increasing. We have heard that repeatedly, especially over the last year, from the Chief Health Officer. For that reason, we need more services, and they need to be in locations that are fit for purpose.

The Sexual Health Centre's building is, regrettably, outdated. Having attended the facility and seen firsthand the excellent work that is done there, I do wonder myself how it will continue to meet demand in the current facilities. A needs assessment for a new sexual health centre would be sensible, as would a satellite site. I note, pleasingly, that last year the government was running a pilot satellite centre after hours at the Belconnen and Tuggeranong community health centres, in partnership with another excellent organisation, the AIDS Action Council.

We heard in annual reports hearings that the ACT government, thankfully, is actively considering whether there is sufficient staffing and sufficient infrastructure to deal with what we are finding regarding STIs and the care that we can be giving in respect to that. I think it makes a lot of sense that clinical testing be considered in our walk-in centres and also that something like chlamydia testing take place at Groovin the Moo.

I very much hope that the government carefully consider the contents of this petition in their response, and I very much look forward to it.

### **Light rail stage 2—direct alignment—petition 13-18**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (10.07): I am speaking to the petition from Woden residents about the light rail. I point out that this is not about whether it is light rail or another form of transport. It is about the route of the transport. This is a matter of great importance to transport users in the Woden Valley and, of course, places further south. Currently the people such as me who use, say, the Blue Rapid from Kambah or Mawson to the city are very well served by public transport. It is a fast, direct service. Most of the time the bus makes it from Woden to the city in 16 minutes or less—sometimes down to 12. It is regularly done in 13. People are very happy with this service. It is very popular. ACTION has had to put on extra services because it is so popular.

The residents behind this petition are concerned that this fast, direct service could be lost when light rail starts. In June 2018 the government announced that light rail via the Barton dogleg would take between 20 and 30 minutes from Woden to the city. That is almost a doubling of the travel time for those who start in Woden. Those who

start south of Woden will have to transit from the bus to the light rail. This will add at least an extra five minutes.

For people in Gungahlin or the city who want to go to Barton, of course the Barton dogleg is a good thing. There are also people in Woden who go to Barton and they would benefit. However, the reality is that more people—particularly, of course, more of my constituency—want to go from Woden to the city. Thus the Barton dogleg is a backwards step for them. Unfortunately, many of them have said to me that they would start driving if the travel time increases. That would be very regrettable.

Of course, there are many possible solutions to this. I have raised these before. One option would be to design the infrastructure and the timetable to allow for express services. This is also one of the points the petition makes. You could run the services that go express from Woden to Barton, and then on to the city. This would be a lot quicker because there is a real delay at each stop.

Another option would be to keep the Blue Rapid running in parallel with light rail. After all, the light rail with the Barton dogleg is actually servicing a different piece of Canberra than the direct city to Woden services. I imagine this would be particularly attractive to the people in Tuggeranong going to the city because then they would not have to change at Woden.

Interestingly, since this petition was started, the government announced that it would look at a State Circle option, which would not include the Barton dogleg. I am sure that many of the people who signed this petition would welcome that. Certainly, the feedback that I have had from the people in my electorate is that they prefer the State Circle option on the assumption that it would be quicker than the Barton dogleg.

With the Blue Rapid we have public transport that is as fast as a private car. This is one of the ways that we can really encourage public transport use, to have it as fast as the alternative. Certainly, if we are going to address our greenhouse gas issues, we need to increase the amount of public transport and decrease individual private car use.

I think this is important. It certainly would appear to be one of the guiding principles behind the new bus network, the planned network 19. I urge the government, when they are considering the various options for light rail, to consider the people in my electorate and the people beyond in Brindabella who use public transport, and to make sure that the light rail route is such that it best serves their needs as well as the needs of all of Canberra.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Report 4**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (10.12): Pursuant to order, I present the following report:

*Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 4—Report on inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the Motor Accident Injuries Bill 2018, dated*

14 December 2018, including additional comments (*Mr Pettersson and Ms Cody*) and a dissenting report (*Mrs Jones*), together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

In a personal capacity, I note that I made a dissenting report. The committee received 75 detailed submissions from key stakeholders and interested individuals, with the vast majority of these being scathing about the proposed bill. The substantial evidence received by the committee showed that most aspects of the proposed new scheme would lead to a CTP scheme where insurance profitability is favoured over proper compensation for significantly injured victims.

The evidence received made it apparent that large insurance companies stand to gain the most under the proposed changes, at the expense of innocent victims of motor vehicle accidents. Throughout the entire process, the government did not appear to have asked victims what changes they believed would have improved the scheme.

Rather, it brought a theoretical perspective to what the government believes would be a better scheme. I have therefore recommended that the bill not be supported by the Assembly. Other committee members have taken a different view. My recommendation personally is that the ACT government begin again to genuinely seek improvements to the current CTP scheme. The government should propose an improved scheme which benefits the community as a whole and not simply insurance companies.

I move:

That the report be noted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 26**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (10.14): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 26, dated 5 February 2019, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

**MRS JONES:** Scrutiny report 26 contains the committee's comments on 11 bills, 19 pieces of subordinate legislation, three national regulations, one regulatory impact statement, five government responses, one private member's response and proposed amendments to the Controlled Sports Bill 2018. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

## **Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee Report 5**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (10.15): I present the following report:

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee—Report 5—*Inquiry into the Future Sustainability of Health Funding in the ACT*, dated 11 December 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

On 14 December 2018 the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services tabled its fifth report for the Ninth Assembly. As 14 December was not a sitting day, the committee is today presenting its report to the Assembly. This report presents the committee's findings from its inquiry into the future sustainability of health funding in the ACT, which was self-referred in November 2017.

Following the self-referral of this inquiry, the committee adopted comprehensive terms of reference, which included examination of the following matters: the efficiency of current health financing; the nature of health funding; the sources and interactions of health financing; the population, demographic and technological impacts on health financing; the relationship between hospital financing and primary, secondary and community care; the funding of future capital needs; and relevant experiences and learnings from other jurisdictions.

The committee received 17 written submissions from a range of peak bodies and organisations, as well as the ACT government. In addition to the evidence provided in submissions, the committee considered evidence presented by other jurisdictions, relevant literature, and data provided by ACT Health, the Productivity Commission, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The committee resolved to report to the Assembly on matters discussed in submissions and evidence presented through research, as well as results from the committee's deliberations. The committee made 13 recommendations relating to preventative health, primary and community health services, digital health, patient-focused health services and value-based health care.

The committee acknowledges that the ACT is not the only jurisdiction that has identified that the continued health expenditure growth is unsustainable. The committee further acknowledges the importance of ensuring that the future trajectory of health funding remains sustainable while maintaining high quality services and good health outcomes for the ACT community.

The committee hopes that the recommendations will provide support for and enhance the future sustainability of health funding in the ACT. The committee wishes to thank all those who have contributed to this inquiry by making a submission. The committee also appreciates the efforts taken by the peak bodies, organisations, and the ACT government in providing such detailed submissions.

I would also like to take this time to thank other members of the committee, both past and present, all of whom contributed to the report that is being presented today. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Statement by chair**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (10.18): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A.

I wish to inform the Assembly that during the applicable reporting period, 1 July to 31 December 2018, the committee considered the proposed appointment of three members and the reappointment of four members to the ACT Radiation Council. In the committee's response to the minister, the committee noted that all statutory appointments to the ACT Radiation Council were due to expire on the same date.

During the applicable reporting period, the committee also considered the proposed appointment of the administrator of the national health funding pool for the ACT. In the committee's response to the minister, the committee proposed that the minister seek advice from the Solicitor-General regarding the legislative requirement for the committee's consideration of this statutory appointment prior to the expiration of the administrator's current appointment period.

Madam Speaker, I present the following paper:

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee—Schedule of  
Statutory Appointments—9th Assembly—Period 1 July to 31 December 2018.

## **Government priorities 2019**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events and Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment) (10.20): I am very pleased to have this opportunity this morning, at the start of a new parliamentary year, to reflect on the important work that the territory government has underway and to outline our priorities for 2019.

Madam Speaker, the development of an integrated public transport network for Canberra, a fairer tax system for our city, increased investment in better local schools

and public health care, the shift to powering Canberra with 100 per cent renewable electricity, more inclusive social policies, attracting new businesses and creating good jobs in our key industry sectors by opening our city to the world—these are all the promises that we made at the 2016 election and this is what we are focused on delivering in this parliamentary term.

Our agenda is to continue making Canberra more inclusive, more progressive and more connected. In 2019 this will mean getting on with the job of delivering the better infrastructure, better services and better community supports that we promised.

Our city is a great place to live, and more and more people are choosing to make our city and the surrounding region their home. As we speak today, Canberra's population is over 420,000 people and it will reach half a million in the next 10 years. We understand that it is our role and responsibility as a territory government to cater for these new arrivals so that Canberra families are not stuck in traffic jams or left struggling to access the healthcare and education services that they need.

That is why we have work underway on a half-billion-dollar expansion of the Canberra Hospital, along with other community health facilities. Late last year, we confirmed the location of the new SPIRE centre that will deliver more and better emergency and specialist healthcare services. In the next few months, the government will consider the full business case for this important project so that we can get on with letting tenders and getting shovels into the ground.

We will deliver territory-wide health care, open an expanded and upgraded emergency department at Calvary Public Hospital, focus on continuing to bring down waiting times and deliver 14,000 elective surgeries this financial year. Canberrans can also expect to see a clear focus on improving the culture of public health workplaces in Canberra, as the government implements the recommendations of the independent review into workplace culture.

We will also begin delivering on our commitment for two new paramedic crews and five new state-of-the-art ambulances, fitted with electronic stretchers, power loaders and brand-new defibrillators. This adds to the 23 new paramedics and two new ambulances delivered last year and shows that the government is continuing to invest in core emergency services as our city grows.

Being a truly inclusive city means ensuring that everyone has fair and equal access to justice, whether they are a victim, they are accused of a crime or they have been involved in a civil case. Following extensive consultation with the disability and legal communities, we will finalise a disability justice strategy for the ACT in the first half of 2019, delivering on another 2016 election commitment.

In education, we are in the process of delivering more public schools and more student places at existing schools. With the 2019 school year comes the opening of the Margaret Hendry School, Gungahlin's newest primary school. Located in the suburb of Taylor, the school will ensure that children in Canberra's fastest growing region can continue to find a place at a great local school close to their home. We are also

adding around 1,000 places to existing schools across the city, and work is well underway this year to deliver another full new school in the Molonglo Valley.

The Deputy Chief Minister is continuing to develop the model and framework for our commitment towards providing free early childhood education to every three-year-old in the ACT, up to 15 hours per week, in addition to the existing arrangement for children in the year before full-time school.

Stage 1 of Canberra's light rail network is nearing completion and a significantly expanded new bus network will commence in late April, with the 2018-19 budget review delivering new initiatives to support the commencement of Canberra's integrated transport system.

Minister Fitzharris is now progressing planning for stage 2 of Canberra's light rail network, with the current work focused on securing commonwealth environmental and planning approvals as quickly as possible. Bring on the federal election, Madam Speaker. The light rail route from Civic to Woden is an important link in the city's future transport network as well as a significant new project in our city's forward infrastructure plan, and the government is determined to get on with building it.

Getting on with delivering these important health, education and transport infrastructure projects is a top priority for government in 2019 because we understand that they are essential for protecting and improving Canberra's livability in the 2020s and beyond.

Minister Stephen-Smith and I will soon sign a new 10-year ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement, along with the chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Head of Service. The new agreement will continue to set out the ongoing commitment of the ACT government, the elected body and the community to recognise and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT. I take this opportunity to thank the elected body for the significant consultation and work that has gone into developing this new agreement.

Madam Speaker, we recognise that owning a home or finding secure, affordable and suitable housing is a challenge for many Australians and many Canberrans. We will continue to focus on improving housing affordability and housing supply in 2019 because we know that this is central to our city's inclusiveness.

Last year Minister Gentleman launched the ACT planning strategy refresh, which steps through the important choices that we face about our city's growth. This year we will build on that work by undertaking a review of the Territory Plan to ensure that we are delivering more efficient outcomes and a focused planning system that results in better design outcomes and protects what people love most about our city.

We are also committed to raising the quality of buildings in Canberra so that residents can have confidence in the homes and apartments that they buy. To do this we will ensure that those who hold a licence have the appropriate knowledge. It will increase the level of design documentation that needs to be provided so that builders can have

an appropriately detailed plan to build to, and we will develop codes of practice for builders and certifiers to ensure adequate supervision of the building process.

We know that if we want to protect what is unique about Canberra and ensure that we continue to be the bush capital, we must—we simply must—contain our urban sprawl and combine greenfield developments with urban renewal in our CBD, in our town centres and along our dedicated transport corridors. That is the way we can protect our city's suburbs and protect the surrounding bushland whilst avoiding Sydney-style commutes for our residents.

This approach is making more homes available that are within reach for first homebuyers and single-income families. From 1 July this year, first homebuyers will get more support to purchase their first home, with the government fully abolishing stamp duty for eligible first homebuyers, whether they want to live in a newly built home or an existing property in an established suburb. This is a potential saving of tens of thousands of dollars for young Canberrans looking to get into the housing market for the first time and is a significant achievement of the government's tax reform agenda.

This year will see the completion of the first stage of our public housing renewal program, which is replacing nearly 1,300, or around 10 per cent, of Canberra's oldest public housing dwellings with new, modern, energy efficient homes that will suit the needs of current and future tenants.

But we are not stopping there, Madam Speaker. We have already announced that the next phase of our investment in public housing will deliver an additional \$100 million into the sector, to build up to 200 new homes and renew another 1,000 homes over the next five years. In this period of government and the next period of government that would be fully one-fifth of all public housing in the territory being renewed. This work will get underway in the second half of this year so that we can keep the momentum going from the public housing renewal program to deliver even more new and renewed homes for Canberrans.

This forms part of a wider ACT housing strategy that will tackle a range of housing challenges across the spectrum, from homelessness to renters' rights, to make sure that Canberrans can find the right place to call home. The implementation of the strategy has already kicked off, with initiatives funded in the budget review, and there is more to come throughout the year.

We will also continue to ensure that all Canberrans have access to the high quality city and community services they deserve, wherever they live. Minister Steel is overseeing the rollout of green bins, with all Canberrans to have access to a green bin by April of this year. We are undertaking a program to build new playgrounds and upgrade existing ones through a \$1.9 million community-led play spaces forum.

Madam Speaker, the ACT has one of the fastest growing economies in the country. Our city's population is growing because more people are finding secure, well-paying jobs in our city and are choosing to settle here. Canberra's unemployment rate is now 3.6 per cent; that is a full 1.4 percentage points lower than the national rate. And we

continue to have the lowest rates of unemployment anywhere in Australia. This success did not happen by accident, and we must continue to diversify our economy and support more job creation for Canberrans from all backgrounds.

Over the coming year, the ACT government will continue to engage in a range of discussions with community stakeholders about the opportunities posed by emerging industries. We will begin community consultations to refine the government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement policy. We will also continue discussions with the University of New South Wales about establishing a new UNSW Canberra city campus. Education is a vital part of the territory's economy, and the establishment of a new UNSW Canberra city campus could see thousands of new students coming to Canberra to study.

To maintain our strong economy and create new growth opportunities, Canberra must also connect with opportunities beyond our city's borders. This is why we will continue to strengthen our connections in the Canberra region government to council and business to business, and strengthen our transport connections by road and by rail.

We are also working to link Canberra with other cities in Australia and around the world that can grow and diversify our economy. We will continue to better connect Canberra by working to attract more direct flights from Canberra Airport. We are particularly focusing on international connections to China, New Zealand and the United States via New Zealand, and domestically to Hobart, and the attraction of low cost carriers to Canberra. This will benefit the community as a whole by generating more business for local companies, producers and creators, and give more opportunities to expand and grow into new markets.

Madam Speaker, in addition to the great initiatives we have planned or those that are well underway, we will continue to utilise this place, the Legislative Assembly, as the vehicle to drive important reforms for Canberra.

In forthcoming sitting weeks, I will introduce legislation to reform the ACT's compulsory third-party insurance scheme. At present, the scheme does not cover everyone injured in a motor vehicle accident, something that comes as a surprise to many Canberrans. Payouts can take more than two years, and Canberrans still pay among the highest premiums in the country. The government's changes will deliver a fairer accident insurance scheme—a no-fault scheme, Madam Speaker—that will better protect all Canberrans on our roads.

We will implement more recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse by amending legislation to enhance the operation of our working with vulnerable people scheme, and further legislative reforms to ensure that the confessional seal cannot be used as a shield to protect perpetrators of sexual violence against children.

Minister Ramsay will continue his exceptional efforts to limit the harm caused by problem gambling by reducing—significantly reducing—the number of electronic gaming machines in the ACT. The voluntary surrender scheme developed by the

attorney has been incredibly successful. The response from industry has been very strong, I am pleased to say, and we will have more to say on this in the coming days.

This year the government will deliver on our commitment to establish the ACT's first drug and alcohol court to engage high-risk, high-needs offenders whose criminal activity is associated with drug and alcohol dependence. Substance abuse has a strong link to criminal offending, and evidence suggests that drug courts are effective at reducing both reoffending and substance abuse.

From 1 July this year, the ACT's new integrity commission will begin taking submissions. Canberrans rightly expect transparency and accountability from their government and public officials, and the establishment of the ACT integrity commission, combined with our progressive reforms to freedom of information rules and legislation to ban developer donations to all political parties in the ACT, will deliver on this expectation and on the government's election commitment.

Finally, when it comes to combating climate change, the ACT is and will continue to be an Australian and global leader. Tackling climate change is not just an environmental imperative; it is an economic necessity. Communities and governments are finally starting to understand this, and they are acting. In the ACT we started this journey many, many years ago, and we will meet our goal. I thank the Canberra community for their commitment to making this journey.

We have invested in many clean energy projects, projects necessary to achieve 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2020. This year we will make it clear that 100 per cent renewable energy is the standard Canberrans expect, when Minister Rattenbury introduces legislation to enshrine this target into law. In addition to our 100 per cent renewable electricity target, we have set a nation-leading target to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

In 2019 we will release two major strategies, our next climate action plan and the new transport strategy, to ensure that Canberra remains Australia's most sustainable city over the coming decades. We are leading the way, showing other governments in this country, particularly at the federal level, how this can be done. This is something that future generations will appreciate more than we can possibly realise now.

Madam Speaker, over the past two years we have made a lot of headway on delivering the better Canberra that we promised. In 2019 we are focused on making more progress with the important infrastructure projects that this city will need in the years and decades to come, whilst continuing to deliver legislative reform that reflects—and strongly reflects—this community's progressive values and will make our city more inclusive and a better place to live for all Canberrans and all future Canberrans.

We have a lot to do, Madam Speaker, but as a government we are committed to what we took to the 2016 election. We are committed to getting on with that job. That will be our focus through 2019 and 2020. I present the following paper:

Government priorities for 2019—Ministerial statement, 12 February 2019.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **ACT Ambulance Service Ministerial statement**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (10.38): Over the past three years our ACT Ambulance Service—ACTAS—has been undergoing change. This has been guided by the blueprint for change. The blueprint for change arose from a number of reviews into our ambulance service and was directed towards improving a number of things, including culture.

I want to thank all staff within ACTAS for their perseverance and their approach to the blueprint for change. The last few years have not been easy, but by working together, working as a team across ACTAS, the staff have helped make changes for the better.

I would like to provide the Assembly with a report on the ACT Ambulance Service blueprint for change project. On 18 March 2015, you, Madam Speaker, as former Minister for Police and Emergency Services, released *Enhancing Professionalism: a blueprint for change*, and I want to thank you for the work you did. The blueprint for change arose from a number of reviews into ACTAS, including a review of the prevalent culture, and it made eight recommendations.

The blueprint for change has provided the framework for ACTAS and the ACT Emergency Services Agency—ESA—as a whole to enhance professionalism by improving cultural standards and addressing workplace concerns around trust, conflict resolution and leadership.

I am very happy to report that all eight of the original blueprint for change recommendations are substantially addressed or have been completed. In light of this, the blueprint for change oversight committee has recognised that a transition of governance and oversight to ACTAS “business as usual” is now required. I can update the Assembly on each of the eight recommendations as follows.

Recommendation 1, adoption of an implementation charter, has been achieved. The implementation charter was endorsed at the October 2015 meeting of the oversight committee and updated in 2016. It was the action plan for the blueprint for change and was developed after extensive stakeholder consultation. In March 2016 ACTAS and the Transport Workers Union also agreed to sign a joint accord, committing to work together to deliver the recommendations arising from the blueprint.

As part of the transition a new blueprint governance and compliance committee will be established, with the implementation charter to be updated and endorsed by the new committee. Reporting will be to the Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate on a quarterly basis, and the director-general will be accountable to me on a continuing basis to progress this work.

Recommendation 2, professionalism as a cultural standard, is substantially addressed. The achievement of professionalism as a cultural standard involves considerable hard work and commitment from all staff across ACTAS. The ESA commissioner and the chief officer of ACTAS have both issued statements of commitment. Significant investment in training for behavioural change has been undertaken, including values in practice; respect, equity and diversity; respectful workplace; and difficult conversations training.

The blueprint for change report also spoke of the need to progress the paramedic profession to achieve registration nationally. I am pleased to recognise this achievement, with all ACT paramedics now registered under the national registration and accreditation scheme.

The Chief Officer ACTAS, Mr Howard Wren, is also one of the nine members on the Paramedicine Board of Australia, under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, or AHPRA. The board is responsible for a range of key steps in preparing for registration and regulation of the paramedic workforce, including the preparation of draft national standards. On the board Mr Wren represents the interests of the three smaller jurisdictions—the ACT, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Recommendation 3, ACTAS emergency services leadership framework, has been achieved. The ACTAS leadership toolbox, comprising the ACTAS leadership framework, the leadership expectations statement and the behavioural interview guide, has been issued to all staff, after extensive stakeholder consultation. Online resources have also been developed to embed the culture of leadership in ACTAS.

The project board will continue to set measurement criteria for remaining implementation project products and the blueprint program outcomes. This will include measures of the success of deeply embedding the ACTAS leadership framework into recruitment, promotion, staff development, performance management and the wider fabric of ACTAS human resources practice.

Recommendation 4, 360-degree feedback of leaders, has been achieved. Such feedback was conducted for all managers at the rank of duty officer and above, and individual feedback has been supplied. As part of the transition the broad trends identified in the initial program will inform management and leadership development initiatives under the leadership training and support component of the blueprint for change project.

Recommendation 5, leadership development, is substantially progressed. A number of important blueprint initiatives, including values in practice; respect, equity and diversity training; respectful workplace and difficult conversations training; and the

ACTAS leadership framework, have included discrete managers and supervisors sessions as part of their implementation.

As part of the transition, further work is required to set a strategic vision and to operationalise the expected behaviours agreed on in the ACTAS leadership framework at all levels in ACTAS. This work will be progressed by the chief officer of ACTAS. Targeted leadership training and development will be developed with the integration of the capabilities identified in the ACTAS leadership framework into the ACTAS staff development and performance framework through 2019.

Recommendation 6, staff workshop series, has been achieved. Five facilitated workshops were held for all staff in 2015 to canvass areas of concern and to set priorities. The schedule of issues arising from the facilitated workshops formed the body of work progressed and discussed in project working and focus groups, which met on 48 occasions in 2016 and 2017. Nine focus groups, three of which continue to meet, are finalising recommendations for action on the discrete issues of concern. The ACTAS staff consultative forum has been established as a standing committee and has met on 11 occasions to date and provides an ongoing opportunity for staff engagement.

Recommendation 7, communication strategy, has been achieved. The adoption of the blueprint for change internal communications strategy, which has been reviewed, updated and endorsed on several occasions, provides the capstone guidance to enable effective product delivery within the blueprint for change project and assists in aligning the activities and deliverables to the broader objectives of the ESA. The ACTAS staff consultative forum is also tasked with improving internal communications. The project board will continue to review and update the internal communications strategy.

Recommendation 8, governance and measurement, has been substantially addressed but will remain an ongoing requirement. As part of the governance structure of the blueprint for change project, the blueprint for change oversight committee was established in 2015 and met on 15 occasions. The oversight committee was established to provide strong governance and to report on the progress of blueprint for change recommendations.

This oversight committee was headed up by an independent chair, Mr David Place, recently appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the South Australian Ambulance Service. Mr Place has been the independent chair since the inception of the oversight committee in 2015, and I want to express my gratitude to the South Australian government for making Mr Place available over the past four years.

I also want to acknowledge the leadership of Howard Wren, our chief ambulance officer. He has brought about a more inclusive workplace and one that has built on the blueprint for change.

Making change and ensuring that our paramedics and ACTAS staff are looked after is no easy task, and I want to thank the Transport Workers Union for their dedication and passion in ensuring that our community has the best ambulance service. Without

their help and work on the blueprint for change, we would not be where we are today. It is another example of the way unions help to improve our workplaces and ensure our community has the services we need.

The oversight committee also includes representatives from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, the ESA commissioner, and an ACTAS staff representative. I want to thank each of these individuals for all of the hours they have put in. ACTAS staff do a difficult and demanding job, often under stressful conditions, and I acknowledge their work and the sacrifices they and their families make. In particular, I want to thank all the ACTAS personnel who have contributed to the blueprint work, and for their patience and understanding as the blueprint has been progressively worked through.

Following each oversight committee meeting, Mr Place has provided me and my predecessors with quarterly summaries on the progress of the blueprint for change project. Mr Place has provided a vital independent assurance that this process is rigorous and well governed. His quarterly ministerial advice has been frank and constructive and has provided invaluable oversight of the actioning of the blueprint for change recommendations.

Mr Place's latest advice, in September 2018, was that the blueprint for change project was ready to convert into business as usual, and that the December 2018 meeting would be his last meeting as chair of the oversight committee. As part of the converting the blueprint for change project into business as usual, the blueprint project team drafted a transition plan which was approved by the final oversight committee meeting on 13 December 2018.

I was pleased to attend the final Oversight Committee meeting where I was briefed on the status of all the recommendations of the blueprint for change project. I was also provided with information on the progress towards converting the blueprint for change project into business as usual into the future, and this forms the information I have just provided to the Assembly in this ministerial statement.

At the final oversight committee meeting I also had the privilege of awarding Mr Place an ACTAS meritorious service medal. I did this on behalf of ACTAS in recognition of Mr Place's professionalism, strategic leadership and support of ACTAS through the oversight committee.

As the project enters its final stage, ACTAS is extremely well positioned to deliver the remaining outcomes. As mentioned, it will now transition from the oversight committee to the governance and compliance committee. The new committee will seek the input of independent representatives to ensure that a variety of perspectives continue to be considered in the final delivery phases.

In addition to Mr Place, I want to pass on my gratitude to all of the members of the oversight committee for their significant contribution in progressing the recommendations of the blueprint for change project.

Staff at ACTAS do not have the easiest of jobs. And despite the negativity from those opposite the community can be assured that we have an excellent ambulance service, one that leads the nation. Our staff are being looked after, and this will be an ongoing process. This government is committed to working with our paramedics and all ACTAS staff.

The government continues to provide support for our ambulance workforce and remains focused on their health and welfare as we continue to meet community expectations. This is demonstrated with the significant funding packages announced during this term of government to date, which will deliver 53 additional paramedics, seven new ambulances, and powered stretchers in all operational ambulance vehicles. I want to thank and acknowledge all ACTAS staff for continuing to deliver the highest standards of response times and patient satisfaction to the ACT community while going through these significant reforms.

In closing I want to highlight that no workplace is immune from behavioural issues. I recognise the demanding and challenging role of paramedics and the social and mental impact it has on individuals. The blueprint for change reforms will not remove all of these demands and challenges. However, I am satisfied that the frameworks and mechanisms introduced as part of the blueprint for change project will support a more collegiate and harmonious work environment.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with the ESA commissioner, chief officer ACTAS, and the Transport Workers Union and staff from ACTAS to achieve this. The continued strong response performances by ACTAS clearly demonstrate that the community can continue to have full confidence in the capability and quality of ambulance services that are delivered by its frontline personnel on a daily basis.

I present a copy of the statement:

ACT Ambulance Service—Blueprint for Change—Ministerial statement,  
12 February 2019.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (10.52): The minister has stated that making change and ensuring that our paramedics and ACTAS staff are looked after is no easy task. That is quite right, minister: it is no easy task and is clearly beyond this minister's capacity. It is important to remember the basic facts of how paramedics have been treated under this minister. Thirty six thousand hours of overtime have been demanded of workers: over 40 per cent of all shifts were falling below the minimum crewing levels despite this huge amount of overtime, and now the minister has done away with the minimum crewing measure completely so he can avoid future scrutiny, not so his staff can enjoy an excellent work environment.

The minister might think he can continue to ignore the many failings, but the people of Canberra are seeing through it. They see through the political spin and the ham-fisted attempts to have a go at the opposition. They understand that our paramedics continue to be under significant strain just to do their jobs on a daily basis.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Electoral Amendment Bill 2018**

Debate resumed from 29 November 2019, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (10.54): My understanding is that, although we are discussing this bill in the in-principle stage today, once we have done so, we will then adjourn the debate. Much of what I say with regard to this bill will perhaps be better informed once some discussions have happened offline and in detail over the coming week or weeks.

In terms of what this bill intends to do, based on what it says, it is to encourage equality of opportunity for democratic participation. We would all agree that that is a noble intention. The question is whether the bill as it has been presented actually achieves that aim or not.

With respect to some aspects of the bill, it prohibits gifts from property developers and their close associates to MLAs, political parties, candidates and associated entities. It prohibits political entities from accepting gifts from property developers and their close associates. It amends the definition of “gift” to include the first \$250 of a contribution in a single fundraising event, and it amends the time frames for reporting of gifts.

The Greens, I note, have a series of amendments, but they have not been submitted in accordance with the new standing order requirement of 14 days so that it can go to the scrutiny committee. That is a large part of the reason why we will be delaying further consideration of the bill. No doubt Ms Le Couteur or Mr Rattenbury—whoever is speaking—will discuss some of this, but they are seeking a number of interesting changes. We have not formed a view on those changes and we look forward to discussions in the coming weeks before we can form a view.

They include increasing the cap for independents to \$60,000 from the existing \$40,000, reducing administrative funding, putting a cap of \$10,000 on donations, banning donations from gambling businesses, expanding the definition of “property developer”, abolishing the 100-metre rule and making it consistent with the federal rule, which is for a six-metre rule, and including lobbying activists. There are others suggested as well. We have not formed a view, and we look forward to those discussions with the other parties.

We will be agreeing to this in principle today because the devil very much is in the detail, not just with regard to the Greens' amendments but with regard to some of the detail within the bill, particularly when it relates to campaign finance. We have to be very careful that we do not have any unintended consequences in trying to achieve the outcome of the bill, which is to make it more equitable.

We do not want to do the reverse. It is very important that what we end up with is workable and that we do not end up with arrangements that become too problematic and difficult, and which would then prevent people from engaging in the political process. As much as we want to make sure that we do not have donations that are intended to unduly or inappropriately influence political activities, equally, we have to make sure that people are able to participate in the political process, and that includes being able to donate to any of the parties, individuals or independents that may be standing.

It is important, as well, that the rules are balanced and fair. I note that there are amendments that address gambling and gambling entities. I echo some of the comments that Mr Coe has been making. We have a highly regulated gambling sector, particularly as it relates to poker machines. We also have a situation where the government has moved for a bill and, with respect to the Labor Club and the 1973 Foundation—the entity that is there essentially to get money out of the Labor clubs and donate it back to the Labor Party—it is a matter of whether that will form part of this suite of amendments from the government.

If you are serious about legislative reform, and making make sure that we have the strongest electoral donation laws in the country, and if we want to make sure that those laws address those people in a highly regulated industry that may potentially have an influence, be it property developers or gambling entities involving poker machines, to introduce a series of amendments whereby the Labor Club and the 1973 Foundation can continue to donate to the Labor Party unfettered does smack of a certain disingenuous approach.

We look forward to working with the other political parties to make sure that we do strengthen our laws, which I think are very strong already. I think they are good laws. In the past we have seen the three parties work cooperatively together. Each party will perhaps be looking to advantage themselves. I note that some of the Greens amendments look like they are designed to do what is best for the Greens, and no doubt the same is the case with some of the Labor Party ones.

It is important that we then put some of those prejudices aside and work for what is in the best interests of the people. It should be fair and balanced, and it should strengthen our laws. We need to make sure that people can participate, that they are workable and that there is no undue or inappropriate influence on our political process. I look forward, with Mr Coe, who will be taking the lead on this from the opposition, to working with the other parties to achieve that outcome.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (11.00): Our democracy is for people, not for companies. The Greens support a very simple principle: that the people of a

jurisdiction should be the ones who influence the politicians of the jurisdiction. It is called representative democracy, and our job is to represent our electorates.

The Greens have a long history both in this place and in other parliaments of pushing for electoral reform to increase transparency and accountability and reduce hidden influences on our government. In the Seventh Assembly I was privileged to be part of the Assembly when it passed legislation to, firstly, institute a limit of \$60,000 on campaign expenditure by a candidate or by a third party in support of the candidate or party; secondly, institute a limit on donations of \$10,000 per donor per financial year; and, thirdly, ban donations from corporations or private companies. While the cap on electoral expenditure has remained, the Greens were and are disappointed that the other two provisions were removed by the Eighth Assembly.

As well as removing the restrictions on donations, the Eighth Assembly significantly increased the amount of public funding received by parties that get four per cent or more of the vote. Parties now receive \$8 per vote. Shane Rattenbury was the sole member arguing against this generosity. This shift to higher public funding was said to balance the commensurate ban on corporate donations, and the restriction to taking donations only from individuals. However, when those restrictions were removed in the Eighth Assembly, the funding for votes was not lowered back to its previous amount.

For a party that fields the full 25 candidates, the expenditure cap is \$1 million. That is, of course, both the Liberal and Labor parties, and they each received over \$700,000 in public funding after the 2016 election. The Greens received less public funding, although I note we also fielded fewer candidates, so we had a lower expenditure cap. Basically, the point is that the task of financing party campaigns has become a lot less difficult in Canberra, as for any party or individual candidate who gets at least four per cent of the vote the public purse funds a significant amount of their expenditure.

The Eighth Assembly also introduced administrative funding for parties with members in the Assembly, and this is not capped. The combination of these two sources of funding means that political parties and any individuals who are successful in getting elected to the Assembly have a lot of their campaign and operational costs paid by the public purse. Thus there is less need for other income, and the Assembly can legislate to restrict donations without significantly impacting on the capacity of successful candidates and parties to finance their campaigns and ongoing party expenses.

The Greens amendments seek to restore some of the restrictions on donations by restricting the receipt of donations to \$10,000 per year from any individual or corporate group. We are seeking to introduce a class of prohibited donors that includes not only property developers but also gambling businesses. We are seeking to rationalise ACT party financing by introducing a cap on administrative expenditure payments to parties at the equivalent of five times the maximum amount payable per MLA. This amount, which at present is around \$300,000 per annum, should be adequate to fund party administration. It should also be noted that this party administration funding was put in place to cover the additional costs of managing a

separate bank account for ACT elections, and this requirement was also removed in the last Assembly.

As well as funding issues, we are trying to improve our electoral process by amending the current 100-metre rule for canvassing to permit canvassing within six metres of a polling place, in line with the practice for federal elections, and introducing a higher expenditure cap for non-party candidates, that is, \$60,000 versus \$42,000. This recognises the lack of economies of scale available to independents in campaigns.

The Greens believe very strongly that democracy should be powered by people, not corporations, and that our electoral laws should be structured to protect this basic premise. The government's bill will restrict political donations from property developers to MLAs and political parties in the ACT. This is an item in the parliamentary agreement between ACT Labor and the ACT Greens. We, of course, are very pleased to see these amendments and we do support the bill. Our amendments simply build on the attorney's amendments and provide additional protection against undue influence.

I would like to spend a moment discussing why we think it is important to have political donation reform. It is worth noting that the reason people and corporations make political donations generally falls into two camps, and they are not mutually exclusive. Firstly, you support a politician, a party or a cause that an individual or a company believes in. Secondly, of course, it is about buying access and influence.

If the second issue were not important, it would seem very unlikely that mining companies, property developers and big banks would bother donating so much of their shareholders' money to political parties. In my opinion, and in the Greens' opinion, political donations, as I said, should be limited to people on the electoral roll. Unfortunately, the High Court has taken a different view in its interpretation of the Constitution. In 1992 two cases established the concept of implied freedom of political communication. Corporations, it seems, have a right to political communication, including through political donations.

As constitutional lawyer and academic Professor George Williams wrote in his 2017 submission to the Senate committee into the political influence of donations:

Recent High Court decisions establish clear parameters for ... reform. In particular, the decision in *Unions NSW v New South Wales* suggests that any attempt to limit donations to individuals on the electoral roll has an unacceptable risk of being struck down. On the other hand, the more recent decision in *McCloy* establishes that caps may be imposed generally upon donations, and that categories of donors may be banned where they give rise to an unacceptable risk to the political process.

The Professor of Law from the University of Queensland, Graeme Orr, concurred, noting that the *McCloy* case:

... unequivocally confirmed ... that political donations may be limited—both in their size, and even in who can make them. In doing so, the judges showed signs of a welcome embrace of political equality to temper the court's earlier fascination with political freedom.

The government's bill banning property developers from making political donations goes some way towards limiting potentially questionable donations. I understand that this was modelled off the New South Wales legislation that was upheld by the High Court in the McCloy case. That legislation, the Electoral Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 in New South Wales, also banned donations from a number of other sectors, including gambling, tobacco and liquor industries. The current New South Wales legislation, the Electoral Funding Act 2018, maintains this list of prohibited donors.

The Greens' amendments do not target alcohol or tobacco industries, and focus instead on banning gambling donations. This is because we think that gambling is much more likely to be an issue in the ACT. Unfortunately, new standing order 182A means that we had less time available to write amendments.

The McCloy case concerned property developers, rather than the other three categories of prohibited donors. It followed quite a number of cases in the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption which showed undue influence from property developers. The ACT has almost, but not yet, got a functioning integrity commission; thus there is no proven evidence of widespread corruption or similar untoward behaviour relating to the property sector.

Nonetheless, both property developers and gambling entities are in a position where relatively simple changes in government policy can have major implications for their viability and profitability. For example, the zoning or permitted uses of a particular block of land or precinct, a cap on the number of poker machines or a pre-commitment requirement for gamblers could have major financial implications for the entities who are governed by them, in particular, gambling and property development entities. Given that the value of property development and gambling businesses is so dependent on government regulations, it seems to us entirely reasonable and proportionate to ban donations from these types of businesses.

One of the issues, though, is that, despite the best of intentions, defining a property developer is quite difficult. There are numerous people and organisations who are involved in most developments. The threshold for the legislation before us today is very similar to the one in New South Wales. It relates to the number of successful development applications—three—in a given period, which is the previous seven years, or one current, open DA. Of course, only one entity submits a DA for development, so unless the developer totally utilises in-house resources, there are likely to be many people and many organisations involved in a given development, and some of these people will not be caught under the government's definition of "property development". Some of them should not be caught, because they are so peripherally involved.

This is one of the reasons why the Greens will also be seeking to limit the size of donations to \$10,000 per year. This will catch all entities. In *Lange v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* [1997], the High Court reiterated the test for determining whether legislation infringes on the implied freedom of political communication.

Anna Ross, Kate Gill-Herdman and Michael Joffe from Corrs Chambers Westgarth wrote in 2015 that the Lange test:

... requires that not only must the purpose of the provisions be compatible with the system of representative government provided for in the constitution but so too must the means adopted to achieve that purpose.

They go on to note that the High Court found that caps on political donations are valid because although such provisions target money which may be used for political communication, they also have the legitimate purpose of preventing corruption and undue influence in government by preventing the payments of large sums of money which could be used to influence decisions in favour of the donor.

While our amendments on donations are not the only ones we will be moving when we eventually debate the detail stage, the Greens do believe they are the most important. I will go through our amendments in more detail at the detail stage, which I understand will be on another day.

An open and robust electoral system is a key component in safeguarding our democracy. Politics must be of and for the people. Our policies and budget decisions must be in everyone's interests, and access and influence should not be restricted to those with the deepest pockets.

The Greens wholeheartedly support the bill in principle. We will be moving a range of amendments which we believe will further strengthen our democracy.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (11.14): The Electoral Amendment Bill 2018 meets a key government election commitment by banning political donations from property developers. This is a bill that will increase public confidence in our democratic system of government by removing perceived bias and strengthening our electoral reporting framework.

It sits alongside the government's work to create the ACT Integrity Commission and, as other members have noted, it reflects the parliamentary agreement of the Ninth Legislative Assembly. The bill, importantly, implements the key commitments made in the government's response to the Select Committee on the 2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act, a select committee I was part of and remember pretty vividly.

The bill represents the first stage of reforms that the government is developing in response to the select committee's report. The next tranche of electoral reforms will address other issues in that report, including how the communications allowance is provided to MLAs and managed under the relevant regulations and legislation, something I think we are all interested in.

The impact that existing rules and regulations about disclosure and reporting obligations for campaign activities have on MLAs will also be considered. The government is indeed committed to preventing the risk and perception of corruption and undue influence and maintaining confidence in the ACT system of representative government.

To stress the background to the ban on property developers in particular, in its inquiry the Select Committee on the 2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act recommended that political donations from property developers be banned in the ACT. For those following along at home, that was recommendation 8.

The committee examined the findings of the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption on the New South Wales Liberal Party electoral funding for the 2011 state election campaign and other matters and the New South Wales parliament Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' recommendations in its report on the inquiry into the *Final report of the expert panel—political donations*, and it considered submissions from a range of parties, community members and, of course, the Electoral Commission.

The government response to that inquiry, which was tabled here early last year, agreed with that recommendation to ban for-profit property developer donations noting that perceived influence by property developers on government decisions is a serious concern. That response noted at the time that the planning and development involved frequent decisions by government that can have enormous consequences for the value and profits of private land developers.

The public of course has a strong interest in being certain that elections are not influenced by the private wealth that results from those decisions. Nationally there has been a growing understanding that the comparative ability of large for-profit corporations to make donations far in excess of those made by members of the public has the potential to distort the representativeness of our political democracy.

The legislation as drafted ensures that the ban on donations goes no further than necessary and focuses closely on the identified risks of undue influence on elections and ACT government decisions. It is worth stressing the definition of “property developer” as it currently stands:

A person who carries on a business involving the residential or commercial development of land to sell or lease for profit.

This definition includes an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991. Associations are ineligible for incorporation if they trade or obtain pecuniary gain for members. The definition also excludes other not-for-profit corporations. This section as currently drafted includes an example of a not-for-profit company as being a Corporations Act 2001 company limited by guarantee that does not operate to obtain pecuniary gain for their members. The definition also excludes a corporation prescribed by regulation.

I know that in principle we are all pretty on board but that, after that, there are some different views in this room. But I commend the willingness to work through amendments that have been put forward of all members today, on which I expect we will be hearing from the minister as well. As Mr Hanson said, there will be a longer conversation about this in the coming weeks as the amendments are worked through, including under and through our new standing orders. I thank the Attorney-General

and other members in advance for their work on this. I think we are all in agreement that it is very important to get it right.

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (11.19), in reply: I start by thanking Mr Hanson, Ms Le Couteur, and Ms Cheyne for their contribution and their support in principle for this important matter, ensuring that we do indeed have a robust and transparent electoral system here. I also note the reality that there will be additional views and alternative views expressed at a later stage in the debate when the matter returns for consideration in detail. But this is in closing this part of the debate.

The government introduced the Electoral Amendment Bill alongside the Integrity Commission Bill late last year; they are seen together. These bills demonstrate the government's commitment to maintaining the integrity of public institutions and also ensuring community confidence in the ACT system of representative government. The Electoral Amendment Bill supports that commitment. This government is committed to improving the transparency of our public administration and strengthening our electoral reporting framework. This, as has been noted, is a key parliamentary agreement commitment.

As has also been noted, ACT Labor has already stopped accepting donations from property developers. As I stated when I introduced the bill last year, perceived influence by property developers on government decisions is a serious concern. Property developers are distinct from other businesses because their profit depends heavily on decisions that are made by government in relation to land development. Importantly in this debate, there is an evidence base in New South Wales to show that the risk of property developer donations influencing government decisions is not purely theoretical. Canberrans are entitled to know that political donations cannot unduly influence decisions about land.

The bill was also presented in the context of an evolving set of legal principles around the country. Numerous High Court judgements have recently considered the extent of the implied right of freedom of political communication. Attempts to regulate the electoral system can be and have been found unconstitutional. Similar legislation from Queensland is currently before the High Court.

It is clear that a ban on political donations by one group, by one industry or by one class of people must be supported by the strongest possible evidence. That is why this government undertook a thorough legal analysis in developing the bill. The bill carefully manages the critical task of removing the distorting influence that property developers can potentially have on development applications while maintaining the constitutional right to political communication.

The thorough evidence base and legal analysis behind this bill reflect a commitment not only to effectiveness but also, importantly, to human rights. The rights to recognition and equality, to freedom of expression and to take part in public life are all enshrined in our own Human Rights Act. Any limitations must be reasonable and

must be demonstrably justified. The government's work to implement the parliamentary agreement meets that double standard.

So, it was with some disappointment that I read late last week of amendments to be moved that would dramatically alter the legislation and target a broad range of both private and community groups. The amendments that were announced by the ACT Greens mean that today we cannot debate a straightforward implementation of our shared commitment on property developer donations. It is unfortunate that, although we share a commitment to end political donations by property developers, we were not able to move forward today.

The amendments that are proposed by the ACT Greens would, without any evidence base, ban nearly all clubs in the territory from engaging in political campaigns. They would also expand the definition of who is a property developer to capture non-profit community groups. The High Court's ruling in the case of *McCloy v New South Wales* on property developer donations depended on an evidence base, and that included numerous New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption findings.

The proposed amendments, by targeting a wide swathe of community groups and an entire industry with no such evidence, are extremely unlikely to withstand constitutional scrutiny. That is not limited to the attempt to expand the ban on who can and cannot make a political donation. The amendments would also introduce a new special expenditure cap for non-party candidates, just weeks after the High Court found differential spending caps without strong justifications in New South Wales to be unconstitutional.

These changes cannot simply be accepted or negotiated between members here. It is not a matter of what the parties in this chamber think of the politics of political funding. I note again that the fact that the Canberra Liberals have again today spoken of specifically targeting one individual or entity shows a gap they have when it comes to due process, evidence base, the rights enshrined in our constitution, or the law as stated on numerous occasions by Australia's High Court.

There are clear constitutional limits on what we can and cannot do when it comes to electoral laws. As the first law officer of this territory, I cannot in good conscience recommend that we knowingly consider legislation that would breach the implied freedom of political communication in the Australian Constitution or the rights enshrined in our Human Rights Act. That is why today, as has been flagged, we will be debating the bill in principle but will be adjourning consideration of the amendments in detail and final passage of any legislation to a later date. So long as there remain serious constitutional issues with any proposed amendments, the bill simply cannot move forward.

There are a range of other integrity measures in this bill that are worthy in their own right and that also will unfortunately not be enacted today. The bill also amends the Electoral Act to treat the total amount of a fundraising contribution as a gift for the purpose of reporting thresholds. Previously donations of up to \$250 did not need to be reported. This amendment will assure the Canberra community that parties and

candidates are accountable for their campaign activities and fundraising. The bill also introduces year-round reporting of gifts that exceed the \$1,000 disclosure threshold.

These changes also come from an evidence base. The government considered these issues in detail following the report of the Select Committee on the 2016 Election and the Electoral Act. The government will continue to progress work on the other issues that emerged from this report, such as the management of the communications allowance provided to MLAs and the disclosure and reporting obligations for campaign activities. The government will also work with the ACT Electoral Commission to ensure that our elections are fair, inclusive and transparent.

The government acknowledges that the interaction between commonwealth and state legislation continues to be the subject of High Court review. Both Queensland and commonwealth legislation are currently being tested in the case of Gary Douglas Spence v Queensland. The government is intervening in that case to protect the interests of the territory.

The integrity of public institutions is critical to a healthy democracy, and this government has delivered legislation to secure that integrity. This bill has been drafted taking into consideration human rights, High Court judgements, and relevant inquiries and reports. The result is a human rights compliant bill that focuses narrowly on the risk of influence on government decisions.

The government will continue to progress work in this space to ensure a robust system that guarantees the ongoing public confidence of Canberrans in their public institutions. I am hopeful that as members our shared commitment to transparency and fair elections will in the future allow us to pass a bill that is legally sound and is effective.

I join my colleagues in ACT Labor today in expressing my commitment to electoral laws that improve the fairness and transparency of ACT government and protect the constitutional and other rights of Canberrans to participate in our democracy.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

### **Detail stage**

Clause 1.

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

## **Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Bill 2018**

Debate resumed from 29 November 2018, on motion by **Ms Fitzharris**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR WALL** (Brindabella) (11.31): The bill before us is very straightforward and mostly technical in nature, and the opposition will be supporting it. As the minister flagged in her presentation speech late last year, the Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Bill 2018 reflects some of the findings from an external review undertaken in the 2016-17 financial year. This review focused on the governance arrangements at CIT and, amongst other things, identified that the skill set and the composition of the board membership needed some variation and revision.

The opposition supports this revision to the expertise and knowledge criteria for the board membership and understands the need to revise and clarify the role of the students and the staff representative appointments on the board. We see this revision in the skills criteria and the inclusion of some subject matter understanding as a good thing for board members. It will ensure an appropriate mix of skills present on the board to ensure a diverse membership and appropriate governance. This will also enable a stronger focus on developing industry partnerships and the networking capabilities with the corporate community and develop a further and greater connection to CIT in our local community.

In our view a smaller board reflects better corporate governance and leaves a more agile board able to react to the ever-changing landscape of the vocational education space. We agree also that changes proposed in this bill to now outdated language conventions—for example, the reference to “institute” being replaced with the reference to “CIT” and the replacement of the term “director” with “chief executive officer”—are straightforward, minor and technical but reflect a more modern and corporate view and, more importantly, the current practice within the CIT.

The Canberra Institute of Technology continues to be an important part of ACT’s educational landscape. It is important that we keep it current to ensure that it is best placed to serve the needs of a changing workforce and our economy. This bill goes some steps towards ensuring that outcome.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (11.33): The Greens are pleased to support this bill, which makes changes to the structure of the CIT board following the change from an advisory council to a board structure in 2015. A subsequent 2016-17 review of CIT’s governance arrangements has identified a small number of further changes which will enable the CIT board to operate in a more effective and responsive manner.

The Greens have long been proud supporters of CIT as a key part of our commitment to high quality and equitable education for all members of our community. We believe that quality, accessible vocational education and training, including through CIT, is crucial to Canberra’s future. We are committed to a publicly funded VET sector and we will safeguard CIT against any threat of privatisation, a threat we have seen from conservative governments across the country in recent years.

Rather than privatisation we need to continue to build a publicly funded VET sector that offers new skills and reskilling for future occupations. The VET sector will have a vital role to play in providing the training and upskilling we need for the 21st century, particularly in the areas of clean energy and climate change mitigation.

Additionally, as Minister for Mental Health I know that CIT is an important provider of training for mental health workers, including a specific program for peer support workers who are a crucial component of our mental health workforce.

The future for institutions like CIT is bright as long as governments maintain a commitment to them. CIT needs to be able to continue to identify the new and emerging skills people will need as we prepare for the jobs of the future. To do that it needs clear and efficient governance and administration processes in place. These are the kinds of organisational changes that will ensure that CIT can continue to be sustainable and provide for its staff and students.

I am particularly pleased to see that under the new board structure proposed in this bill a requirement for staff and student representation is retained. This recognises the importance of having staff and student voices at the decision-making table, something the Greens support as part of our commitment to grassroots engagement. Staff and students bring an important perspective to the CIT board by providing on-the-ground experience and current knowledge, skills which are just as valuable as the financial and governance expertise of other board members.

I believe that the revised board structure provides the right balance and skill mix to provide CIT with a professional and well-informed board to best meet the needs of the institute as an organisation and as an education provider.

The bill also makes a number of minor changes to language to better reflect CIT's current practices, which we also support. The bill will strengthen the management of CIT through its board. The Greens will always stand up for CIT and the wider VET sector as a vital part of the ACT's higher education sector, and this bill contributes to that in a small but important way. I am pleased to support this bill today and commend it to the Assembly.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (11.36): I am very excited to be speaking on what I anticipate to be the very first bill we will be passing this year. It is great to have already heard the comments of the opposition and the Greens on this, and I will expand on that as well. As both members have already noted, it is a technical bill but technical bills in this place are incredibly important, as I have noted previously with our SLABs and PABELABs.

The Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Bill 2018 implements changes to the CIT board to strengthen CIT's ability to operate effectively and implement its future-focused strategic vision. The amendments will enhance strategic direction-setting and decision-making right across the organisation with a governing board whose membership will reflect the knowledge and the expertise required to build on CIT's track record of excellence in teaching and learning, incorporating the latest technology and progressive and accessible education solutions.

CIT has been proudly part of the Canberra landscape for over 90 years. The ACT government is committed to ensuring that it maintains its strong position as the primary provider of high-quality vocational education and training in our city. On a

personal note, I was particularly pleased to be able to join with staff and students at the opening of the new CIT dental clinic in early December. They really do some remarkable work there, and their commitment and passion to that work is commendable.

Since 1928 CIT and its predecessor organisations have provided technical and further education in the ACT and surrounding regions. As the nature of training delivery and the needs of the labour market have developed, so too has CIT evolved to address those needs.

The establishment of the governing board in 2015 is just one example of CIT's adaptability and capacity to embrace a client-focused, efficient and effective service delivery model. Since then the board has supported the development and implementation of CIT's strategic vision.

In July 2016 CIT released the strategic compass 2020, which established its vision and direction under four pillars: shaping change; growing our region's economy; advancing Canberra's workforce; and transforming our business. The bill we are debating today will implement changes to the board structure to ensure that CIT is well placed to deliver the objectives of the strategic compass 2020, in particular, transforming business to meet the increasingly competitive and rapidly changing circumstances of vocational education and the training market.

As the ACT and region's largest provider CIT currently delivers structured training to approximately 20,000 students each year. The scope of training and the qualifications offered by CIT clearly demonstrate that it is a critical part of not only our economic infrastructure but also our community. CIT exemplifies the ACT government's commitment to inclusion and ensuring equitable access to training, to assist individuals to meet their needs and aspirations, and to equip them for the jobs of the future.

In recent times CIT has undertaken significant activity in response to and in collaboration with emerging industries. This ensures that the right knowledge and skills will meet and fuel the demand for capable workers in fast-growing sectors, crucial to the economic performance and sustainability of the territory.

Initiatives include purpose-built facilities that respond to contemporary needs, like the training security operation centre that opened in November 2018 to support the delivery of cyber security qualifications, and like the dental clinic that I mentioned before. It is essential that CIT is in the best position to continue to respond to local workforce development needs and the needs of a modern economy.

The new board will be well positioned to address challenges, identify new areas of demand and continue to pursue excellence as the ACT's largest public provider of vocational education and training. This bill removes the appointment of ACT government members to the board, consequently reducing the minimum number of members from nine to seven.

This level of participation was important for CIT's more recent governance journey but, as a government, we feel the time is now right to remove the positions so there is a clearer separation of government policy, development processes and board decision-making. Regardless of these changes, there are already collaborative working relationships between the ACT government and CIT but we will also look to improve how communication occurs and how we can effectively work towards our shared interests.

Just as CIT is focused on providing appropriate supports for students, the ACT government is committed to supporting CIT to build a robust framework for responsive training delivery, one that supports development of the skills and capabilities that our community, industries and economy need.

The bill maintains the maximum number of board members at 11 to ensure sufficient flexibility to provide expertise and knowledge through the potential appointments of industry experts. The ability to augment existing board members' knowledge and expertise with specialist skill sets will allow the board to appropriately oversee and ensure the comprehensive implementation of CIT's strategic vision and planning now and into the future. Maintaining this degree of flexibility will support CIT's ability to operate with a greater commercial and entrepreneurial focus in an increasingly contestable training marketplace.

A key part of any business development is, of course, identifying and prioritising need through constructive and productive stakeholder consultation. For this reason the bill retains the student and staff representative positions to ensure that the board maintains strong links to all members of the learning community. I really cannot say it better than the comments Minister Rattenbury was making before. However, the bill will clarify the intent of the staff and student positions by stipulating that, while the positions are elected by CIT staff and students, they do not act as delegates of the represented body.

Further amendments are even more technical in nature and include updates to referencing, such as replacing the term "institute" with "CIT". These are minor changes to update some outdated conventions within the Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987.

The bill strengthens the existing structure of the board to allow it to be fit for purpose, responsive and adaptive moving forward. A competent and enthusiastic board will provide the direction and the leadership that CIT needs to continue its transformation, thereby ensuring the ongoing viability of our public provider for many years to come.

The changes to the CIT board proposed by this bill will enable CIT to remain positioned as the primary public provider of vocational education and training in the ACT, delivering quality training opportunities accessible to all Canberrans. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency

Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (11.45): In closing the debate on behalf of the Minister for Vocational Education and Skills I thank members for their support of the Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Bill 2018, which will strengthen the structure and governance of the Canberra Institute of Technology board.

CIT is the largest and longest serving provider of vocational education and training in the ACT. In fact, I did my oxyacetylene welding course there in 1983. It was quite a challenge to do a four-hour evening course after working for a full day and raising three children under the age of five, particularly in winter. It was quite a challenge to ride my DT 175 motorcycle across the edge of the lake towards Reid in the cold. We would do the first two hours of practical training for a No 15 branch weld followed by two hours of theory with the heaters turned up in the back of the classroom. It was a challenge to stay awake, but we did it.

Over the last 91 years CIT, as the ACT's premier public provider, has earned the trust and respect of the ACT community and enjoys a well-deserved reputation for quality. This can be attributed to CIT's commitment to innovate, diversify and adapt to embrace opportunities and address challenges within the vocational education and training sector. The ACT government is committed to supporting CIT to deliver on their strategic objectives. This includes providing CIT with a minimum of 70 per cent of the ACT government funding for vocational education and training.

In 2014 the government supported changes to the Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987. These changes ensured that CIT's governance arrangements reflected best practice and enabled proactive engagement with industry. To ensure that CIT was best placed to implement a future-focused vision and a robust and comprehensive framework for training delivery, the ACT government committed to revising and improving CIT's governance arrangements again in 2017.

It is my understanding that the changes proposed by the Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Bill 2018 will better position CIT to achieve the objectives of CIT's strategic compass 2020 and remain agile in response to the needs of industry and our community.

CIT needs strong, skilled leadership to provide strategic direction and to evolve to meet new national standards and emerging industry and labour force demands. The proposed change to the structure of the board will ensure that the board has extensive contemporary expertise and knowledge of relevant industry business.

A highly skilled and strategically focused board is vital for CIT to navigate future challenges and strengthen its status as a leading provider of quality vocational education and training both in the ACT and nationally. These amendments will position CIT at the forefront of responding to local and national training needs in innovative ways to meet skills demand in emerging markets and drive diversification of the ACT economy. This is critical to enhancing the skill profile of the ACT community, attracting investment and building the ACT's economic independence.

I support my colleague the Minister for Vocational Education and Skills on this change and commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

**Sitting suspended from 11.49 am to 2.00 pm.**

## **Ministerial arrangements**

**MR BARR:** As members would be aware, Minister Fitzharris is away ill from the Assembly this week. Minister Rattenbury will take questions in the health portfolio, Minister Steel in the transport portfolio and Minister Stephen-Smith in the higher education portfolio.

## **Questions without notice** **Economy—asset recycling**

**MR COE:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister, particularly in his capacity as Treasurer. Mr Barr, in relation to the asset recycling initiative, what public housing and other items are yet to be put on the market?

**MR BARR:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question; and welcome back, everyone, to a happy new parliamentary year. There are, I believe, a small number of properties that were part of the agreement with the then Abbott government that have not yet gone to market. I will need to take on notice the exact block and section numbers. But I can report that the asset recycling program is largely complete. It closes in the middle of this calendar year.

**MR COE:** Treasurer, when do you expect all of these to be sold and the revenue received? Noting the deadline of 30 June, but could they be done earlier?

**MR BARR:** The process works in two ways: we would not receive our payments from the commonwealth until the completion of the asset sales. So the finalisation of the territory's transactions with the commonwealth, I imagine, would extend into the second half of this calendar year and possibly may even go into the next financial year, depending on when the commonwealth settles its payments. But our expectation would be that if we meet the 30 June deadlines then we will of course receive the proceeds from the asset sales and the commonwealth bonus would then come subsequently.

**MR PARTON:** Treasurer, how much revenue will be forgone if sales are unable to be completed this financial year?

**MR BARR:** The total amount was capped at around \$67 million and we have already received over \$50 million so the amount that has not yet been paid to the territory is now only a handful of millions of dollars.

### **Homelessness—services**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the minister for housing. It is in relation to homelessness services over the Christmas period. Minister, I note that OneLink and the Early Morning Centre, two of Canberra's key homelessness services, were shut down during the week between Christmas and new year. Minister, what services are available to people experiencing homelessness during that period in addition to the annual Christmas DV initiative?

**MS BERRY:** OneLink was available and open for a number of days across that Christmas period—the government shutdown. If there were people who needed to get in touch with a homelessness service or OneLink during that period, OneLink would have been available via a phone message and then somebody would have contacted the individual afterwards. I can check on any other services that were open during that period. Of course services like the Domestic Violence Crisis Service had availability during that period as well, should people have required that support. But I will get all of that information on services that were available to people over that period to Ms Le Couteur and to the Assembly.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Is the unmet demand for homelessness services and assistance during this period being monitored? How do you propose to meet the unmet demand?

**MS BERRY:** I am not sure what unmet demand Ms Le Couteur is talking about. As I said I will get information to Ms Le Couteur about services that were available during that period.

### **Schools—violence**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, yesterday, 11 February, the *Canberra Times* reported on a group of parents who were so concerned about the safety of their children at a Tuggeranong primary school that they wrote to you outlining incidents which had gone back as far as 2017. They expressed frustration that nothing had been done for over a year. Minister, when were you first advised of this issue?

**MS BERRY:** I received four pieces of correspondence on the issues that were described in the *Canberra Times* yesterday throughout 2018, typically referring to individual students who had been injured or incidents at the school. The petition letter that was referred to in the *Canberra Times* I received in my office on 8 November last year. My office subsequently spoke with the sender of that petition on 15 November. I then escalated the matter to the education directorate as I would with any of those kinds of situations.

**MS LEE:** Minister, what steps have you personally taken to address the serious nature, frequency and longevity of these claims, given that apparently they go back as long ago as 2017?

**MS BERRY:** I have sought assurances personally from the Director-General of the Education Directorate that the systems in place to deal with issues of this kind in schools across the ACT, but particularly the ones in this school referred to in the *Canberra Times* yesterday, are appropriate. I can say that since then the directorate has contacted, or has attempted to contact, all of the families that were included on the petition that was sent to the directorate. There were 17 families. There will be a meeting of parents at the school to discuss the approaches that have been implemented since those incidents occurred. Looking forward, the school will also be participating in positive behaviours for learning, which is about building a school culture around positive support and learning for students in that school community.

I am assured that the systems in place and that were available at the time dealt with the issues. But what I am concerned about with the issues at Theodore is that there does not appear to have been complete and thorough communication between the school, the directorate and the families about what was actually being implemented to support their children and their families in regard to those incidents.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, are you aware of violence in other schools and, if so, what are you doing to address it?

**MS BERRY:** Generally our schools are safe places for students but on occasion students are injured in schools and schools and the Education Directorate have systems and supports in place to support the school communities to ensure that teachers and leaders within those schools have all of the supports they need to address these issues as they arise but also, more than just the individual issues, that they have a whole-of-school culture that contributes to a positive, safe learning environment for all students regardless of where they come from or their backgrounds.

Positive behaviour for learning is being rolled out across all of our schools, including Theodore, to ensure that all of those supports are available, that teachers and leaders and the whole school community understand what it means to support each other to have positive learning environments. But yes, occasionally in schools there is violence and the Education Directorate ensures that the schools have the appropriate supports, processes and policies in place to ensure that parents and students are properly supported.

### **Schools—violence**

**MR WALL:** My question is also to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, the principal of a Tuggeranong primary school that has been highlighted in the media this week sent an email to parents assuring them that the school has put in place measures to address violence, including the rollout of the positive behaviour model, to respond to incidents. In the email, the principal

acknowledges that communication has not been as clear or as frequent as parents may have liked. Minister, why is the positive behaviour model not working effectively in this school?

**MS BERRY:** The positive behaviour for learning module that is being rolled out across all of our schools also exists across New South Wales schools. It is shown to be a very evidenced-based program that supports positive behaviour and learning in schools, hence the title.

It is not that that is not working in the schools, as I said. It is about ensuring that the school communities are aware of all the programs that are in place to support the teachers, the parents and families, and the children to ensure a positive and safe learning environment in schools.

**MR WALL:** As the minister responsible for this school, what steps have you taken to assure yourself that matters are under control at this school and that children will in fact be safe when they are at school?

**MS BERRY:** I refer Mr Wall to my previous responses to Ms Lee's questions. I have spoken directly to the Education Directorate and the director-general seeking assurances from them that there are systems in place to deal with this. There are systems in place; I have been assured of that. There are policies and procedures. On this occasion, however, the communication to families was not as good as it could have been. I have sought assurances from the Education Directorate that that communication absolutely must occur across all of our schools, not for individual circumstances on their own but for whole school communities so that schools understand very clearly what systems are in place, what procedures are there, what policies exist, and how they and their children are supported through any incidents of violence that might occur.

**MS LEE:** Minister, why did it take so long for this information to be distributed to parents, and why was the communication not as clear or as frequent as parents would like?

**MS BERRY:** There are probably a number of reasons that I still have not been advised of yet. I have asked the Education Directorate to look very thoroughly at what occurred during these four individual instances at Theodore Primary School, to find out exactly where the communication breakdown was for these families and to make sure that that communication improves.

I have already described circumstances particularly with the writer of the letter with the petitions that was referred to in the paper yesterday. My office had direct contact with the writer, and I am still finalising correspondence to her and another parent from the school who has written to me. Because of the article yesterday, I need to change the level of detail that is in those letters.

The Education Directorate and the school did respond appropriately; it was just that the communication to those families about that response was inadequate and

unfortunately not to the satisfaction of those families, as was described in the paper yesterday.

### **Schools—2019 school year**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, what are some of the highlights of another start to the school year?

**MS BERRY:** There were 49,000 students who started the year in ACT government schools, across the 88 schools now in the ACT; 80,000 school students across all of our excellent schools in the ACT. These students are supported by more than 3,700 committed, expert teachers who work in government schools, and in non-government schools a further 3,000 teachers are equally dedicated to the many students across those 40 schools. Across all of those schools there are hundreds of support staff who make our school education happen.

This year around 130 new educators joined the government school teaching workforce, and I had the chance to welcome them to our system last week. It is an important opportunity today, on the first day of sittings this year, to acknowledge the work of the people who provide school education. This, for me, is the highlight of the school year, alongside seeing children accessing life-changing learning.

As I have said many times in this place, second only to individual student factors, the most important thing in providing every student with access to a great education and the life changes that this brings are the teachers and school leaders who are facilitating that learning. It is the dedication of teachers to their students that means it is vital that they have a strong advocate for their industrial interests. For them, I acknowledge the Australian Education Union, as well as the Independent Education Union.

The beginning of the 2019 school year has also seen some excellent school learning environments being provided and improved, and I look forward to continuing that work throughout 2019, as the school year continues.

**MS ORR:** How is the government providing new and upgraded schools to meet the needs of students starting school in 2019?

**MS BERRY:** The government went into the election with significant commitments to invest in providing new and upgraded schools to meet the needs of students. We are delivering on these commitments. We committed \$85 million over four years to upgrade Canberra's public primary schools, high schools and colleges.

In 2018 twenty-two schools received better disability access, with ramps, toilet refurbishments, handrails, expansion of call rooms and accessibility upgrades as well as quiet rooms. Twenty-nine schools received upgrades to assist special needs students, including sensory gardens, room refurbishments, acoustic works, learning support unit upgrades, calming areas and play equipment upgrades. Fifty-schools underwent improvements such as roof upgrades, new modular and transportable

classrooms, new toilets, new science labs and library and classroom upgrades as well as new furniture.

The government is expanding government schools to make space for the increasing number of people who are choosing public education. The 2017-18 budget included an allocation of \$24.072 million over four years to expand schools in Gungahlin with 700 places. Of this, \$18.6 million is being used to expand Gold Creek School junior campus, Neville Bonner Primary School, Harrison School junior campus, Palmerston District Primary School and Franklin Early Childhood School. A year later a further \$19.83 million over four years was announced in the 2018-19 budget for another 500 places in Gungahlin schools, at Gold Creek School junior campus, Neville Bonner Primary School and Amaroo School junior and senior sites as well as planning for a new school in east Gungahlin.

I am pleased that the ACT government has continued this commitment to schools in the ACT as well as the new school in Taylor, the Margaret Hendry Primary School.

**MS CODY:** Minister, what supports are available to make sure all students have access to a great education this year?

**MS BERRY:** The most critical factor in providing students with access to a great education is investment in learning professionals. I am proud of this government's focus on respecting and empowering learning professionals in the ACT's schools. A major pillar of the future of education strategy is to empower teachers, school leaders and other professionals to meet the learning needs of students.

In last year's budget, \$5.4 million over four years was allocated to first-phase work on empowering learning professionals in our schools. Late last year I launched two key elements of this, including a leadership plan and the affiliate schools partnership with the University of Canberra. The plan will support our high school teachers through employment of four skilled teachers with expertise in pedagogy, learning difficulties, and literacy and numeracy programming to implement a coaching and mentoring model to build teaching capacity.

The plan will also provide more opportunities and time for collaboration, training for leadership staff in data literacy in schools and funding to engage leading national and international education researchers, as well as training programs to support principal health and wellbeing through efficacy, job confidence and job satisfaction, as well as better promotion of mental health support.

This approach is based on strong evidence and research of leading education systems and improved outcomes through instructional leadership as well as enabling innovative approaches to learning and teaching.

### **Education Directorate—alleged bullying**

**MISS C BURCH:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, does the department of education do regular staff surveys? If so, how frequently are these conducted?

**MS BERRY:** The Education Directorate is often engaging with the school communities about improving school environments for schools in lots of different ways. School satisfaction surveys of school communities are conducted each year. With reference to the Education Directorate's work in responding to the issues around Theodore giving rise to this line of questioning today, the Education Directorate is regularly corresponding with school principals and leaders about expectations of the directorate and the government about how schools support students and provide excellent learning environments for all our children.

**MISS C BURCH:** Minister, does the department of education question staff about bullying in the workplace and, if so, what are the latest statistics?

**MS BERRY:** I have just gone through a conversation with the Assembly about the programs that are in place around positive behaviour for learning, which is about creating an environment in our schools that is a positive, supportive environment for every child to be able to get the best possible education. On occasion, issues arise within our schools—

**Ms Lee:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the minister is referring to the answers that she provided to previous questions, and they were clearly in relation to the circumstances at a particular school, which she clearly knows a lot about. The question that Miss Burch definitely asked was about whether the directorate does regular staff surveys. I would appreciate it if she could get to the point of the question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I will ask the education minister to come to the substance, which was around the results of staff surveys.

**MS BERRY:** The positive behaviours for learning program actually is directly part of how schools respond to issues like bullying and unhelpful behaviour in school environments, so I—

**Ms Lee:** Madam Speaker, on the point of order, she is just continuing to repeat what she was saying earlier. The question specifically was about staff and bullying in the workplace, not about the programs that are being rolled out in schools.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Minister, you have part of a minute left to come to the point of response to surveys. I think that was the thrust of the question.

**MS BERRY:** Yes, the directorate does regularly engage with school communities about different ways of support that might be required or issues that might be occurring throughout schools. Those surveys are on a number of issues and could include bullying. I can check with the directorate and provide information to the Assembly as to whether specifically bullying has been an issue that has been the subject of surveys.

**MS LEE:** How many staff working in your directorate have been the victim of bullying and harassment at work or seen others being bullied or harassed?

**MS BERRY:** I am not aware of any issues around bullying within the Education Directorate. I might just seek clarification, Madam Speaker. The directorate or within schools?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Do you want to repeat your question?

**MS LEE:** My understanding is that ACT government teachers are part of the directorate, so it would mean the directorate bureaucrats as well as teachers.

**MS BERRY:** This has been an issue that the government has been working on as far as implementing the policy in our schools to prevent violence against teachers is concerned. That includes issues around whether or not teachers have been bullied by other staff or others in the school communities, whether that is violence that has been perpetrated by staff, by parents or by children against teachers. These are very important issues that the government is keen to resolve, and we have been working very closely with the Australian Education Union to ensure that our staff—all staff—across the directorate and within our schools are appropriately supported.

**Ms Lee:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Point of order.

**Ms Lee:** The question was specifically about how many staff. I would appreciate it if the minister could provide that response.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I think the minister has taken her seat. You have concluded your answer, I am assuming, minister?

**Ms Berry:** Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Education—curriculum**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, during annual reports hearings one of your officials said:

The government has invested significantly in the leadership capabilities of school leaders in understanding and deeply embedding the curriculum in every classroom in their schools.

Minister, given that understanding the curriculum in every classroom should be a fait accompli, what exactly does this quote mean in practice?

**MS BERRY:** As I referred to earlier, in answer to a question on notice regarding what the government was doing to support teachers and school leaders in the ACT, the government's affiliated schools program with the University of Canberra is about how we support teachers and school leaders to understand the curriculum, to understand the most up-to-date evidence-supported programs of education, and to

support how that curriculum is delivered in our schools. That is how that it is deeply embedded across all of our classrooms.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, why do school leaders with many years of learning experience prior to becoming school leaders need additional training to understand the curriculum?

**MS BERRY:** Like any profession, the teaching profession needs to continually upgrade and make sure they have the most up-to-date, researched-based evidence-supported programs in place in their schools to deliver the curriculum. Just as a medical professional would be updating their professional requirements and training every year, so will teachers and school leaders to ensure that they have the most up-to-date programs, policies and procedures in place to ensure that our children get the best possible education.

**MS LEE:** Minister, what is the financial cost of that proposal?

**MS BERRY:** I am sorry, I did not catch the last word of the sentence.

**MS LEE:** What is the financial cost of that proposal?

**MS BERRY:** For the schools?

**MS LEE:** For the proposal that was quoted in Ms Lawder's first question.

**MS BERRY:** Embed in the curriculum?

**Ms Lawder:** Investment in leadership capabilities and curriculum.

**MS LEE:** Yes.

**MS BERRY:** I can provide that. Of course it has been announced as part of the budget; so I can refer members to the budget papers which provide exactly the amount of money that has been invested in supporting continued education and development for learning professionals, including school leaders.

The university affiliated schools program, I think, was around \$6 million. I can clarify that and make sure that that is the correct amount. There was an additional \$4 or \$5 million, I think, around making sure that there are mentors who provide that extra support to beginning teachers to ensure that when they leave university they come into our schools ready to learn and are supported by professional educators on the ground, can give them the support in the classroom and, in addition to the affiliated schools program and our relationship with the University of Canberra, this can all feed back to make sure that teachers are ready before they leave university and that they are supported with the most up-to-date, research-based policies and programs to implement curriculum in our schools and give our children the best possible education.

### **ACT Ambulance Service—government support**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, how does the ACT Ambulance Service compare to the rest of the nation?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Cody for her question. With the release of the 2019 report on government services—ROGS—it gives me great pleasure to highlight the excellent service that the Canberra community continues to receive from the ACT Ambulance Service—ACTAS. The 2019 ROGS shows that ACTAS has recorded the best response times in the country for the seventh year in a row, as well as maintaining a high level of patient satisfaction, with a 97 per cent result in the annual ambulance patient satisfaction survey.

ACTAS also reported the second highest percentage of emergency triple zero calls answered within 10 seconds, outperforming the national average by 7.1 per cent. This terrific result has been achieved during a period that has seen a significant growth in the number of emergency triple zero calls due to population growth and changes in the age profile of the Canberra community. Ambulance call-outs have risen from approximately 35,000 in 2009-10 to approximately 54,000 in 2017-18.

The government is working with the hardworking staff across ACTAS to deliver the resources they need. By working with our hardworking paramedics and all staff across ACTAS, we have built the best ambulance service in the country.

**MS CODY:** Minister, how is the government helping ACTAS as our city grows?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Cody for that excellent supplementary question and want to acknowledge her hard work in supporting our first responders, something I know she understands firsthand.

Madam Speaker, to ensure that Canberra remains one of the safest communities in the world to live in, the government will continue to provide support for our ambulance workforce and remains focused on their health and welfare as they continue to meet community expectations.

More front-line staff and new equipment demonstrate our ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of our growing city and keeping Canberrans safe. Significant funding packages announced during this term of government to date will deliver 53 additional paramedics, seven new ambulances, new defibrillator units, and powered stretchers in all operational ambulance vehicles, which will reduce physical demands on paramedics and improve patient safety. This is well above the election commitment, and recognises the support required to maintain a nation-leading ambulance service.

As I have said, Madam Speaker, unlike those opposite we will not be dictating to ACTAS. Rather, we will continue to work with our paramedics and other ACTAS staff to continuing delivering the best ambulance service in the nation as our city grows.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, why is it important to support the ACT Ambulance Service?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I also thank Mr Pettersson for his interest in emergency services. The government committed to ensuring that ACTAS is appropriately supported in meeting the continued increases in demand due to our growing city and the age profile of Canberrans; unlike those opposite who not only voted against the most recent budget that contained additional funding for ACTAS but then doubled down and called a division to record their opposition.

The ACT community can be assured that the ACTAS workforce represents an experienced and knowledgeable team. This experience and knowledge will be complemented with the recruitment of additional paramedics in the future. These officers, current and new, will be part of a high performing service continually looking to improve.

*Members interjecting—*

**MR GENTLEMAN:** In closing, I would once again like to acknowledge the strong results in the 2019 ROGS, which are a credit to the professionalism of the men and women of ACTAS. They clearly demonstrate that the community has benefited from the capability and quality of ambulance services that have been delivered by its front-line personnel on a daily basis. The community can also have full confidence that ACTAS is extremely well positioned to continue delivering this high level of service into the future.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before I call Mr Hanson, can I just remind members on both sides that a level of conversation across the chamber is making it somewhat difficult to hear ministers respond to questions.

### **Crime—motorcycle gangs**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Attorney-General. It relates to outlaw motorcycle gangs in the ACT.

**Mr Barr:** Motorcycle gangs! It's just pull the string out again, isn't it? You haven't asked this question before, have you?

**MR HANSON:** Mr Barr, we have just got some advice from the Speaker—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I do not think he needs your guidance, Mr Hanson. To the question; I think that is what we are asking you to do.

**MR HANSON:** Attorney-General, following calls from the Chief Police Officer for nationally consistent anti-bikie laws, what information can you give the Assembly about the arrival of yet another motorcycle gang in the ACT, Satudarah, an organisation that has been banned in its home country?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank the shadow attorney-general for his question. With the indulgence of the shadow attorney-general, may I note quickly in passing that we have received notice today of the passing of Justice Jeffrey Miles, a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the ACT. I want to place on record at this stage our condolences. There will be a time for further mention of that, but that news has just come through today.

Of course it is important to note the context of quotes. The shadow attorney-general is following the tradition of the Canberra Liberals in selectively quoting matters. In terms of the Chief Police Officer's comments, it is important to note the full statement of the Chief Police Officer in giving context to what the shadow attorney-general has said. The Chief Police Officer said that ACT Policing supports nationally consistent legislation to deal with the national issue of serious and organised crime and will continue discussions with government to explore appropriate powers to prevent, deter and prosecute organised crime which are proportionate and meet the community's expectations. He went on:

However, it is important to note that no single power should be seen as a cure-all and serious and organised crime is not limited to openly identifiable criminal gangs, such as outlaw motorcycle gangs ... ACT Policing will continue to proactively target, prosecute and disrupt those involved in serious and organised crime in the ACT, regardless of their individual affiliations.

I note, for the information of those opposite, that there remain in the ACT, according to the advice that we have received from police, four active outlaw motorcycle gangs. Can I put on record my—*(Time expired.)*

**Mrs Jones:** Point of order, Madam Speaker—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** There is a point of order but I think the time has expired.

**Mrs Jones:** Yes, but this is just to get your advice, just for information. I did not want to interrupt the actual answer while it was going on. With condolences, normally there is a place in the day for those. I wonder whether it is the appropriate use of a minister's time to be offering condolences in the middle of an answer to a question on bikie crime, which may also reflect on that person's life and work.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones, it was not a condolence. You are right: there is a time and place where proper attention is paid to formal condolence motions. It was my understanding, and my read from the Attorney-General, that he had just heard that news a relatively short time ago and that he just wanted to put it on record. It was his call. I do not think it breaches any order. I do not think it is a reflection on anyone who was mentioned in that answer.

**MR HANSON:** Attorney, what information can you give the Assembly about the most recent shooting and arson attack in Kambah, where shots were fired into a home that had children inside?

**MR RAMSAY:** Again, I note that specific policing matters are primarily a matter for both ACT Policing and, in terms of ministerial responsibility, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. However, I can note for the opposition, and for the chamber as a whole, that Canberra is and remains a safe place, and that ACT Policing are doing an extraordinary job in targeting, disrupting and bringing to justice those people who break the law.

In terms of my responsibilities as Attorney-General, in terms of the justice system, we will continue to provide appropriate, effective legislation, as well as providing the resources not only for ACT Policing but also for the Director of Public Prosecutions and for the justice system as a whole to make sure that Canberra is and remains safe, as it is now and as it will be in the future.

**MRS JONES:** Attorney, how many incidents have occurred involving outlaw motorcycle gangs since you blocked anti-criminal gang legislation in 2017? Do you even know?

**MR RAMSAY:** There are a number of matters that are, again, under police investigation—

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

**MR RAMSAY:** and those matters are quite rightly the responsibility of ACT Policing and the minister for emergency services. I note again that with the number of people who are associated with—

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones, please!

**MR RAMSAY:** We do understand that the number of members has not increased in the ACT and, of those numbers, which are around 60, I note that a quarter of them at the moment have been arrested and are behind—

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones, I do not want to have to come to you again.

**MR RAMSAY:** Almost half of them are either in the Alexander Maconochie Centre or on active charges before the courts. Again, I place on record my profound respect for ACT Policing, specifically for Taskforce Nemesis, which has been resourced well through this government and which is producing excellent results.

### **Municipal services—trees**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for City Services regarding the removal of trees from Anketell Street in Tuggeranong town centre. Minister, why have so many healthy looking trees been stripped out of the main street of the Tuggeranong town centre?

**MR STEEL:** I thank Mr Parton for his question and his interest in our government's \$7 million investment in upgrading the public realm at Tuggeranong town centre. We completed stage 1 in mid-2017 and we are now starting construction on stage 2 to create a raised pedestrian zone and low speed traffic environment and off-road cycle lane, improvements to paved areas, outdoor dining areas, improved lighting and more furniture on the street.

We are also replacing the trees on the street. We are increasing the number of trees on the street by 55 per cent. We will be planting fast-growing trees for maximum benefit to the community in a short period of time—around 3.5 to four metres tall at the time of planting. The reason we are doing that is that the existing tree species were shallow rooted, they were invasive and they continued to damage the pavement. This resulted in trip hazards and ongoing representations to the government from the community; costs for repairs to City Services; the trees being too close to underground service lines; and there being an expectation of significant further damage in the future.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, how many years will it take before the replacement trees are providing similar shade and shelter to those that have been removed?

**MR STEEL:** I am happy to take that question on notice. That will obviously depend on the species that are being planted. I am happy to come back with some further detail in that regard. But we are increasing the number of tree plantings along Anketell Street to improve the public realm. We know the benefit of trees to the community in creating a cooler climate and making it a much more friendly space for the community to use. That is the objective of our public realm upgrades in Tuggeranong town centre and I am looking forward to seeing those completed around the middle of the year.

**MR WALL:** Minister, where else in Tuggeranong have healthy trees been earmarked for removal by your department?

**MR STEEL:** Our government is planting more trees around Canberra: around 600 last year, in the autumn, and a further 70 trees in the springtime. I am looking forward to us planting more trees in the coming year, around 400 trees around Canberra.

**Mr Wall:** A point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Please resume your seat.

**Mr Wall:** It is on relevance, Madam Speaker. The question was specifically about where else his department has earmarked healthy trees for removal. I did not ask, in any way, shape or form, about new trees being planted.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The minister was 20 seconds into his answer. I am sure he has time to come to that, should he have that information at hand.

**MR STEEL:** Our focus is not on removing trees. Our focus is on planting more trees, and that is what we are doing.

### **Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—incarceration rates**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the minister for corrections. I refer to the ABS publication *Prisoners in Australia 2018*. It shows that the ACT has the highest ratio of Indigenous people in prison in Australia. The ACT had the highest increase in relative imprisonment of Aboriginals between 2008 and 2018. The rate of prior imprisonment or recidivism rate of Aboriginal prisoners currently in the AMC is 90 per cent, the highest in Australia. Why does the ACT have the highest ratio of Indigenous people in prison in Australia?

**MR RATTENBURY:** That is a deeply concerning statistic for which there is no simple answer. We do see an increasing rate of Indigenous incarceration in the ACT and I think that if we go through some of the statistics that Mr Milligan has just cited and pick each of them apart they point to a range of things. For example, the fact that 90 per cent of people have offended before speaks to the fact that in the ACT people do not get sent to jail on their first offence. And there are significant efforts to keep people out of custody. But those who do go into custody tend to come back repeatedly.

This points to the need for a new approach to justice. We need to be focusing more on justice reinvestment, and that is what the policy direction is that the government has been developing in recent years. Examples of this are the Yarrabi Bamirr program in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services. This was a program that was started recently as a trial and was targeted at working with families to seek to proactively and preventatively avoid people going into custody.

Partnerships with the Aboriginal Legal Service around bail support are similarly targeted at keeping Indigenous people out of custody, seeking to provide culturally appropriate bail support so that Indigenous people can both get bail in the first place and then succeed while they are on bail and not be subject to justice procedure offences under the criminal justice system.

Nonetheless, that trend is one that is of great concern and I think that it does require further work. It is an area that the government is particularly focused on and I will be elaborating some further policy ideas in the near future.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Why does the ACT have the highest rate of recidivism for Indigenous people in Australia?

**MR RATTENBURY:** There is no singular understood reason for that amongst academics, criminologists, people who work in the justice system and the like. What it does point to is that there are some people who, for a range of reasons—and you can point to the considerable disadvantage that some members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community face—continue to be involved in the justice system. The success of programs like Yarrabi Bamirr underlines the fact that there is not a singular answer to this. It requires a whole-of-systems response.

In my conversations with Winnunga, for example, the new health services that we have just launched at the Alexander Maconochie Centre—Winnunga are now a primary health provider inside the AMC—are the sorts of responses we need to focus on. What that will mean is that some people who were clients of Winnunga prior to going into custody and will again be clients after being in custody will now also have access to Winnunga while they are in custody. This will promote continuity of service. Winnunga's model is very much a wraparound one that looks at not just health but also wellbeing factors, psychosocial support and a range of other responses which, they argue—and I support their views on this—will lead to better outcomes for people who are currently involved in the justice system and ideally reduce their exposure to the justice system.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, why has the ACT had the highest increase in relative imprisonment of Indigenous people between 2008 and 2018?

**MR RATTENBURY:** As I outlined in my previous answers, there is not a singular understood reason for that. A range of factors is identified amongst academics, researchers, police and those who work in the justice system. That is why we are putting in place a range of programs to seek to respond to those factors.

### **Employment—secure local jobs package**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the implementation of the secure local jobs package?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his interest in the secure local jobs package. The ACT government has delivered on its election commitment to implement the secure local jobs package. Since the passage of the legislation last year, the code and associated guidelines have been established and a secure local jobs registrar, approved auditors and advisory council have all been appointed.

The secure local jobs code came into effect for tenders for construction, security, cleaning and traffic management services from 15 January this year. This means that each new tender for ACT government work in these categories will now require businesses to have a secure local jobs certificate, certifying that their workers are treated with respect, paid fairly and have access to representation in the workplace should they choose that access.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that as of close of business on 8 February 2019, the Secure Local Jobs Registrar had received 224 applications for a certificate, and of these applications 179 have so far been approved. There are 20 approved auditors, able to undertake initial certification audits as well as compliance audits, to ensure that businesses continue to meet the highest ethical and labour standards.

The Secure Local Jobs Advisory Council also held its first meeting on 4 February, consisting of representatives of employees, business and government. The council is tasked with providing me with advice in relation to the operation and implementation

of the code and will undertake a review within the first two years of the legislation's operation.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, are you aware of any federal advice on the interaction between the secure local jobs code and federal law?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary question. Madam Speaker, as you might recall, much of the concern in relation to the secure local jobs package was in respect of two issues, firstly, that businesses may not have been able to get certified by 15 January; the numbers I have updated the Assembly with in respect of these certifications may allay that concern.

Secondly, some people expressed concern that there would be a conflict between the secure local jobs code and federal law. The government worked diligently to ensure that there were no conflicts between the code and federal law and also included provision of an exemption clause within the legislation to ensure that emergency works or any conflict now or in the future could be managed. The federal laws that were referred to were primarily the Fair Work Act 2009 and the Code for the Tendering and Performance of Building Work 2016, also known as the building code.

Madam Speaker, it is no secret that my colleagues and I do not support the draconian building code or the Australian Building and Construction Commission. However, I do appreciate the certainty provided by the ABCC during a workshop presentation late last year where they advised local construction industry members that it was indeed possible to comply with both the secure local jobs code and the federal building code.

Of course, the ABCC advice simply reinforces what the ACT government has been saying from the beginning of the development of this package, that we did not intend to create two pools of work. And, of course, it completely contradicts the Canberra Liberals' baseless scare campaign, as so much of our work tends to do when push comes to shove. I can also advise the Assembly that there have been 15 applications for exemptions under the code but none of these has been granted, in line with the advice of the ABCC.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what are the next steps for the secure local jobs package?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary question. As with any new scheme, there are a few provisions in the code that have not yet been utilised or tested. There may be a time when we need to grant an exemption to the requirements of the secure local jobs code, particularly for emergency works or when critical services have been disrupted or to prevent an imminent danger to health and safety where there are no secure local job certified businesses to undertake the work at short notice.

There will no doubt be complaints, and there will need to be investigations and compliance audits undertaken, potentially resulting in conditions being imposed on a business's secure local jobs certificate, or even, potentially, a certificate's cancellation.

An important milestone for the package will be the extension of the secure local jobs code to any tender primarily for labour and valued above an amount prescribed by regulation. As I indicated when the legislation was introduced, I expect the contract value in this respect will be \$200,000 or more.

I am confident that as we continue to progress through milestones and work our way through each “first” for the secure local jobs code, we will continue to meet our commitment to the people of Canberra that this ACT Labor government only contracts with businesses that uphold the highest ethical and labour standards. In this area, as in so many others, we are getting on with delivering our commitments to the people of Canberra.

### **Mental health—patient outcomes**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, I refer to table 13A.53 of the Productivity Commission’s ROGS report which shows that the ACT has the lowest level of mental health patients being discharged with significantly improved outcomes. Only 35 per cent of patients had their condition improve while they were inpatients. Why does the ACT have the lowest level of mental health patients being discharged with significantly improved outcomes?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Right throughout the report on government services there is a significant range of indicators. Mrs Jones has picked out one, but there are quite a few that reflect very positively on the work of mental health services in the ACT. I am happy to seek further advice for Mrs Jones on the specifics of table 13A.53.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**Mrs Jones:** Mr Hanson, I have got a question to ask.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I know it is the first day back, ladies and gentlemen, but please can we get to the end of question time in a civil manner.

**MRS JONES:** We would love to get to the end of question time. Are patients being discharged, minister, because the mental health system is over capacity at all?

**MR RATTENBURY:** No. Patients are discharged under the advice of medical staff who assess them.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, what actions are taken to check on patients who have been discharged without a significant improvement in their condition?

**MR RATTENBURY:** As members who have read the ROGS report in detail will know, there are indicators which go to the rate of follow-up. The ACT has a follow-up rate whereby people are discharged and followed up, and follow-up calls are made. That is the key mechanism through which people are assessed going forward. Not everybody has a follow-up plan. I have dug into these figures because I wanted to look at why some people were not getting a follow-up phone call within seven days,

as measured under the report on government services. That is because some people return interstate and they are not followed up by ACT mental health. Others have a different care plan. So there are a range of factors there as well.

### **Mental health—patient follow-up**

**MRS DUNNE:** My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. On 9 August last year, several MLAs were contacted by a parent of a person with a mental illness who had been discharged from the adult mental health unit on to the street. I raised this issue with you on 9 August. Minister, how common is it for people to be discharged from the mental health unit or from the accident and emergency part of the mental health unit on to the street?

**MR RATTENBURY:** I am aware of circumstances like that being brought to my and other members' attention. That is clearly not the best possible outcome for people. As is always the case with these matters, and particularly those that are specifically drawn to my personal attention, it is worth drilling into the detailed circumstances of each case. Often there are complexities that speak to the circumstances. But it is my view that people should not be discharged like that.

Some people do not have or do not provide external points of contact, next of kin or similar. Some people, as adults, are free to go when they choose. They are free to leave and they are free to specify that they do not want anybody else contacted. I am not saying that this is the case in the example that Mrs Dunne has identified but there is a range of circumstances in which people leave the hospital. But I think it is a far better case that people should leave with the support of a carer, a friend or similar.

I am also in active discussions with ACT Health about what information should be provided to those carers and supporters. There are challenges under the privacy rules where, again, adults who are in the mental health system can decline to share information with others. I think that that can, in cases, produce unsatisfactory outcomes for the consumer. We are looking at options as to how to find the right balance between the right to privacy for an adult and the best possible outcomes for an individual in terms of their ongoing care.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, taking into account the things that you have said in your answer and in previous answers, what follow-up is done in the specific cases where adults are discharged from mental health units who do not have appropriate accommodation?

**MR RATTENBURY:** As I touched on earlier, there is an indicator in the report on government services about the percentage of people followed up within seven days with a follow-up phone call and similar. But, as Mrs Dunne would appreciate, it does vary in some circumstances. Some people will be referred, for example, to a community service provider. Others will be referred to one of the ACT community health centres in Belconnen, Tuggeranong, Woden et cetera. There will be a range of responses for people.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, has the number of people discharged onto the street increased since the program to replace the ligature points in the facility began?

**MR RATTENBURY:** I have no concept why Mrs Jones has linked those two matters. I am happy to seek data on the first half of the question. I am not sure what the point is she is trying to make and I am not aware of anything that speaks to the trend she is attempting to suggest.

### **Children and young people—protection**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Minister for Children, Youth and Families. Minister, the ACT government in 2010 undertook a tender for a therapeutic protection place, as outlined in the Children and Young People Act. That tender failed. As a result, ACT magistrates have spent the past 14 months repeatedly having to choose between locking up an 11-year-old—now 12-year-old—girl with complex needs in Bimberi—which the court has said is no place for a vulnerable child—or releasing her back into the community knowing that she will again assault her carers. Minister, what specific steps has this government taken between 2010 and now to provide a therapeutic protection place for the children who desperately need it?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for the question. This is a very complex issue, as so many are in this space. I can assure members in this place, as I have the public, that the Community Services Directorate works very hard to manage the behaviours of children who pose a risk to themselves and others, through close collaboration with mental health services and other therapeutic treatment providers.

The directorate seeks not to use restrictive practices in response to behaviours of concern, and follows a formal positive behaviour support framework. The Community Services Directorate does provide individualised therapeutic responses for each child. I think this goes to the heart of the matter that Mrs Kikkert is getting to. These involve wraparound therapeutic care teams that work closely with the child, their family and/or carers to ensure that appropriate supports are in place. That includes managing the safety of children and the community.

In that context I think it is really important that we understand that the therapeutic protection place that is envisaged in the Children and Young People Act 2008 is not considered to align with best practice in trauma-informed support for children and young people. The therapeutic protection orders involve a place of confinement for a child at a therapeutic place for a period of time.

We are talking about very small numbers of children and young people. We are potentially talking about confinement of one or maybe two children—maybe two children who it would not be appropriate to have in contact with one another—in a place of confinement. That is not considered to be the best therapeutic response. Indeed, in the most recent article in relation to this matter, there was mention made that the young person had indicated that they wanted to return to Bimberi because there were other young people there. This is a very complex matter.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, why do Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory all have therapeutic protection places for children and young people with complex needs when the ACT does not, in breach of the Children and Young People Act?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I absolutely emphasise that there is nothing we are doing that is in breach of the Children and Young People Act. The Children and Young People Act enables a therapeutic protection place to be established, which we consider would not be aligning with current best practice in trauma-informed support for children and young people.

In December 2017, when this issue first arose, I did ask the Community Services Directorate to work with the ACT Human Rights Commission to review the therapeutic protection provisions of the act to develop options that align with best practice and contemporary knowledge. This work is underway but, as I have mentioned, it is particularly complex due to both the evolving evidence base and the unique nature of each child or young person's trauma response and patterns of behaviour.

Madam Speaker, there is no one-size-fits-all solution in supporting children who have experienced significant trauma in their young lives as a result of abuse and neglect. I understand that the director-general and senior officials of the directorate have recently met with the Children's Court magistrate to discuss his concerns. These meetings will be ongoing. I welcome and I support this engagement. I can assure the Canberra community again, and the Assembly, that the directorate continues to work with its partners, drawing on experts in the field to respond to these very serious issues as they arise. This work is difficult; this work is complex. We acknowledge that a child's progress to recover from complex trauma will often be a case of two steps forward and one step back as the effectiveness of different therapeutic interventions and supports changes over time.

I commend all those who work in therapeutic care teams to provide these children with 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week care and support. I can assure the Assembly that that support is provided in the most evidence-based way that we possibly can provide it.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, are you ruling out a therapeutic protection place as per the 2010 tender?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Lawder for the supplementary. To the extent that the 2010 tender was to establish a place as described under the Children and Young People Act, yes, we do not consider that that is an appropriate response to the complex trauma that too many young people in our community have experienced as a result of abuse and neglect and to which some young people and children respond with very complex patterns of behaviour.

An individualised therapeutic response is the most appropriate response for these children and young people and that is why I have asked the Community Services

Directorate and the Human Rights Commission to work together to develop a more appropriate response than is currently envisaged in the Children and Young People Act. I await that work to determine whether that would be a separate residential place or whether it is a different form of support.

But, again, I can assure everyone that wraparound 24/7 therapeutic responses are available to support the small number of children and young people with these very complex behaviours to get through this and to go on and live health, happy lives.

### **Sport—cricket test**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the recent international cricket test match played at Manuka Oval?

**MR BARR:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. This was a significant event for Canberra to host. It had been a long-term ambition for Cricket ACT throughout the organisation's existence and a project that the ACT government had been working closely with Cricket ACT on for more than a decade. After many meetings, negotiations, progressive investments and improvements at Manuka Oval, including the lights, the new media and function centre, complete resurfacing of the venue, and additional seats in place in time for the fixture, Canberra was ready for its international test cricket debut.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The venue itself shone throughout the match. It was clearly a delight for cricket fans. Importantly the staging of this event provided a significant boost for our local economy. There were international and interstate visitors filling our hotels, restaurants, bars and cafes and, as has been reported in the local media, apparently drinking the Kingston Hotel dry of its beer, which is no mean feat. It was a very well-attended event, with nearly 31,000 through the gates for the 3½ days of the duration of the match. The feedback has been very positive from patrons and from Cricket Australia.

**MS CHEYNE:** Chief Minister, how was the feedback from patrons and the media on the ground and facilities?

**MR BARR:** The feedback in relation to the grounds and facilities was very positive. Let me take this opportunity to put on the public record our thanks to Brad van Dam and his team, who curated the venue and the pitch. It was particularly pleasing to see a break in the drought of test match centuries for the Australians and the return to form of Mitchell Starc with two five-wicket hauls in both of the Sri Lankan innings.

The feedback from patrons was very positive. It is a charming boutique cricket venue, supported by pleasant and helpful staff. The quality and price of food and beverage offerings and the ease of ticketing and entry processes certainly received very positive feedback. The media were happy; in fact, delighted. The feedback there was that the facility was the best of its kind in the nation. Its adaptability to be able to be converted into a function centre for year-round use and, indeed, for use during AFL matches, is an important part of its design.

The intimacy of Manuka as a cricket venue was a delight for the players and that feedback was very clear from both the Australian and Sri Lankan teams. The undeniable atmosphere, energy and excitement around this fixture I think demonstrated the worth of Cricket ACT's and the ACT government's decade long work to make it possible. The attendance, I note at nearly 31,000, was nearly double that achieved by Tasmania at their most recent test match.

**MS ORR:** Chief Minister, what is next for Manuka Oval?

**MR BARR:** As we concluded the most successful summer of cricket Canberra has ever seen with another sell-out crowd for the Big Bash match on the weekend, between Sydney and Hobart, we now look to the future of the venue, with agreements to be struck between Cricket ACT, Cricket Australia and the ACT government, and the Giants and the AFL, to continue to host major sporting events at the venue in the years ahead. It may have taken over a decade of work and more than a century as a city to host our first test match, but it will not be a one-in-a-lifetime experience for most Canberrans.

We have made a decision in the budget review this year, as I have already announced, to invest further in the facility, to put more seats under cover and to upgrade the change-room facilities to make them more suitable for female athletes, as in 2020 we will be a major host city for the Twenty20 Cricket World Cup. This will be an important next step in the evolution of Manuka Oval as Australia's best boutique cricket venue, and also one that can host Australian football.

We will commence discussions on and early planning for a new eastern grandstand with the major users, cricket and AFL. We will be seeking financial co-contributions from those sports and the Australian government as we proceed with the development of an eastern grandstand at Manuka Oval.

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

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

### **Municipal services—trees**

**MR STEEL:** I want to clarify the exact number of trees that were planted last year and this year. There were 608 trees planted in winter last year; 96 trees were planted in spring 2018; and 444 trees will be planted this year in autumn.

### **Education—curriculum**

#### **Homelessness—services**

**MS BERRY:** Madam Speaker, in relation to the Australian curriculum that is being rolled out across our schools over a series of years, professional development programs, including the affiliated schools partnership with the University of Canberra, as well as Empowered Learning, totalling \$5.4 million, will help to bed down the Australian curriculum with research-informed, evidence-based delivery methods for our teaching professionals.

During question time, I was asked about specialist homelessness services available during Christmas and the New Year period. I can advise the chamber that over this period each homelessness service has a plan in place to assist people experiencing homelessness. This includes refuges providing an on-call response for existing clients.

OneLink was open every day except Christmas and New Year's Day. Rough sleepers supported by Street to Home were provided with a letter and contact details for Samaritan House if they required assistance. The Domestic Violence Crisis Service Christmas program provided short-term accommodation for people experiencing and escaping domestic violence over the Christmas and New Year period. The Early Morning Centre provided food services every day except Christmas Day and New Year's Day, and they provided information services to clients during the holiday periods, as well as hampers to other guests that visited that service. The Blue Door also provided free food and was open except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

### **Mental health—patient follow-up**

**MR RATTENBURY:** During question time Mrs Dunne asked me a question about the discharge of mental health patients to homelessness, and she specifically referenced an occasion that she had asked me about in August last year.

Having now had a chance to review the correspondence of the time, I am pleased to update the Assembly by saying that Mrs Dunne and I and my chief of staff had some correspondence at the time. My chief of staff emailed Mrs Dunne in response to her memo. She said:

We totally agree, that it would be inappropriate to discharge a patient—either from hospital, or the mental health unit, into homelessness. However, we have confirmation from ACT Health that this isn't the case, and they don't do this. Health have been very clear with us that any patient—either in hospital or the AMHU must have a house to go to, and they do have a duty of care in these situations.

In relation to the specific matter that Mrs Dunne raised around a particular patient, that particular patient was not actually admitted to hospital in the week before the question and thus did not come under the Health protocol of not releasing without a housing plan. However, my office undertook to follow up with the housing minister and seek support from homelessness services for the particular individual.

Given that that explanation was given to Mrs Dunne in August last year, I am surprised that she has used that example as the premise of her question today.

### **Papers**

**Madam Speaker** presented the following papers:

Inspector of Correctional Services Act, pursuant to subsection 30(2)—Report of a Review of a Critical Incident by the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services—Assault of a detainee at the Alexander Maconochie Centre on 25 October 2018, dated 18 January 2019.

Ombudsman Act, pursuant to subsection 21(2)—ACT Ombudsman—A report on the activities of the ACT Ombudsman—Report No 1/2019—Quarterly report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2018, dated 30 January 2019.

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

12/2018—2017-18 Financial Audits—Financial Results and Audit Findings, dated 13 December 2018.

1/2019—Total Facilities Management Procurement, dated 18 January 2019.

8/2018—Assembly of rural land west of Canberra—Corrigendum.

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Gaming Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, dated 3 December 2018.

Integrity Commission Bill 2018, dated 7 and 10 December 2018.

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Remuneration Tribunal Act, pursuant to subsection 12(2)—Determinations together with statements for—

Part-time Public Office Holder—Clinical Leadership Forum—Determination 17 of 2018, dated December 2018.

Part-time Statutory Office Holder: Integrity Commissioner—Determination 16 of 2018, dated December 2018.

Financial Management Act, pursuant to subsection 20A(2)—Budget 2018-19—Budget review.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Methodology for determining rates and land tax in strata residences*—Government response.

Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services—Independent Review—Interim Report, dated 31 January 2019.

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approvals—Variations to the Territory Plan, including associated documents—

No 342—Belconnen Town Centre: Zone changes and amendments to the Belconnen precinct map and code, dated 11 February 2019.

No 359—Changes to the Tharwa Precinct Map and Code and removal of public land overlay, dated 6 February 2019.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2017-2018—

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate—Corrigendum, dated February 2019.

Community Services Directorate—Corrigendum.

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 30E—Half-yearly departmental performance report—December 2018—

ACT Local Hospital Network Directorate, dated February 2019.

Canberra Health Services, dated February 2019.

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, dated February 2019.

Community Services Directorate, dated February 2019.

Education Directorate, dated February 2019.

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, dated February 2019.

Health Directorate, dated February 2019.

Housing ACT, dated February 2019.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, dated February 2019.

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

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General Appointment 2019—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-2 (LR, 17 January 2019).

Betting Operations Tax Act—Betting Operations Tax Determination 2019—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-5 (LR, 24 January 2019).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act—

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2018 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-289 (LR, 10 December 2018).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2018 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-290 (LR, 10 December 2018).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2018 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-291 (LR, 6 December 2018).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2018 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-292 (LR, 10 December 2018).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—

Civil Law (Wrongs) The Australian Computer Society Professional Standards Scheme 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-301 (LR, 21 December 2018).

Civil Law (Wrongs) The Law Society of New South Wales Bar Professional Standards Scheme 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-286 (LR, 29 November 2018).

Court Procedures Act—Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-25 (LR, 17 December 2018).

Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act—Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-24 (LR, 12 December 2018).

Cultural Facilities Corporation Act and Financial Management Act—

Cultural Facilities Corporation (Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-275 (LR, 26 November 2018).

Cultural Facilities Corporation (Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-276 (LR, 26 November 2018).

Cultural Facilities Corporation (Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-277 (LR, 26 November 2018).

Cultural Facilities Corporation (Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-278 (LR, 26 November 2018).

Cultural Facilities Corporation (Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-279 (LR, 26 November 2018).

Domestic Animals Act—Domestic Animals (Fees) Determination 2018 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-285 (LR, 3 December 2018).

Financial Management Act—Financial Management (Directorates) Guidelines 2019 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-4 (LR, 24 January 2019).

Gaming Machine Act—Gaming Machine (Offset Amounts) Regulation 2018—Subordinate Law SL2018-27 (LR, 19 December 2018).

Government Procurement Act—

Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs Audit) Guidelines 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-287 (LR, 3 December 2018).

Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs Complaints and Noncompliance Investigation) Guidelines 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-288 (LR, 3 December 2018).

Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act—Health Records (Privacy and Access) (Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-294 (LR, 17 December 2018).

Integrity Commission Act—Integrity Commission (Commissioner Selection Criteria and Process) Determination 2019—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-1 (LR, 16 January 2019).

Legal Aid Act—Legal Aid (Review Committee Panels) Appointment 2019 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-3 (LR, 21 January 2019).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act 2009 and Financial Management Act—

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2019 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-6 (LR, 24 January 2019).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2019 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-7 (LR, 24 January 2019).

Official Visitor Act—

Official Visitor (Children and Young People) Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-295 (LR, 20 December 2018).

Official Visitor (Corrections Management) Visit and Complaint Guidelines 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-269 (LR, 29 November 2018).

Planning and Development Act—Planning and Development Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1), including a regulatory impact statement,—Subordinate Law SL2018-21 (LR, 22 November 2018).

Public Health Act—Public Health Amendment Regulation 2019 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2019-2 (LR, 31 January 2019).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—

Race and Sports Bookmaking (Sports Bookmaking Venues) Determination 2018 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-302 (LR, 21 December 2018).

Race and Sports Bookmaking (Sports Bookmaking Venues) Determination 2019 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2019-8 (LR, 31 January 2019).

Racing Act—Racing Appeals Tribunal (Rules of the Tribunal) 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-293 (LR, 17 December 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 10)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-281 (LR, 22 November 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 11)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-296 (LR, 20 December 2018).

Road Transport (General) Exclusion of Road Transport Legislation (Light Rail) Declaration 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-303 (LR, 21 December 2018).

Road Transport (General) Exclusion of Road Transport Legislation (Summernats) Declaration 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-297 (LR, 21 December 2018).

Road Transport (Offences) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 3)—Subordinate Law SL2018-23 (LR, 29 November 2018).

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act—Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Public Transport Fares Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-284 (LR, 29 November 2018).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Regulation 2019 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2019-1 (LR, 29 January 2019).

Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Act and Road Transport (General) Act—Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-26 (LR, 13 December 2018).

Taxation Administration Act—Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Ambulance Levy) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-300 (LR, 21 December 2018).

Veterinary Practice Act—

Veterinary Practice (Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-299 (LR, 20 December 2018).

Veterinary Practice (Professional Bodies) Declaration 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-298 (LR, 20 December 2018).

Veterinary Practice Regulation 2018—Subordinate Law SL2018-28 (LR, 20 December 2018).

### **Budget review—2018-2019**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (3.17): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to subsection 20A(2)—Budget 2018-19—Budget review.

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events and Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment) (3.18): Via the manager of government business, I have presented to the Assembly the 2018-19 budget review, prepared in accordance with section 20A of the Financial Management Act 1996.

This update shows that the ACT government continues to deliver the quality local services and infrastructure that our growing city needs, whilst maintaining a balanced budget to build for Canberra's future. Our strong and growing economy is creating more good jobs, and we continue to attract bright, skilled people from across Australia and around the world because of the great quality of life on offer in our city.

The 2018-19 budget delivered a significant step up in front-line services for Canberrans, including more hospital services and surgeries, more places at our local schools, better roads and public transport, and stronger community support for those who need it. The 2018-19 budget review demonstrates again that the government is continuing to invest where and when it is needed to maintain high quality services and infrastructure for our community.

Our balanced budget position and capacity for continued investment are underpinned by the sustained growth of the territory economy. In 2017-18 our real gross state product increased at the fastest rate of any jurisdiction in Australia, at four per cent, well above our 15-year average growth rate of around 3.3 per cent.

The unemployment rate in the territory remains the lowest in the country. Pleasingly, our youth unemployment rate is well below the national average and has been falling over the past 12 months, to currently sit at 8.7 per cent. The past 12 months have seen strong job creation in areas outside of the public sector, such as construction and tertiary education and research, as the government's economic diversification plans take root.

Canberra's tertiary education and research sector now contributes \$3.3 billion annually to our economy and provides 20,000 full-time equivalent jobs in our city's economy. This is an increase from a contribution of \$2.6 billion in 2014. Education is also our largest service export, with the value of these exports having grown by \$527 million over the last five years. This reflects Canberra's growing reputation as a destination of choice for both international and interstate students.

The ACT's solid fiscal position and strong economic outlook have been confirmed again by the international ratings agency Standard & Poor's. In September 2018 the agency confirmed our AAA credit rating and upgraded the territory to a stable outlook. This is the highest rating possible for any state or territory government and, amongst the Australian states or territories, is a credit rating we share only with Victoria and New South Wales.

Since the 2018-19 territory budget was released, the ACT government has made significant progress on a range of important service and infrastructure initiatives. Detailed planning and design work is underway for the half-billion-dollar expansion of the Canberra Hospital through the development of the new surgical procedures, interventional radiology and emergency centre. In late 2018 we announced that SPIRE will be built on the north-eastern side of the Canberra Hospital campus, with construction to commence in 2020. SPIRE will feature more operating theatres; more inpatient wards; state-of-the-art surgical, procedural and imaging facilities; a coronary care unit; and a significantly expanded emergency department and intensive care unit. The centre is an important health investment for Canberra as it will futureproof our hospital services and ensure that our free public healthcare system can meet the growing needs of our city.

In recent months the government has opened a third nurse-led walk-in centre, in Gungahlin, and announced the location for a further walk-in centre, in Weston Creek, with funding to build it delivered through this budget review. This means that by the end of 2019 there will be four walk-in centres operating across the city to provide free treatment and health advice for Canberrans close to their homes.

Stage 1 of Canberra's light rail network is nearing completion, with the government delivering new initiatives to support the commencement of operations and make it easy for Canberrans to integrate light rail into their daily commute. The government is also progressing planning for stage 2 of the network, with submissions on the route progressing for commonwealth environmental and planning approvals. The light rail route from Civic to Woden is an important link in the city's future transport network. This project is a significant one in our forward infrastructure plan, and we are determined to get on with building it.

I am pleased to say that last week the first students in class at the Margaret Hendry School, Gungahlin's newest school, located in Taylor, took their places. It will ensure that Canberra's fastest-growing region can continue to provide schooling at great local schools close to home. We are also adding around 1,000 places to existing schools across the city, and work is underway on delivery of a new school in the Molonglo Valley.

Meeting Canberrans' need for safe, suitable and affordable housing is a priority, and in recent years we have delivered the largest renewal program of the territory's public housing stock in the history of self-government, replacing nearly 1,300 ageing properties with new, modern homes. We have now announced the next stage of investment in Canberra's public housing, with \$100 million dedicated over the next five years to deliver at least 200 new homes and renew a further 1,000 properties.

The 2018-19 budget review provides further support for other priority actions from the new ACT housing strategy released in October, including land tax exemptions for landlords who rent their properties through community housing providers at below-market rates. We understand that affordability and rights for renters are a significant part of the housing challenge. That is why we are currently also in the process of amending the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to give renters more rights to make a property feel like home and restrain unfair rent increases, at the same time as expanding public housing and affordable land releases.

We are continuing to grow our investment in emergency services to keep Canberrans safe. The 2018-19 budget review delivers five new ambulances and two full paramedic crews to ensure that our emergency response times remain the fastest in the country, as well as more investment in preparing for bushfires as summers get hotter and fire seasons get longer.

We are investing in innovative new justice interventions for non-violent offenders to help break the cycle of imprisonment and recidivism, including implementing the drug and alcohol court and providing accommodation alternatives to remand.

We are helping Canberrans on low and fixed incomes with their costs of living by further expanding the utilities concession scheme. From 1 July this year the concession will increase by \$46, bringing the total annual payment to \$700.

These initiatives show that the ACT government is continuing to make progress on delivering our 2016 election commitments and the important agenda outlined in the parliamentary agreement. We have work completed or underway on most of these commitments, and continuing to roll them out for Canberrans will be a priority for the government this year.

The 2018-19 budget marked a return to balance after several years of fiscal deficits. We understand that it is important to maintain a broadly balanced budget in the near term to improve the ACT's resilience and capacity to respond to the next set of economic challenges when they arise. The government's budget strategy therefore remains focused on strengthening and diversifying the ACT economy, with an emphasis on the creation of good jobs and the delivery of high quality services to Canberrans; maintaining a strong operating balance over the medium term; and investing in infrastructure projects that will protect Canberra's livability and boost our productivity as the city grows.

The 2018-19 budget review confirms that we are on track with this approach, and its key balance sheet metrics are consistent with the maintenance of our AAA credit

rating. While remaining in balance, the updates to the headline net operating balance since 2018-19 reflect movements in significant budget components which are largely outside the government's direct control. This includes volatility in the market price for large-scale generation certificates brought about by the ongoing lack of certainty on commonwealth climate and energy policy, as well as weaker returns from share market investments following a period of global market uncertainty.

The Assembly should note that movement in market prices and returns does not affect the government's capacity to deliver the services that we have promised in the short term; nor will we cut back services just to recover a potentially temporary change in forecast returns. We will, however, continue to monitor these developments in updating our fiscal and economic policies ahead of the 2019-20 budget. I commend the budget review to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Inquiry into the methodology for determining rates and land tax for strata residences—government response**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (3.28): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Methodology for determining rates and land tax in strata residences*—Government response.

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events and Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment) (3.28): I am pleased to table today the government's response to the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into the methodology for determining rates and land tax for strata residences.

I would like to thank the committee for its work, as well as members of the community who took the time and effort to make submissions and participate in this process. The government followed this inquiry closely and has given due consideration to the committee's report.

The change to the methodology for determining rates for strata residences was implemented to make the general rates system fairer and more equitable, as part of the government's broader 20-year tax reform program which commenced in 2012. Under the tax reform program, general rates are increasing incrementally to offset the removal of inefficient taxes such as insurance duty, which has now been removed, and conveyance duty, which has been phased out—conveyance duty also being popularly known as stamp duty.

These taxes are widely recognised as being unfair and inefficient and as hindering economic growth and activity. Conveyance duty can be a significant financial barrier, particularly for first homebuyers. It can also make it harder for families and older people to move to housing which best suits their needs during the life cycle. I am pleased to note that this reform has already resulted in significant benefits for Canberrans, despite being not quite halfway through the 20-year period.

Conveyance duty for eligible first homebuyers will be abolished from 1 July this year. Conveyance duty has also been significantly reduced for every other homebuyer as well. A family buying a property valued at \$500,000 in the ACT today will save around eight and a half thousand dollars, compared to before the start of this reform in 2012.

These savings will continue to increase each year as the reform progresses, ending with the complete abolition of conveyance duty for all homebuyers. In addition, conveyance duty is no longer levied on commercial property transactions below \$1.5 million. This can be a substantial help for a small business looking to establish or expand its presence. These are all significant benefits for our community. Tax reform is helping to deliver a fairer, more sustainable and more stable revenue base for providing high quality services each and every year to all Canberrans now and into the future.

The change in calculation methodology for units, the central issue in the public accounts committee inquiry, has improved the overall rates system by making it fairer and more equitable. It has done this by better aligning charges between houses and unit title properties such as apartments and townhouses. Under stage 1 of tax reform, from 2011-12 to 2016-17, increases in general rates were greater for houses than for units. The overall proportion of revenue raised from units was falling.

This disparity raised significant fairness and equity concerns, given that rates and land tax are used to fund the broadest range of services to the community, such as health, education, community, disability, justice and policing services. If the government had not made this change, the disparity between houses and units would have continued to increase over time, leading to even greater distortions in the future.

This difference between houses and units extended to land taxes as well, as these are calculated using the same methodology. These factors led to the government introducing a change in the methodology, which took effect from 1 July 2017. Previously the calculation was based on a land value attributed to each individual unit, which was often very low; it is now based on the total value of land, with the assessed rates then divided between units.

Even with this change, average rates continue to be much lower for units than for houses. The general rates charge for units in 2018-19 is around \$1,470 on average, compared with \$2,470 on average for houses—so a difference of around 40 per cent. Average general rates and land taxes will continue to be substantially lower for units into the future. In relation to the relativities between units and freestanding houses, we understand the concerns that members of the community have raised, including how

the different components of a rates bill are arrived at, and how the methodology takes into account relativities between types of blocks.

We are currently considering how these issues can be best addressed within the overall framework of the current rating system. This will also inform preparatory work that will get underway this year to develop the next five-year phase of tax reform. In developing the next reform program, we will commission a detailed analysis of the impacts of the reform on our economy, the community's revenue base and Canberrans across the income distribution.

The analysis will be conducted throughout the coming year and will provide input to the government to inform the 2020 territory budget. The aim of the analysis will be to ensure that there is an informed discussion about tax reform and that the settings for the next phase maintain the economic objectives of this important reform whilst ensuring they achieve the community's social needs and priorities.

I commend the government response to the Assembly, acknowledging that there is more to do on tax reform, both through this work and through further deliberations in this Assembly.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (3.34): I will start with some general comments about the tax system and then specifically talk about the government's response. The ACT is in the process of moving away from stamp duty and replacing the lost income with rates and land tax, and this changes our taxation to be annual rather than based on a specific transaction—that is, purchasing real estate. Instead of this, all Canberra residents pay rates annually, either directly or via the rent that they pay to their landlord, who pays rates and land tax.

Paying annually is clearly much more aligned with the ACT government budget and service provision. But the change also changed taxation to be based only on land value rather than on market value, and of course in general the wealth of taxpayers is more closely related to the market value of their property than just the land value.

As I have said in previous speeches, because the ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to deliver this tax reform, the ACT is the first to observe some of the practical issues that arise, such as pensioners in modest older homes paying over 14 per cent of their income on rates, while for median income households median rates are less than 2 per cent of their income; and difficulties with setting rates for units because rates are currently based on land value only, and apartments many floors off the ground simply do not have a simple land value. Entry-level houses for first homebuyers are paying higher rates than a McMansion down the street that is worth half a million dollars more in some instances, simply because of the size of the block. The same thing goes for older people in houses that are much smaller and more modest than their neighbours'.

All of these are issues with the fairness of the tax system. This is a real issue. It is important that we do not let the fact that Canberra has a high average income blind us to the fact that some people in Canberra are struggling financially.

Moving to the government response, I will concentrate on recommendations 2 and 6, starting with recommendation 6, which is the public review of residential rates and land tax. In its response to recommendation 6, the government committed to a public review of stage 2 of the ACT's tax reform program ahead of finalising the details of stage 3. I welcome that commitment. I see it as a vindication of the points that I have been making on residential rates and land tax over the last year, and vindication of the points which many people in the community have been making. In particular, OCN has probably been outstanding in this regard.

Now that the government has committed to a review, the next question is: what should the review do? The Greens have a number of suggestions as to what it should include. First, the review must be public and highly transparent. Tax reform needs broad-based community support if it is to be sustainable in the long run. Second, the review must focus strongly on both fairness and economic efficiency. I am really concerned about the potential impacts of the route we are going on on renters, Canberrans on low incomes and first homebuyers.

Third, the review must include a serious investigation of moving the residential rates system to a market value tax, as the ACT Greens suggested in our discussion paper last year. The issues that we are seeing are partly happening because Canberra's tax system is moving from stamp duty—which was, and is of course, a market value tax—to rates and land tax, which are both land value taxes. Relatively speaking, that reduces the taxes paid on McMansions and increases the taxes paid by first homebuyers and seniors with small houses in older suburbs. Market value rates are much more likely to match taxation and ability to pay.

Fourth, the review must include an investigation of the impact of increasing residential land tax, given that recommendation 18 of the 2012 Quinlan review was to abolish it over time. Many economists believe that, in theory at least, land tax ultimately partly flows through to rents. If this is correct in the Canberra context, this could be having substantial negative impacts on low income Canberrans. The review needs to test whether this, which is undoubtedly a fairly reasonable theory, is actually happening in practice in the ACT or whether there are some other factors here, such as the shortage of rentals. Fifth, the review must consider the role of deferrals of taxation and tax concessions. These are critical for fairness to people on low incomes and people who are falling into financial hardship.

Finally, the review needs to be about taxing better, not about cutting taxes, because of course cutting taxes would mean cutting the services our community relies on, and also because conceptually they are two different questions: how much money we spend on government services and how we tax are related but different questions. This review should be about how the tax pie is shared and how to ensure that we share it in the most equitable and efficient fashion.

Moving on to recommendation 2, this is around rates for units. The government's response to recommendation 2 includes the following quote on the topic of setting rates for units:

The Government acknowledges that there are challenges in appropriately balancing equity across all residential rate payers through the use of a single set of rating factors for houses and units.

Of course I absolutely agree, as does the OCN, I believe. This is because in the ACT rates are charged on the basis of land value, where units and houses do not have comparable ownership of land. Charging rates on the basis of market value would to a very large extent solve this problem. A \$500,000 home would pay the same rates regardless of whether it was an apartment, a townhouse, a duplex or a standalone house. Thus the equity issues are, to quite a large extent, fixed.

In conclusion, I strongly support the government's commitment to a review. Now I just want to make sure that it is a good review that focuses on fairness as well as economic efficiency.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **ACT Health—Independent review into workplace culture**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (3.41): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services—Interim Report.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Planning and Development Act—variation No 359 to the Territory Plan**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (3.42): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No 359 to the Territory Plan—Changes to the Tharwa Precinct Map and Code and removal of public land overlay.

Variation 359 of the Territory Plan incorporates the outcomes and recommendations of the Tharwa village plan into the Territory Plan. The Tharwa village plan was developed in collaboration with the Tharwa community to provide a long-term vision and planning framework to guide its enhancement and viability into the future. It also defined what is important about Tharwa and how its rural character and qualities can

be kept while providing sustainable lifestyle opportunities to live and work in a unique rural village setting.

Variation 359 removes the sport and recreation reserve public land overlay from the Territory Plan map for block 10 section 6 Tharwa, as this is a historical mapping error and not applicable to the block. The variation also introduces built form controls in the Tharwa precinct map and code, including building and height controls, setbacks and plot ratio restrictions, to reflect the existing or desired character of the village.

Variation 359 was released for public comment on 11 September 2018, until 24 October 2018, and received no public submissions during this time. A report on consultation was prepared by the ACT planning and land authority in accordance with section 69 of the Planning and Development Act. Under section 73 of this act I referred the draft variation to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. The standing committee advised that they did not intend to conduct an inquiry, and I subsequently approved the variation.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate—performance report**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (3.43): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 30E—Half-yearly performance report—December 2018—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Multicultural affairs—cultural and linguistic diversity** **Discussion of matter of public importance**

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

The importance of supporting Canberra's multicultural community.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (3.45): I am delighted to bring this matter of public importance in my name to the Assembly today. This is an important time of year to discuss matters relating to Canberra's multicultural residents. This weekend we will enjoy the National Multicultural Festival, which promotes itself on its website as

“Australia’s premier celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity”, with the words “and linguistic” formatted in bold. The home page also points out, again in bold text, that it will involve “more than 350 community groups, using scores of different languages”.

On Thursday of next week the world will observe International Mother Language Day. Proclaimed by the United Nations in November 1999, this day promotes, according to the UN’s website, “linguistic and cultural diversity”. The descriptions for each of these events make clear the important link between language and culture.

In September 2017 a motion by the Canberra Liberals called upon this government to observe International Mother Language Day, also to promote the active participation in, revitalisation and maintenance of local Indigenous languages, and to support second language instruction in schools. Speaking in support, I noted:

As linguists, anthropologists and other scholars have repeatedly pointed out, language is closely tied to both culture and identity. Languages serve as libraries of cultural knowledge as well as enabling the transference of that knowledge across generations.

I remind members that, according to the latest census, 32 per cent of Canberra’s residents are migrants, and more than half of us have at least one parent who was a migrant. Linked to this reality is the fact that a non-English language is spoken in nearly one-quarter of the territory’s households. As a consequence, people care deeply about what this government says about multiculturalism and linguistic diversity. More importantly, they care about what this government does.

The ACT government’s first languages policy, *Your Voices*, was released in 2012 and provided both policy statements and promised implementations for the period 2012 to 2016. According to objective 3 in the ACT multicultural framework, the policy should have been revealed in fiscal year 2015-16, the final year of its intended life span. It was not; nor was it reviewed, from what I can tell, in either of the next two years.

This delay came without any explanation, which caused concern to quite a number of Canberra’s multicultural community members, who shared their worries and displeasure with me. As a consequence, over the past two years I have asked a number of questions on notice and made a number of statements in this chamber in support of the ACT government reviewing and updating its languages policy so that people can honestly know what to expect.

Finally, four months ago, the territory’s multicultural community received a long-awaited update to the languages policy. This, however, was actually just an update to one section of the old policy, the language services section—a fact acknowledged by the minister when he tabled the document. This means that nearly three years after its end date, most of the ACT’s former languages policy remains unrevised and without any updates, and no-one that I am aware of has been given any explanation as to why.

The original policy had a number of objectives, including the provision of language services, support for learning other languages and an emphasis on the role of linguistic diversity in economic development. Amongst others, it promised that “every effort will be made to retain, preserve and use Indigenous Australian languages in the ACT region”. It also stated that “all Canberrans will be encouraged to learn and treasure languages other than English”, and it made important commitments to strongly support both the ACT Community Language Schools Association and the teaching of languages other than English in ACT schools.

The minister did state when he tabled the update that he looked forward to “hearing about how we can support languages more broadly in the community”, but in the meantime a number of Canberrans are worried about what any future and long-overdue policy update might look like.

As noted by my Liberal colleague and fellow migrant Ms Elizabeth Lee in a motion that she sponsored in November last year, the ACT government’s future of education strategy does not make a single mention of the importance of language education in Canberra schools. Such a glaring omission does not reassure many of those in Canberra’s multicultural communities or those closely engaged in teaching languages.

I have highlighted this issue because it points to a number of issues more broadly. When a policy document that is important to culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans is approaching its end date and is due for a review, it should be reviewed. If for some reason it cannot be reviewed, a good explanation should be provided. An expired policy does not communicate that this is a government that values or supports the multicultural community.

This reality merges with other concerns shared with me by others. Culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans expect to be genuinely consulted and not just dictated to. For example, I have recently been informed that policies for booking the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre were changed recently. Community groups that have long held regular events at the centre, including weekly language classes and weekly events for seniors with language barriers, have been told that they are now limited to using the function room only twice a month. In addition, a new charge that community groups cannot afford has been placed on using the centre’s kitchen, where previously this was included in a booking.

Community groups, however, claim that they were not consulted on this matter and were caught unawares by these changes. This causes friction and hurt feelings, not to mention creating logistical problems for community organisations that are fully staffed by volunteers and feel unsupported by this government, even when their activities help to fulfil stated government priorities. Many community groups feel they can no longer use the centre, and the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum have asked for better communication with centre users and have recommended a tenants management committee to oversee bookings in order to restore a sense of fairness.

Culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans also want help in both preserving and promoting their cultures and their languages. They want to see better support for refugees in particular but also for new migrants. They want to feel better supported when accessing health services in Canberra, including mental health services.

As I have noted in this chamber in the past, people from culturally diverse backgrounds often attach severe stigma to mental illness and can be reluctant to access health services. Data demonstrates that these people have significantly lower levels of access to mental health care and support in the wider community, shifting the burden of responsibility onto family members, who often lack the adequate training or support to cope. It is my hope, and the hope of many Canberrans, that this government will do a better job of supporting the territory's multicultural community.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee—Minister for City Services, Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Roads) (3.53): I am pleased to speak on the importance of supporting Canberra's multicultural community. Inclusion is a choice that our government has made to make sure that Canberra is an inclusive city. And we do that in a range of ways throughout the year: most visibly through the upcoming Multicultural Festival, Australia's largest multicultural festival. The maze of white tents and colourful bunting heralds the annual National Multicultural Festival, and in 2019 the festival will mark 23 years of operations as thousands of Canberrans, visitors from across the nation and the globe gather in our city centre to celebrate the cultural diversity of our city and the world.

On top of 150 performances across the three days, festival attendees will enjoy over 300 food, drink and information stalls from Friday lunchtime until late Sunday afternoon. The weather is forecast to be very good for the weekend, with late summer conditions, and we are expecting tens of thousands of visitors to flock into the city centre to enjoy the fun. Each year the festival provides a platform for our diverse multicultural communities to proudly and loudly stake their claim to a share of the Australian story. And this event is a visible statement of how important cultural diversity is to our city's identity.

Reflecting this, our government is proud to reaffirm our commitment to growing this much-loved event, with a commitment in the budget review of \$1.968 million during the next three financial years, ensuring the viability of the annual National Multicultural Festival for years to come. The funding will provide ongoing support for staff and incremental improvements in the lead-up to the 25th anniversary of the festival in 2021. These improvements include a more streamlined approach to the festival's management and the increased focus on public safety in an era of global uncertainty. Through this funding, our government believes we can ensure that the festival has an important role in the future of our city.

While the annual festival is one of the most anticipated weekends on Canberra's event calendar and a reflection of our city's multiculturalism, it is the efforts throughout the year of our multicultural communities that really display the importance that we in our city place on celebrating our cultural diversity. And many of those events are supported by the ACT government, including through our multicultural participation

grants. In 2017 the ACT government fulfilled its election commitment of establishing the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council, which comprises 15 members representing the voices of our culturally diverse community in Canberra.

Since that time the council has met formally on eight occasions, contributing to and consulting on a huge range of policy and program work which is key to the lives of many of our city's residents. More importantly, the council hosted the 2018 multicultural summit in November at which 150 community leaders, service providers and government officials came together to identify a range of outcomes to make sure that we continue to make sure that our city is the most inclusive place for our multicultural communities.

As a result of the summit, I have asked the council to take a lead role in formulating the second action plan of the multicultural framework 2015-20, a plan that will take us into the beginning of the next decade and prepare us for the future. A vital element of the framework is to continue to ensure that the ACT maintains our human rights approach, welcoming refugees and other humanitarian entrants arriving from many different countries to make Canberra their home.

We have a very strong history of recognising the value of our refugee and migrant communities in our city. Over the past 10 years Canberra has welcomed more than 2,000 refugees as part of our proudly multicultural city. The ACT was the first jurisdiction in Australia to enact a human rights act, which provides an explicit statutory basis for respecting, protecting and promoting civil and political rights.

In 2015 the ACT was also the first jurisdiction amongst the states and territories in Australia to declare itself a refugee welcome zone. The declaration of the ACT as a refugee welcome zone is a commitment to welcoming refugees into our community, upholding their human rights, demonstrating compassion and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in our community. Furthermore, in 2016 the ACT joined the safe haven enterprise visa scheme to provide stability and support to asylum seekers and others who have chosen to make Canberra their home. We also invested \$1.4 million in the 2016-17 budget in programs to assist refugees and asylum seekers with language and employment support.

The true strength of any city or community is measured by how we support, embrace and encourage our most vulnerable members, as well as how we acknowledge and value the established communities that we have and their contributions. As we join together this weekend to celebrate the 2019 National Multicultural Festival, it is a time to reflect on the contribution of our city's culturally diverse communities and the way that we can further enhance their participation and support them.

This weekend I will be meeting with the huge range of our multicultural communities, their members, leaders and volunteers as I make my way across the three days of the festival. And I encourage members of the Legislative Assembly and, indeed, the broader Canberra community to head out over the weekend and support this fantastic community event and the efforts of our culturally diverse communities throughout the year.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (4.00): I am pleased to stand today to discuss the importance of supporting Canberra's multicultural community. All people, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, language or place of birth, have equal rights in our society. Our diversity is a source of our strength and a key part of what makes the ACT such a terrific and vibrant place to live. The annual Multicultural Festival is a great example—and of course the one that people tend to focus on—of what I have just described about Canberra, and I look forward to celebrating with the community this coming weekend.

The ACT Greens will always support our multicultural communities to connect with their language and culture and to build relationships with each other and the broader Canberra community. Recent public attacks on religious and ethnic groups, including by some in federal parliament, have shown that there is still a need to continue to educate our community about diversity and the rights of all people to live without being discriminated against or vilified on the basis of their faith, race or ethnicity.

Multicultural communities are supported by small voluntary groups and organisations who work tirelessly to advocate for the needs of their diverse communities. The ACT Greens are pleased to secure a commitment through the parliamentary agreement to establish the multicultural advisory board and convene the first multicultural summit to ensure that those communities have a voice to government and can contribute to decision-making.

This topic is particularly timely, given that the Multicultural Festival is happening this weekend. This celebration of Canberra's and Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity is one of the biggest annual events in Canberra. At the weekend we will see more than 200,000 people flock to Civic for the festival. There will be food from every corner of the world, with over 300 stalls. There will be live music, dancing and cultural performances across six stages. The National Multicultural Festival actively involves more than 350 community groups, using scores of different languages, up to 70 diplomatic missions and dozens of national and local businesses through participation and sponsorship.

I am personally looking forward to the festival, as I do every year, to sample, taste and experience Canberra's wonderful multicultural community. I, like others, encourage all members and all Canberrans to visit the festival this weekend. I am not sure if there is anybody in Canberra who has never been to it. I would like to think there is not, but if there is, this is your chance. The weather is going to be perfect, and it will be a great weekend.

The ACT Greens believe that the ACT should be a safe and welcoming place for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and that those people should be supported through housing, education, life skills and social connections when they settle in Canberra. We are proud that Canberra is the only state or territory to be declared a refugee welcome zone, and this reflects the openness and generosity of the Canberra community.

On this matter, I would now like to talk about the medical evacuation bill that is being negotiated in federal parliament and that has been blatantly politicised by the government. The bill would give doctors more say over the medical transfer of people in offshore detention. This follows escalating concerns about the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers on Manus Island and Nauru. The Greens, on the advice of medical professionals, refugee advocates and lawyers, have become increasingly concerned about the incidence of mental illness, self-harm and suicide.

The blatant politicisation and misrepresentations by the federal government regarding this bill are simply disgraceful. We have heard the home affairs minister say that the bill would allow “most of the 1,000 individuals on Manus and Nauru” to be transferred to Australia within four weeks of the bill’s royal assent. This statement by the minister speaks volumes about the conditions of those imprisoned in these camps. If the federal government’s own minister knows that doctors will recommend transferring people on medical grounds then something needs to be done urgently about the living conditions in the camps. Better yet, these facilities should be shut down. It should be medical professionals, not the minister, who determine what health care is appropriate for people. Since when did an individual’s health in the care of the federal government become a matter of national security rather than human dignity!

I equally urge federal Labor not to succumb to the government’s scaremongering campaign. I know that my ACT colleagues will be advocating for this position, having previously called for refugees and asylum seekers on Manus Island and Nauru to be resettled here in the ACT as part of a national resettlement program. The health and wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers is an issue that the Greens will continue to advocate for, and I hope other parties will join us.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming our commitment to and support for Canberra’s multicultural community, and I look forward to seeing Canberrans out in force at this weekend’s Multicultural Festival.

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (4.05): I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing forward this matter of public importance. It is timely in the lead-up to the Multicultural Festival, and it also allows me to discuss a matter that is very close to home for me, I guess both literally and figuratively. The multicultural community in the ACT is important in so many ways. It is not just about the festival this weekend, which I am very much looking forward to attending. Nor is it just the events that I and members of this Assembly get the privilege to attend with our rich, diverse multicultural communities.

We live in a world that is becoming more and more global. Our business is not limited by borders; our education is not limited by borders; and our society is not limited by borders. Canberra is one of the most diverse cities in Australia. You only have to look at the Canberra Liberals party room to see the opportunities that our multicultural community has been afforded. There is no other Australian parliament that can claim to have elected members from Korea, from Tonga, from Italy, from England and previously, of course, from Hungary—our late big brother Steven Doszpot—in one party room. Each of us is grateful for the Australia that welcomed us or our parents, who sought a better life for the next generation.

Canberra is a world-class city. Although there are many things the Chief Minister and this government have done that I do not agree with, I do acknowledge that he has improved, and he is working hard to improve, our tourism and connectivity to the world. The Canberra Liberals, however, believe that more can be done. This is why Mr Coe will be leading a delegation to China in a few weeks to strengthen our connections with Beijing, the sister city established by the Carnell Liberal government.

This is also why I feel so strongly about language education here in the ACT. Multiculturalism is not just about sharing food, dancing and national costumes. It is about understanding an entire culture and people, and language is a fundamental aspect of making sure that we gear our city and our children toward a more connected global community.

As Canberra becomes more closely linked to the rest of the world, it is our responsibility to ensure that our children are equipped with the skills they need to become truly global citizens. A strong foundation in language education is one of the fundamental ways that we can achieve this. The Canberra Liberals believe that we should be providing a world-class system of language education in Canberra schools. To do this, we need to take the learning of languages in schools seriously. We need to work with our diverse community to ensure that we have our priorities and focus in the right place.

We need an education minister who respects and values the learning of languages in schools, not as an afterthought only in response to a motion that points out the glaring omission in her future of education strategy and calls on her government to bring forward a plan for language education. It is not good enough that under the leadership of this minister and under the current ACT education system you start learning Italian at primary school, but cannot continue it in high school, only to try to pick it up again in college—that is, of course, if you have not found interests elsewhere.

It is not good enough that under the leadership of this minister and under the current ACT education system, Korean, which happens to be my mother tongue, is only available in one year group at one primary school in one priority enrolment area. For anyone else interested in Korean, you cannot take it up unless you are in college.

In a motion that I moved last year, I called on the government to establish a strong plan for language education in ACT schools. I hope that the minister has taken the call seriously, because our future generation deserves a world-class education system that will prepare them for a global multicultural future. Children who learn a second language, especially from early childhood, not only learn skills that help with other aspects of their education; it is also a way of opening up the world. It is a way of opening up a whole new culture. It is a different way of thinking, and it is a different way of being.

In a city as multicultural as Canberra, in a city that is the home to hundreds of different cultures and languages, it just makes sense that we have a world-class system of language education. Madam Deputy Speaker, where this government has clearly failed in achieving this for our children, a Canberra Liberals government will

ensure that language education in our schools is a fundamental part of our education and our community. Our future generation deserves nothing less.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Disability, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Government Services and Procurement, Minister for Urban Renewal) (4.10): I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing forward this matter of public importance today. As we have all noted, it is a timely discussion about the importance of multiculturalism in Canberra, with the National Multicultural Festival setting up outside the Assembly doors.

I think we can all agree that supporting Canberra's multicultural community is very important. I have spoken about the richness and diversity of our community many times over the last couple of years. I am proud, as I am sure we all are, to say that Canberra is one of the most inclusive cities in Australia.

A privilege afforded to members of the Legislative Assembly is the opportunity to engage with many different cultural groups across Canberra. Of course, it is a particular privilege for ministers and shadow ministers in the multicultural affairs portfolio. I feel very honoured to have held that portfolio prior to Mr Steel. Every event or discussion is an opportunity to meet people of different backgrounds, beliefs and experiences, a constant and welcome reminder of how rich and diverse our city is. Canberra is strengthened by our multicultural community. Our diversity presents great social, cultural and economic benefits and opportunities.

Of course, our appreciation of different cultures will be on full display this weekend, when we expect more than 200,000 people to visit the National Multicultural Festival. It is an opportunity for people to appreciate, share and learn from different cultures and traditions right here in the heart of Canberra.

Promoting and maintaining a strong, harmonious and multicultural Canberra requires government, communities and businesses all to work together. The ACT government works closely with a number of community organisations and individuals to achieve this. In 2017, as Mr Steel noted, we established the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council. The council provides a platform for Canberra's culturally and linguistically diverse communities to express their views, have their issues heard and actively participate in consultation on matters that affect their lives and their communities.

The council continues to advocate for the needs and concerns of culturally diverse communities and ensures that the experiences and circumstances of these communities are reflected in advice to government. In 2018 the ACT government, in partnership with the council, hosted the ACT multicultural summit. Community stakeholders met to identify and discuss a range of issues and outcomes affecting Canberra's multicultural community. I was very pleased that Minister Steel invited me to help open the summit. I record my thanks to him for this. It was a great day and I wish we could have stayed longer.

A key role of the Multicultural Advisory Council is also to support the implementation of the ACT multicultural framework 2015-20. The framework

focuses on the importance of supporting the ACT's multicultural communities to ensure that everyone can reach their full potential. It highlights the ACT government's commitment to building a community where everyone is respected, valued and included.

A number of programs and services exist across Canberra to support people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A great highlight for me when I was Minister for Multicultural Affairs was learning about and meeting many community organisations and individuals who were recipients of the multicultural participation grants program.

This program highlights and promotes community participation, cultural diversity and inclusion in the ACT. To be truly an inclusive community we must support and provide opportunities for Canberra's most vulnerable, including refugees and asylum seekers. There are, as Mr Rattenbury has outlined, significant limitations on how the current federal government supports refugees and asylum seekers. But an ACT Labor government and the ACT Labor Party will always stand up for the most vulnerable and will always support the ACT as a refugee welcome zone, a place that welcomes refugees and other migrants to our community.

In 2017 the ACT government expanded the eligibility criteria for the ACT apprenticeships and skilled capital programs to automatically include Canberrans from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, providing more employment opportunities, improving language skills and supporting workforce participation.

The ACT government funds a range of support services to work with migrants and refugees, ensuring that they can build new and better lives. Service partners like Companion House, Multicultural Youth Services and Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services work closely with the government to support those who have suffered persecution, torture and war-related trauma.

The ACT Labor government is proud of its record in making Canberra a more inclusive community. We are committed to multiculturalism and supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities as they grow. Regardless of gender, race, faith or sexuality, Canberra is a city for everyone.

I want to acknowledge the tripartite support in this place for a diverse and inclusive Canberra that celebrates many different cultures and backgrounds. Sadly, the Liberals in the other place across the lake see multiculturalism as an opportunity to drive division and create fear. They are at it again this week, as Mr Rattenbury has said.

While I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing this motion to the Assembly and for her absolute commitment and the absolute commitment of the Canberra Liberals to supporting multiculturalism, I would like to take this opportunity again to encourage Mrs Kikkert, Ms Lee and their fellow Canberra Liberals to share their support for a multicultural community with their Liberal colleagues on the hill, who unfortunately do not seem to share the same values, nor place the same importance on supporting and growing a diverse and inclusive Australia.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (4.16): I was not intending to speak, but the smear on the federal Liberals is worth noting. I make the brief point that the policies adopted by the Labor Party and the Greens federally led to 8,000 children being locked up. Since the Liberal Party has come into government federally, that situation has been addressed and there are now no children locked up.

While you on that side of the chamber want to grandstand, criticise and smear, the 8,000 children were locked up as a result of the policies adopted by the Labor Party and the Greens. We have a very different view of the rhetoric compared to the reality. The reality is that there are now no children locked up. Your mess has been cleaned up.

*Ms Stephen-Smith interjecting—*

**MR HANSON:** You locked 8,000 kids up.

**MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The question before us is in relation to the matter of public importance.

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (4.17): I am pleased to rise today and reaffirm the comments of our Minister for Multicultural Affairs in speaking to the importance of supporting Canberra's multicultural community. Canberra is an inclusive community where diversity is valued and everyone belongs, and a city which is healthy and accessible now and into the future. Our cultural landscape is populated and shaped by people moving here from more than 180 countries across the globe, under the guardianship of our traditional owners. The ACT is currently home to more than 400,000 people, and about half of our city's residents have at least one parent born overseas.

Within Australia's seat of democracy and diplomacy, almost a quarter of us live in a household where a non-English language is spoken at home. As families, couples and friends sit down and converse at dinner tables each night across our urban populace, we can only imagine the joys of conversations in Polish, Farsi, Mandarin and Vietnamese, as well as myriad other languages.

What a wonderful asset the strength of languages is, as Canberra continues to engage and cement itself as a global entity in the spheres of science, tourism, sporting excellence, business and technology. With this in mind, the ACT government will in the coming months enact our city's ACT languages services policy. After extensive community consultation and collaboration, the policy provides a platform for Canberrans to continue to utilise, capitalise on and access support to ensure that mother tongue languages are protected and encouraged for younger Canberrans, older Canberrans and all Canberrans.

Appropriately, one of the key pillars of this year's Multicultural Festival is a focus on raising awareness of Canberra as a multilingual city. I hope many of you will visit the languages showcase on Saturday at 2 pm.

Another key program which showcases the ACT government's ongoing commitment to supporting and strengthening our city's multicultural community is the annual ACT participation multicultural grants program. Each year under the program, \$260,000 is shared amongst dozens of multicultural community organisations. These grants enable communities to both participate in and celebrate at the annual National Multicultural Festival, as well as to organise a vast range of celebrations to host and mark various national days and cultural events.

Over the past four years, our government has delivered funding of more than \$1 million to support initiatives such as a Japanese autumn festival, the purchase of resources for a Mandarin language radio program, a Holi celebration for the Indian community, an Asian women's community newsletter, royal blind society brochures in languages other than English, mosque open days, Sri Lankan new year festivities, Diwali celebrations, and Swiss language radio broadcasting. There are so many initiatives to highlight. This is just a small number of the many hundreds of community-led events and programs the ACT government continues to invest in for the enjoyment and participation of all Canberrans.

The key policy driver underpinning the funding guidelines of the ACT participation multicultural grants program is for applicants to demonstrate a focus on projects, activities or initiatives which contribute to strengthening, supporting and promoting our multicultural community and increasing social inclusion.

I stand proudly with my ACT government colleagues today as we look to the annual National Multicultural Festival this weekend, knowing that we actively support and promote a city which not only embraces its language and cultural diversity but also derives many benefits from it on both a local and a global scale.

*Discussion concluded.*

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## **Focus ACT**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (4.21): It does seem like a lifetime ago, but this afternoon I rise to reflect on the Focus ACT Christmas party which I had the pleasure of attending in December last year. Focus ACT is a disability service provider which works with clients to provide flexible and workable plans for supported independent living, shared and supported housing and even dietary plans for people with a disability. Their Christmas party showed how clients of Focus ACT are not just a number on a spreadsheet but are a real family. In accepting my invite, it was like being invited to a family Christmas dinner.

I had the pleasure of presenting the long service awards: Reena Wati, for five years of service; outgoing general manager, Torrien Lau, also for five years of service; and a third award went to Luz Morris for her 20 years—that is right, 20—working tirelessly with Focus ACT to support people with a disability. The night was full of celebration, with of course a bit of dancing and carols and cake. I had the pleasure of seeing a truly amazing croquembouche for Francis, who was celebrating his 60th birthday that night as well. Francis has been a client of Focus ACT for 30 years, and his sister, Mary, represents all Focus ACT client families on the board.

I thank Focus ACT for inviting me to their Christmas party. Particular thanks go to the board chair, Wilhelm Harnisch; to Torrien, whom I had the pleasure of meeting; and to Francis himself, who was a very enthusiastic, happy and vocal ambassador for the great work that Focus ACT does. I am sure they will go from strength to strength in 2019. The family and community feeling I got from that room has stuck with me over the Christmas period and I am very happy to be able to share the great work that Focus ACT does with the members of this Assembly.

### **History—world wars**

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (4.23): It is certainly not my usual practice here to give an account of my annual leave, but this one time I hope to make at least a partial exception. During January of this year I was privileged to spend some time on the World War I and World War II battlefields in the north of France and Belgium. It is only in recent years that the history of the Western Front, including the Somme Valley, Flanders and the area of the Hundred Days Offensive, has become more recognised here in Australia.

But it does not take long when reading our history to realise its significance. Nor does it take long at all when present on the battlefields and at the many memorials across France and Belgium to feel the weight of the significance. That significance was clear to me from the commencement of our tour at the Adelaide Cemetery in Villers-Bretonneux, where 960 commonwealth soldiers are buried. It was from this cemetery, of course, that the remains of the unknown Australian soldier were repatriated in 1993. And this site is indeed strongly representational. So many Australian divisions fought in this region that, of this veteran, it could truly be said:

He is all of them. And he is one of us.

Important in the context of a visit to the World War I battlefields and the site of this grave are the words from Prime Minister Keating's speech in 1993:

This Unknown Australian is not ... to glorify war over peace; or to assert a soldier's character above a civilian's; or one race or one nation or one religion above another; or men above women; or the war in which he fought and died above any other war; or of one generation above any that has or will come later.

These are words which continue to ring true today. And the significance of the time built as we journeyed to the Australian national memorial, to the Victoria School and

to Le Hamel. The marks of shrapnel from World War II on the memorials to those who were killed some 25 years earlier in the war to end all wars carry their own poignant message.

We continued to Pozieres, to Hill 69, to Papillon, to the Cobbers memorial at Fromelles, which remembers what has been termed the worst night in Australian military history. And we continued to Tyne Cot, the largest commonwealth war grave cemetery in the world, with almost 12,000 graves.

Madam Assistant Speaker, you may be able to imagine the depth of the feeling and the honour that I felt when I arrived in the location of the Menin Gate. Since 1928 on every night, other than during the four years in World War II when it was occupied, there has been a time of remembrance and honour within the memorial that lists 55,000 names, including around 6,000 Australians.

It was my enormous honour to recite the ode for the 31,283rd ceremony and to lay a wreath on behalf of the people of the ACT. The Australian connection there that night was strong amongst the crowd of several hundred people. I spoke with a young veteran from Adelaide who had recently studied in Canberra and I shared the ceremony with a school from Port Macquarie.

As you are aware, each day here in Canberra at the War Memorial a last post ceremony is held which both honours a specific veteran and also enables the remembrance of all who have served. The War Memorial is of course now the location of the lions that formerly sat on either side of the Menin Gate as our World War I soldiers passed along the road on the way to and from those significant and defining battles. I encourage Canberrans to join one of those daily ceremonies.

I am indeed aware of the privileged position that I have been in to have been able to travel to the World War I battlefields and to participate in times of significance. That privilege arises from the broader privilege that I have in my role with veterans here in the ACT. Again I confirm my commitment and this government's commitment to enabling recognition of and support for those who have served and those who continue to serve this country.

### **Proximity Canberra Triathlon Festival**

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (4.28): I rise today to heap praise on two of my colleagues. Strangely, these two MLAs do not sit on this side of the chamber. This afternoon I wish to give a big pat on the back to Ms Cody and Mr Rattenbury, who both joined me on the weekend to do something very special.

On Saturday Ms Cody, Mr Rattenbury and I put our political differences aside. We linked arms and together we took on the Proximity Canberra Triathlon Festival as a tripartisan team. Did it feel a little dirty? No, it felt good. I was the novice on this team. Mr Rattenbury, of course, is a triathlon veteran, going back decades, and Ms Cody has racked up a number of triathlons in recent years. I understand she is currently preparing for Huskisson. They were both able to tell me things that I had no

idea about. I did not realise you would need a belt to put the number on for the transition.

The festival itself was a rip-roaring success. 754 people of all abilities competed. Amongst the hundreds of competitors was veteran triathlete Lachlan Lewis, who, at 81 years of age, rarely misses an event. He is a great example that age does not weary them. Also competing was former Canberran Jono Goerlach, a vision-impaired athlete and former world champion who is expected to represent Australia at the Tokyo Paralympics next year.

Debutantes included Toby Lyndon. Toby is a double amputee who now calls Canberra home. He moved here from the coast with the goal of representing Australia in Tokyo. There is a fundraiser currently underway called Wheels for Toby, which aims to get this extremely determined young man his own customised car and racing wheelchair. All of the details are on the Wheels for Toby website. It was also great to see three teams from Menslink participating.

The event was superbly run by Elite Energy Events. Congratulations to Mark “Emo” Emerton, Tracey Emerton and their team. A big pat on the back too for Craig Johns, who heads up Triathlon ACT, and Todd Wright and his team from Three Sides Marketing. Todd helped me to find my bike because I lost it in the transition. I could not find it. I went to get on the bike and I thought, “It’s here somewhere,” but I walked around for what seemed like an eternity. I am glad, Ms Cody, that you did not do the run in four minutes; otherwise I would have been found wanting.

The whole team from Proximity had nearly half of their staff competing on Saturday. They say sport and politics should never mix, but I think Ms Cody, Mr Rattenbury and I showed that if you put your head and your heart into it, political opponents can join forces to support a great event and a great day.

### **Proximity Canberra Triathlon Festival Indigenous Marathon Foundation**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (4.31): Mr Parton, thank you so much. You have taken about 90 per cent of my adjournment speech tonight.

**Mr Parton:** That’s why I was keen to get up in front of you, don’t worry!

**MS CODY:** I cannot echo Mr Parton’s words enough, which I am sure we will not hear very often in this chamber, but there you have it. The Proximity Canberra Triathlon Festival on the weekend was a roaring success. I must say that Mr Parton’s bike leg and Mr Rattenbury’s run leg were exceptional and helped us to bring it home in the end to finish in a very comfortable position. It was good to see. We all had fun; that was also the name of the game. I too would like to encourage people to support Wheels for Toby. It is a really amazing cause to help young Toby to get a proper racing wheelchair.

Whilst I was at the Proximity triathlon event, however, there were a number of other things that happened. Yes, we had the amazing Lachie Lewis, who I see often. In fact,

he joined me this morning at the Indigenous Marathon Foundation's closing the gap fun run. The event is organised by marathon runner extraordinaire Mr Rob de Castella. I am sure that anyone who has lived in Canberra for any length of time will know Mr de Castella's long history with Canberra, his long history with marathons and marathon running. I do not know how many world records he still holds today; he has competed for Australia in marathons.

Mr de Castella decided, with the help of a range of other people, that he wanted to help our young Indigenous people to bridge the gap, and running was a way that he thought would be appropriate. The Indigenous Marathon Foundation, for those that do not know, was established in 2009. In 2010 four young Indigenous Australians created history as the very first to run in the world's biggest marathon, the New York City marathon, as part of the Indigenous marathon project.

The IMP, as it is more commonly known, has grown significantly, with 75 graduates finishing a major international marathon, including the New York, Boston, Tokyo, London, Paris and Berlin marathons. They also complete an education component, with a certificate III in fitness, which is delivered by AFL SportsReady.

The continual growth and expansion of the IMP led to the establishment of the IMF in 2015, which covers four core programs—the Indigenous marathon project, Indigenous Communities for Activity and Nutrition, or I-CAN, FrontRunners, which is a graduate-specific program; and Deadly Running Australia. Part of the idea of the IMP is that running and physical activity underpin and provide commitment to social inclusion and also provide a fun environment for people to adopt active and healthy lifestyles.

As I said, this morning I put on my runners again, after running on Saturday, and did a 5k run around our wonderful Lake Burley Griffin. There were hundreds of people there this morning to support the closing the gap fun run-walk, which happens every year. I would encourage members or anyone in the community to get along and support both the IMF and the IMP and any of the deadly runners we see. There were many out at the proximity event on the weekend, also competing, and they did a wonderful job, as did we all.

It has been a very active few days for me, and I hope to continue that. As Mr Parton noted in his speech, I have my own triathlon coming up in about 10 days, so bring on the more active, healthy and wonderful lifestyle that Canberra gives us the opportunity to have.

### **Mental health—patient follow-up**

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (4.35): I want to put on the record a few comments in response to Mr Rattenbury's comments after question time. The case that I raised in question time was a case that I raised with Mr Rattenbury last year. It is true that there was correspondence between Mr Rattenbury's office and mine and it is true that Mr Rattenbury's staff were (a) shocked and (b) helpful in trying to get the bottom of the issue. But it is also true that the person concerned, whilst not admitted to the

Canberra Hospital, had spent a considerable amount of time in the mental health part of accident and emergency.

His father reported to me and to other members how distressed he was because this young man was released into homelessness. He was in fact, in his father's words, released to a tent and a sleeping bag in the bush behind the Belconnen Markets. It took some days for him to be contacted and for his father to be able to make contact with him. There was considerable concern about the fact that a person in those circumstances should be released from a health facility where he had been receiving treatment into homelessness. There is no doubt about it: the man was released into homelessness.

Mr Rattenbury might ask why I raise these issues. I raise them out of concern for this person in particular but also for the number of people we see who are discharged from the mental health environment into unsatisfactory circumstances. And, as Ms Lawder pointed out to me, being released to a homelessness organisation is effectively being released into homelessness. This is something that, as a community, we need to be working on a lot more diligently.

Mr Rattenbury has raised a whole lot of issues. These people are adults, they are entitled to be autonomous, et cetera. But, at the same time, as a community we have a duty of care to these people. It is not satisfactory that they are released from hospital to sleep rough behind the Belconnen Markets.

### **Mining—stop Adani rally**

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (4.38): I had hoped to jump in after Ms Cody, because I thought that would be entirely appropriate in light of the two earlier speeches about the triathlon on the weekend, although today I was planning to speak about the stop Adani rally this morning.

The lawns of Parliament House have always been a powerful site for political protest. For decades, Australians have congregated outside the political centre of our country to demand justice from the government of the day on a host of issues. Certainly this morning was no different. Australians from all walks of life stood outside Parliament House and spoke with a unified voice, amplifying a simple and powerful message: the need to stop Adani. With Ms Le Couteur and seven of the federal Greens senators, I was lucky enough to be standing alongside them, adding my voice to the chorus.

With the effects of human-induced climate change already beginning to bear down upon us, protesting against complacency is more important than ever. Rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions are becoming much more frequent, and the dangerous impact of carbon emissions on our atmosphere is well understood. This summer, heatwaves have swept our country, with last month being the hottest ever recorded. The five warmest years of recorded history have been the last five.

This is why we need to make sure that politicians build our future on renewable energy, not on coal. The United Nations intergovernmental panel on climate change says we need to halve our carbon emissions by 2030 to avoid rising above two

degrees of warming and all of the catastrophic effects that come with crossing that threshold.

This morning we made clear that allowing the construction of a new coalmine, especially one that will not have any major economic benefit to our country, is not a path we can follow. Allowing a mine to be built that will alone use 0.5 per cent of the carbon budget of the entire world is simply unconscionable.

While today's rally was to protest the Adani coalmine, it was also about much more. With both major parties still supporting coal, the crowd implored those in power to look beyond short-term thinking and self-interest. We had to remind those standing in the way of renewable energy that their decisions are bigger than them, that what they do now will affect billions of lives in the future. They told politicians that complacency on climate change is not acceptable any longer.

I was inspired by the conviction and solidarity on display at the event. It was a clear reminder that when we stand alongside one another, rather than alone, we have the power to make a real difference. When our institutions fail us, it is incumbent on all of us to push for change at the grassroots level. I was pleased to see so many people out in force against government inaction on climate change. Just as people have fought for justice on many other issues before us, today we demanded justice for our environment. I thank all the organisers, speakers, and protestors who made the event possible. I encourage everyone to continue to stand up for climate justice.

Standing beside my fellow climate activists, I was proud of the accomplishments of the ACT. We are on track to meet world-leading targets. We will be 100 per cent powered by renewable electricity by next year. By 2045, we hope, our city will produce zero net emissions.

But the work is far from over. I was dismayed to see the federal Labor Party declare their support for the coalmine at this critical moment. At times like these, I sometimes wonder whether entrenched power and short-term thinking may actually have the power to defeat the hard work of activists and community members. I truly hope that Labor will consider all that is at stake and follow the policies of the Greens, who think that protecting the environment should be a central priority of any government. That means no new coalmines or coal fired-power stations.

It is clear from the turnout at the rally this morning that people are ready to mobilise and demand better. With a looming federal election, it is a critical time for the community to demand better from our federal politicians. Thanks to those who did that this morning.

### **Planning and Development Act—variation No 342 to the Territory Plan**

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (4.42): Today the minister for planning presented variation No 342 to the Territory Plan. It passed with little fanfare. That is, of course, no bad thing, and I am sure many public servants are relieved. But I want to put on the record the journey that was taken to get to this stage, one which I have been very

proud of to be part of since the beginning, as deputy chair and then chair of the Belconnen Community Council, and now in this place.

Territory Plan variation 342 is the culmination of more than five years of work from government and, importantly, from community members and community organisations. Territory Plan variation 342 is the implementation of key recommendations from the Belconnen town centre master plan.

The Belconnen town centre master plan really began back in early 2014, when the Belconnen Community Council released a survey to assist it in gaining a deep understanding of community views on the future of the town centre as well as ensure that there was momentum for engagement and communications once the formal master plan process and consultation got underway. The survey received more than 200 responses. Many of the themes which emerged remained consistent throughout the formal master plan consultation phase, which began in late 2014.

The Belconnen Community Council contributed to ensuring that as many people as possible were not only aware of the consultation, but also participated in it. This included partnering with the Belconnen Community Service and Belconnen Arts Centre to host a consultation; hosting an informal consultation at Ginninderra Tavern; and creating an exhibition with the assistance and help of Westfield Belconnen. Many residents and organisations contributed to this consultation, and I believe that to this day it remains one of the most engaged with master plan processes.

Issues consistently seen before the master plan process began, and throughout it, included the community's desire to have certainty regarding building heights, particularly after Wayfarer emerged as, back then, the tallest building in all of Canberra; better street-level amenity; and proposals to activate the promise and the potential of Emu Bank. Happily, the Belconnen town centre master plan addressed these desires.

A master plan, as we well know in this place, is guidance and a vision. To implement many of the recommendations in the master plan, to give effect to them, the Territory Plan needs to be amended. A draft variation of the Territory Plan to give effect to these changes was released in May 2018, and a number of organisations and individuals made representations. I am pleased to learn that these comments were taken seriously in finalising the variation. This variation has been through the planning and urban renewal committee which, it appears, has decided not to inquire into it, from the fact that its report has been tabled today. Today we saw that tabling, and much of the work in the master plan will now be realised.

The smoothness of this process is why, I suspect, there is little fanfare, but there is still much to celebrate and, indeed, many people to acknowledge. I want to put on the record today my thanks to ACT government planners, in particular Chris Gell, for their work and collaborative approach. This is necessarily an iterative process, but it is not an easy one, and the planners' commitment throughout it has been commendable.

Thank you also to the many organisations and individuals throughout Belconnen who took the time and made the effort to make submissions, no matter at which stage.

I would particularly like to thank past and present members of the Belconnen Community Council, including current and former chairs Damien Haas, Glen Hyde, Robyn Coghlan and Elizabeth Hirst, as well as stalwart members like Charles Thomas, Graeme Evans, Brian Rhynehart and many more who have been leading the community engagement on this throughout five very long years for some of us. I cannot wait to see what is next.

### **Australia Day awards**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (4.47): I would like to quickly mention some of the Canberrans who were acknowledged on Australia Day this year for their contributions.

First, I have to say how proud I am that the Senior Australian of the Year is our very own Canberran Dr Sue Packer OAM. Sue has been tireless in her efforts to raise awareness of issues affecting children, and I am sure will continue to shine an even closer spotlight on the issue of child abuse and neglect and the importance of child-friendly and child-focused services over the coming year.

I would now like to talk about two women I know personally who live in my electorate. The first is Ms Glenys Patulny of Kambah. She received an Order of Australia for her service to the community of Tuggeranong. I am sure that Mr Parton will join me in acknowledging that Glenys has been absolutely tireless as President of the Tuggeranong Community Council since at least 2005; I seem to think it was earlier than that.

She has been the chair and deputy chair of the southern catchment group since earlier than that, 2006, and was a founding member of that. She is a member of the National Landcare Network. She worked at Lanyon High School; she was one of the initial teachers there and she was deputy principal for over a decade. She is tireless working for the good of Tuggeranong, and Tuggeranong is incredibly lucky to have her.

The other person from Kambah I would like to acknowledge is Donna O'Brien. She is the recipient of an award for her services to football. I cannot talk much about her services to football, though I will note that she has been president, vice-president and chair of the Weston Creek soccer club since 1984. I know her as my gym teacher. She has done a lot in terms of gym suitable for senior Australians such as myself. I was in a class with her this morning. As Mr Rattenbury noted, I went to the Adani rally, and she told me, as I did not have quite enough time, that I could do my calf stretches while I was at the rally.

Donna was originally nominated for an OAM by Jenny Mobbs, I understand, from COTA. After that, it was realised that she has done a lot more than her contribution to senior Australians. But she has developed a whole range of exercise classes for seniors, and she runs weekly classes. There are well over 200 senior Canberrans who go to her classes, and she has won awards for her contribution to seniors.

I am very proud to know these Kambah women from my electorate. I am really pleased to see that Canberra women are being recognised.

Across Australia, women received 422 awards, which sounds great and is the highest number and percentage we have ever had, but still only 37.4 per cent of the awards went to women. Unfortunately, the ACT did not do brilliantly, as only 32.9 per cent of our recipients were women. I look forward to the future. We have to nominate more women. There is a female majority here in the chamber, so I can say that we are doing the work. We are as valuable contributors as our male counterparts in Australia and Canberra; we should nominate our peers and they should be recognised.

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Lee): Order! The time allotted for the debate has expired.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 4.51 pm.**