



QUESTION TIME
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

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Thursday, 2 December 2021

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Questions without notice

Chief Psychiatrist—reports and recommendations

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the Chief Psychiatrist has the power under subsection 197(b) of the Mental Health Act to make reports and recommendations. Given that, according to your answer to question on notice 456, the Chief Psychiatrist has not made any reports to government regarding people's treatment, care, support, accommodation, maintenance and protection, or recommendations on how to improve these matters since January 2020, is it your government's position that there are no problems in our acute mental health system in the ACT that could be improved upon?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I apologise to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not recall signing this question on notice. It does sound like a question for the Minister for Mental Health. I will take the question on notice.

MS LEE: Minister, what support has your government provided to the Chief Psychiatrist to do their job during this time?

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

MR CAIN: Minister, what do you see as the precise role of the Chief Psychiatrist in the ACT, and is it independent of the executive?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: My understanding is that the Chief Psychiatrist reports to the Minister for Mental Health, so I will take that question on notice and consult with my colleague.

ACT Policing—resources

MR HANSON: My question is to the minister for police. Minister, I refer to statements from the Australian Federal Police Association in relation to the new police online reporting system. I quote from the AFPA: "I believe that the ACT community may be concerned about this change in policy and question the decision. ACT Policing has been robbing Peter to pay Paul for far too long in relation to officer numbers. Of concern to the AFPA is that ultimately this is a resources issue." Minister, how do you reassure the Canberra community who are concerned, as the AFPA have identified?

Mr Parton: Just answer the question online! That will be sufficient.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson—Mr Parton. It is habit forming. I will admit that. I think all of you would agree with me.

MR GENTLEMAN: I look forward to Mr Parton being online into the future as well!

The ACT government does continue to resource police and increase those resources each and every year. I am very pleased with the work ACT Policing have been able to do with that resourcing. It is reflected in the drop in crime statistics that they recently published on their website. For members' interest, you can go to ACT Policing and look at the website, see the interactive map and have a look at the difference between crime

trends year after year.

We do, of course, intend to keep resourcing ACT police and increase those resources where needed. I am very pleased that police have been able to do the work they have been able to do. They will continue to do the best for the ACT community.

On resourcing, we have been providing \$11.4 million to improve accommodation for police and emergency services in Gungahlin, \$4.2 million to meet the growing and increasingly complex workload associated with forensic medical services, \$6.6 million to replace the ACT—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on a point of relevance—

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat.

Mr Hanson: Although the question's preamble talks about resourcing, the specific question was about the quote from the AFPA that the Canberra community may be concerned and question the decision. The question was about how the minister will reassure the community, who are concerned, as the AFPA identified. It was a question about the actual decision to go down this route, not necessarily about the specific resourcing.

MADAM SPEAKER: Time has expired.

MR HANSON: Minister, why have you been robbing Peter to pay Paul in relation to police numbers, as the AFPA assert?

MR GENTLEMAN: I just explained very clearly that that is not the case. In fact, we have been increasing resourcing for ACT Policing. They are using that resourcing to increase their numbers where they can due to the opportunities for recruiting across the ACT.

This is an operational matter. The CPO has been very clear on that. He has the clear guidance to be able to use operational resources in the best way that he sees fit for the Canberra community. I support him in those decisions. He has the capability and the expertise to be able to decide where those resources should go. It will not slow the work that they are doing on behalf of the Canberra community. It does show modernisation in how people can report to police, particularly on these trends. Police will still interact the way they have before, attending to the most important jobs where they occur.

MR PARTON: Minister, why do you continue to claim that this is not a resourcing issue when the Chief Police Officer and the AFPA both state categorically that it is a resourcing issue?

MR GENTLEMAN: I disagree with Mr Parton's statement, Madam Speaker. I do not think they have categorically said that this is a resourcing issue. We have increased resourcing every year. I started to read out those figures earlier. On top of those figures that I read, there is \$9.2 million to upgrade ACT Policing facilities; \$8.8 million for new initiatives, including funding for enhanced protective security measures; \$6.4 million for the expansion of the Taskforce Nemesis organised crime syndicate work;

and \$2.6 million to equip.

You can see, Madam Speaker, that what I am talking about is the extra resourcing that we have put into ACT Policing. And of course, that is the money that the Canberra Liberals just voted against the other day.

Tuggeranong—SouthFest

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation. In spite of the really difficult year that we have had, I met with the committee organising SouthFest for 2022 last week and was excited to hear that SouthFest reimagined will be taking place in February of 2022—a great opportunity to highlight how good it is to live in Tuggeranong. Can you outline what the government is doing to support SouthFest reimagined in February?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Davis for the question, and I am pleased to talk about what the government is doing to support SouthFest. Members may recall that SouthFest, the inaugural event, was held in November 2018 to great success with more than 15,000 people in attendance. After that overwhelming response it returned again in November 2019 with over 200 stallholders and more than 20 sponsors, which I think is a real credit to the organisers.

SouthFest then applied for and was successful in receiving a grant through the ACT Event Fund for 2020 to the tune of \$15,000. It was not able to hold the event in November 2020 nor in November 2021, but it is now reimagining the event to be held as SouthFest in the Suburbs in February 2022. We have been able to rollover that \$15,000 of funding.

I am also pleased to share with the Assembly that SouthFest has been successful again in their approach to the ACT government through the ACT Event Fund and has received another \$15,000 to host SouthFest in November 2022 in a more traditional format. So the Tuggeranong community will be benefitting from not one but two SouthFests next year.

MR DAVIS: Minister, what additional government supports have you identified might need to be required to manage in ongoing pandemic situation as it relates to SouthFest?

MS CHEYNE: We always take the health advice, and I appreciate that the organisers have put together a reimagined festival as a result of where we currently are with the pandemic. The ACT government stands ready to work with the organisers of SouthFest, particularly around public land use and any events approvals that are required.

As members are well aware, we have also established an Outdoor Activation Taskforce, and I understand that SouthFest has a callout at the moment for different stalls and events that people might want to host throughout the suburbs. We would be prepared to work with anyone who is identified through that process to ensure that SouthFest in the Suburbs is a success.

MS CLAY: Minister, can you tell me what planning and support you have underway to support similar events in Belconnen and Gungahlin?

MS CHEYNE: There are plenty of events going on, and we look forward to the return of the Gungahlin festival. There are pop-up events and particularly in the suburbs we have been really impressed to see just how many suburban shops have been engaging with the Outdoor Activation Taskforce. One particular example has been in Scullin in the electorate of both Ms Clay and me. We have been working with the Scullin Community Group on how we can activate more of the outdoor space, particularly around the shops.

We encourage anyone who is interested to get in touch. We have an events team and, of course, the Outdoor Activation Taskforce, but if anyone is having any difficulty navigating that they should get in touch with my office and we will support any and all event proposal that have merit in the coming years.

ACT public service—work arrangements

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Chief Minister. Canberra's small business sector is trying to resurrect after being smashed during lockdown. Working from home is not an option for most of them, who are desperate for customers walking through the door. With students now back at school, our hardworking small business owners need our 24,500 ACT public servants back in the offices to stimulate trade and are concerned about some reports that the directorates might not come back until next February. Chief Minister, when will Canberra's public servants return to the office?

MR BARR: They will not; they will adopt a hybrid working model from hereon in. If Mr Milligan followed the budget statements he would be aware that the government is investing in a number of ACT government workplaces, new hubs, in town centres. We are decentralising our employment, so it will no longer be the case that directorate X will be in location Y. People will be able to work across a number of different ACT government office buildings and they will undertake hybrid working arrangements that meet their needs and the needs of the business unit that they work for and ensure that they can deliver the services that are required.

Across the ACT public service this varies, given the nature of employment. Clearly, staff who work at the hospital, the largest single employment centre for ACT government staff, will need to work from the hospital. But as it relates to white-collar public servants who can work in a variety of different locations, they may well be working out of the Gungahlin ACT government office building if they live in Gungahlin and that suits them and they may well be working out of the Woden ACT government building if they live in the Woden area and that suits them; similarly, in Tuggeranong, in Belconnen, in the city and in Dickson. So there will no longer be an operating requirement of compulsory attendance, if you like, at an ACT government office building nine to five. The world has changed, Mr Milligan, and we are changing with it.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary, Mr Milligan.

MR MILLIGAN: Chief Minister, how many of the ACT's 24,500 full-time public servants have already returned to the various sites?

MR BARR: Most work either in health or education, so their employment is distributed across the city, as I have mentioned: in health, the hospital, Calvary, walk-in centres and other community health facilities and, in the education system, across—what, 100 public schools, minister for education?—nearly every suburb in the ACT. In relation to white-collar directorate staff—

Mr Steel: The buses are still running.

MR BARR: Indeed, the buses are seen all over the city. Mr Milligan seems to think that there are 24½ thousand white-collar public servants who work in the building next door. No. Most ACT government employment is regionalised and distributed through all of the suburbs of Canberra. It will vary from directorate to directorate, but most staff are working under a hybrid arrangement that is going to continue into the future—forever, I hope.

MR CAIN: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Cain.

MR CAIN: Minister, post-lockdown, how many days a week is the average public servant likely to be in their office compared to working from home?

MR BARR: At the moment it is likely to be one to two days a week in the office and the rest at home across most directorates. In some, as I have outlined in my previous responses, like Health and Education, it will be five days a week in their workplace rather than working from home. Think about it, Mr Cain, in terms of whether they are directly delivering a service to someone in a school or a health facility. Again, if the question is about office workers then it is a hybrid arrangement and it will continue to be.

This is a global trend. The way we will attract and retain the highest quality staff is to have flexibility in working arrangements. So we will never go back to nine to five, Monday to Friday, everyone in the same office all together. That world is over; it is done. That is the case for all major businesses in this country as well. In fact, I think even the commonwealth are allowing a degree of flexibility for their own public servants as well.

The world has changed. The future of work has changed and we must be flexible and allow for hybrid working arrangements. That will mean that staff will come back into the office in greater numbers than is the case today, but it will never ever return to what it was pre-pandemic. That era is over.

Sport—CBR Sports Awards

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation: can you update the Assembly on the preparation for this year's CBR Sports Awards?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Orr for her question. I am really excited to be opening tonight the CBR Sport Awards. These annual awards honour our Canberra athletes, celebrate our sports teams and provide collective recognition of the people and organisations that

make sport such a central part of the Canberra community.

This year's awards, of course, will look a little bit different, and despite the challenges it is important that we get the chance to celebrate the incredible achievements of individuals and organisations during what has been a very difficult year.

This will be my sixth year at the CBR Sport Awards as the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and every year I am astounded by the breadth and skill that we have in the ACT's sporting community. With the highest sports and recreation participant rates in the country we definitely punch way above our weight, and when it comes to rising stars and elite athletes we have an amazing number of people who fall into those categories. We have amazing organisations, teams and volunteers who contribute to our communities and provide opportunities for everyone to have a go.

Tonight's event will be a bit of a road show, and it will mean that recipients will be watching from their own venues. I will be taking myself and my team across to those venues to celebrate with individuals as well with people coming together and celebrating achievements in their own ways. The 2021 CBR Sports Awards will be held as a virtual online event from 5.30, and I encourage everybody here in the Assembly to get online and cheer on the amazing groups and individuals who have supported Canberra's sporting community this year.

MS ORR: Minister, which athletes, teams and sporting organisations are recognised as this year's finalists?

MS BERRY: Without giving too much away before tonight's event, we will be celebrating some amazing and outstanding achievements of Canberra's sporting community. The category awards celebrate our men's, women's and para athletes, including our fantastic Olympic and Paralympic athletes who competed in Tokyo this year.

We will also be celebrating rising stars and amazing teams in our community, recognising individuals who have provided outstanding service to sports as well as inducting individuals into the ACT Sport Hall of Fame. The finalists include some of our awesome Paralympians—Nikki Ayres, Vanessa Lowe and James Turner—as well as our awesome Olympic athletes like Patty Mills, Kelsey-Lee Barber and the rowing men's quadruple scull team.

The CBR Sport Awards also recognise organisations and groups that have developed excellent programs and supported events and activities across three categories, including the minister's inclusion, innovation and event excellence awards. The sports groups and teams that have been nominated for these awards include a diverse range of sports and groups from Athletics ACT, squash, rowing and table tennis. I congratulate all of this year's finalists and wish them all the very best of luck for tonight's event.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, why is it important to recognise the work of Canberra's sporting community following a challenging year?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Pettersson and acknowledge his interest in all things sports across the ACT. This year has, indeed, brought many challenges, and so tonight is the

opportunity to sit back and reflect on all of the success of our sporting communities and excellent athletes. I extend a big thank you to all levels of sport in Canberra who have had an extended period of time on the sidelines from August to October who were able to reactivate and re-initiate our sporting activities and meet some of the challenges even as we continue through the health pandemic under the health directions.

I know firsthand how difficult it has been for thousands of volunteers who already do so many things behind the scenes to step up and ensure that their sport continues to be Covid safe. The countless regular catch-ups amongst the sector kept everyone connected and informed on the next steps following the lockdown.

It has been evident during this last year how important sport is to our community, not only for physical activity but also for mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. During lockdown not being able to pull on your club colours and train and play with friends, to referee or volunteer or just lend your support from the sidelines has been really tough, and it has been for many isolating as well.

Sport is the lifeblood of our community, and so I am glad we have been able to see many of these activities progressively recommence and thrive. While many of our winter seasons were cut short, it is great to see that many sports have bounced back stronger than before. I am looking forward to tonight's awards to celebrate all the sporting achievements through the year and all of the wonderful people who have contributed to these outstanding outcomes.

Light rail stage 1—environmental impact

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Two years ago, Minister, on 29 November 2019, my good friend and former Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur asked you several questions on notice about light rail stage 1. She asked whether the government had done or commissioned any studies about greenhouse gas emissions and the environmental impacts of the project as well as a comparison of tram emissions to bus emissions. The response to all three questions was a one-word answer, "No." Minister, why didn't your government do or commission any studies about the environmental impacts and emissions of light rail stage 1 in comparison to some other alternatives?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We have, of course, through that project, undertaken an assessment under the ISCA rating and received a leading rating in relation to the sustainability of that project. That has since been reported on in the benefits realisation plan for the stage 1 project. We have seen the other benefits of the project as well, in attracting people onto public transport who would not otherwise have used a bus. The benefit of light rail is that it attracts people to use public transport, and that is the goal of the government in wanting also to expand the service down to Woden, as part of stage 2.

We know from surveys that we have done that around 30 per cent of people who use light rail stage 1 never used a bus previously. So it has a pull effect that buses have never delivered in Canberra. Of course, buses will continue to be part of an integrated public transport service that includes both light rail, providing a mass transit spine from the north to the south of Canberra, and buses, providing those route services, those

coverage services in the suburbs that also link with our rapid buses and our mass transit network in light rail. They all have a role to play.

Of course, as part of this, we are moving our buses, our dirty diesel buses, to a zero emissions future as well. We are in the process of procuring zero emissions battery electric buses, to make sure that we bring down the emissions profile of our bus fleet as well. Light rail runs at 100 per cent renewable electricity; it has from day one. It has meant that 20 per cent of trips in Canberra are powered by green electricity, which is absolutely fantastic. We want our dirty bus fleet to also be powered by that energy. *(Time expired.)*

MR PARTON: Minister, are you able to provide a summary of the environmental impacts and emissions of light rail stage 1 as compared to other alternatives?

MR STEEL: I refer the member to the benefits realisation plan for light rail stage 1, which is published on the website.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, will you do or commission any studies about the environmental impacts and emissions of light rail stage 2A? If not, why not?

MR STEEL: As part of the work that we are doing on major projects right around Canberra, we will make sure that we work to an ISCA rating or an equivalent green agency rating. Those are processes that we will go through to make sure that we can improve the sustainability of our projects going forward. At the heart of light rail is the will to try and get more people to use public transport, which is a much more efficient form of transport than the private car. It uses less energy to move more people around our city, and that is a great thing. That is why we want to expand the network.

With respect to the constant campaign that we have seen, there has been a pattern of behaviour in this place, with Mr Parton not being able to stand up and say that he actually supports light rail stage 2 to Woden. It is extraordinary; as the opposition spokesperson for public transport, it appears that he is against public transport.

Ms Castley: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I was asking the minister about the environmental impacts of stage 2A—the building process as well, not just having the trams.

MADAM SPEAKER: Do you have anything to add, Minister?

MR STEEL: Madam Speaker, that is the purpose of the ISCA rating.

Municipal services—Charnwood shops

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. For more than six years, Charnwood residents have complained about the dangerous pavers at their local shops. People have fallen, have broken bones and have been hospitalised from buckled and cracked pavers. The local pharmacist regularly calls an ambulance. In 2016 your government said that it would fix the pavers, and Ms Berry did a photo-op, but the problems with dangerous pavers continue. The government also promised a “listening report” by October which we are yet to see. Minister, has the report been

released; and if not, why not?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. We have undertaken a range of different improvements at Charnwood shops over the past few years. One of the issues that has arisen over a period is that the roots of the trees, which provide fantastic shade and amenity for local residents at the Charnwood shops, have been lifting pavement. That has raised some issues which we have been rectifying over a period as they have arisen.

It has become clear that this is going to be a systemic issue going forward at the shops. That is why I have been engaging with local members like the Deputy Chief Minister. We went out to Charnwood shops to talk about the issues. We then went out to the community to ask for the community's views about what they would like to see in terms of future improvements, particularly around the paving issue; that retention of trees in the area; and how people would like to access the shops, in particular the supermarket adjacent to where the issues are occurring. We have been going through that community consultation process.

Mrs Kikkert: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MR STEEL: We will release the report once we have considered it.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Steel, resume your seat. There is a point of order.

Mrs Kikkert: The question specifically asked the minister about when the listening report that was due in October would be released, not the previous failed attempts to fix the dangerous pavers at Charnwood chops.

MADAM SPEAKER: He is talking about the repairs in the Charnwood area.

MR STEEL: I have answered the question, Madam Speaker.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, when will the dangerous pavers be repaired, given that you announced five years ago that you would fix the problem?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. Once we have considered what the community would like us to do at Charnwood shops, we will look at the range of options to improve the paving.

We have been pretty proactive. We have put in place permeable solutions around the tree bases in parts of Charnwood shops to try and make sure that the paving is not lifting around the tree bases and provide opportunity for those trees to get water so that they can continue to thrive. There has been some vandalism on some of the trees at Charnwood shops that we have been working very hard to rectify to make sure that those trees continue to survive.

There has been a clear amount of work that the ACT government has undertaken at Charnwood shops. We will continue to work with the community on the solutions. Now that we have their feedback, we will be looking at those options and what further systemic improvements we can make to the shops.

MR CAIN: Minister, how can Charnwood residents have confidence that the government will get the job done when you fail to release the listening report and fail to repair the pavers you promised in 2016 to fix?

MR STEEL: Because we are going through the process of consulting with them and getting their views before we actually take action. We have shown in the budget that we are taking action on local shops, investing in 11 upgrades at local shops around Canberra.

Ms Lawder: What about the pavers in Charnwood—

MR STEEL: You did not commit to upgrading Charnwood shops in the election. The community can have confidence that we will do something, because they know that you never promise and you cannot deliver.

Electric vehicles—charging stations

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Emissions Reduction and relates to zero emissions vehicles. Can the minister give an update on the zero emissions vehicles charging master plan and how that will help us get a more rapid uptake of EVs?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank the member for the question. The document is currently being finalised and we expect to release it in the coming weeks. The document has been renamed the ACT Electric Vehicle Charging Outlook, and we have done that because it aims to provide guidance to the industry as we go out to market for the 50 public charging stations as well as guiding any future charging stations.

The document includes information on things like electricity grid capability, current and projected EV ownership by suburb and existing charging stations and dwelling types. This will inform those who come forward to bid when the government releases the tender for the 50 charging stations but also if other suppliers are interested in providing charging stations this information will be publicly and freely available about where people live, where the EVs are, where charging demand is. It will enable people to invest more readily in EV charging stations in the ACT.

We know that most EV owners in the ACT who live in detached homes will charge at home because they roll up to their garage and plug in. A key focus of the rollout of the 50 charging stations based on the research that has been done is to meet the needs of people who live in apartments. We have committed to ensuring that all new apartment buildings are EV-charging ready. Of course, we already have a range of apartment buildings that do not have that capability, so we need to make sure we think about where to position the public charging stations to make sure they are of maximum benefit to the people who live in apartments and want to have EVs.

We know having a good network of charging stations is critical for people's confidence in taking up electric vehicles, particularly for those who do not have the ability to charge at home. The document will present that information. I think it will be very beneficial for the development of the public charging infrastructure sector in the ACT. *(Time expired.)*

MS CLAY: Minister, what feedback have you heard from those who live in apartments about the barriers for EV charging at home?

MR RATTENBURY: There is a range of barriers because it can be difficult to get agreement from the whole body corporate to put the charging infrastructure in. The government has, of course, made changes to the unit titles legislation to make it easier for owners to get approval from a body corporate for sustainability infrastructure, but that can be a challenge for people. There is an expense, obviously, particularly where you have to retrofit an apartment building that is not currently capable. That is one of the reasons under the EV action plan there is a commitment to ensure that all future apartment buildings are charging ready.

That does not mean putting a charging point at every parking spot in a building, but it does mean things like putting in the conduit and cabling so it is much easier to fit those things later. They are the primary areas of feedback. Of course, there are not many publicly available charging stations in the ACT at the moment. That is why we have a commitment from the government to install 50 as part of the release that we will go to market with in the near future.

MR DAVIS: Minister, are you aware of what better practice or even best practice look like for those who choose to live in apartments overseas but also own electronic vehicles to charge?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank Mr Davis for the question. We are looking overseas because Australia has been relatively slow on the uptake of EVs for a range of reasons. Norway are the recognised global leader on EV uptake and research shows that EV owners living in apartment buildings to a larger degree charge at public stations and use fast charging more frequently. We are looking at the way Norway has focused on rolling out charging stations and particularly meeting the needs of EV owners who live in apartments.

The data and the research from Norway particularly shows that people who have a detached dwelling do not use public charging stations nearly as much, certainly not in their home cities. They will use them much more when they are travelling, but when they are at home they will predominantly charge at their home because, of course, with a range of anywhere between 150 and 500 kilometres on a vehicle, most people do not drive that far in a day so they are quite capable of simply plugging in at home. Many only need to charge once a week.

Norway has faced the same questions we are now facing, and so we are looking at them as a leader as well as other European countries that have had to deal with some of these issues and try and make it easier for EV owners who live in apartments.

Transport—active travel

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, how is the ACT government investing in active travel infrastructure across Canberra?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Pettersson for his question. Active travel is a key part of our transport plan to make Canberra a more liveable and sustainable city. I am very pleased to say that this year's budget includes a major new investment in active travel infrastructure across Canberra. We are investing more than \$45 million in new active travel initiatives and that builds our current pipeline of walking and cycling infrastructure over the forward estimates to more than \$77 million.

The investments in this year's budget include funding for brand new infrastructure like the Sulwood Drive path, as well as improvements to our existing network. We are investing \$4 million in path maintenance over the next four years following the completion of a territory-wide path audit undertaken by our hardworking Jobs for Canberrans staff over the last 12 months. We are also expanding the successful Age Friendly Suburbs Program to more suburbs to deliver accessibility improvements and safety upgrades to paths and crossings in suburbs like Chifley, Reid, Scullin and O'Connor.

The significant increase in active travel investment in this year's budget will ensure that Canberrans have more options to walk and cycle around our city, encouraging people to take up active travel. This will make it easier for people to take everyday action on climate change by leaving the car at home more often.

MR PETTERSSON: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Pettersson.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, what investments are being made on Canberra's north side?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary question. We have made significant investments in cycling infrastructure on Canberra's north side in recent years, with the completion of the first stage of the Belco bikeway last year and the detailed design for the second stage underway. This is in addition to investments in last year's budget handed down earlier in the year for a feasibility study to widen paths to busy areas around Lake Ginninderra to better separate cyclists and pedestrians. This year's budget also includes an allocation under the Australian government's road safety program to fund construction of the second stage of the bikeway. This will run along Haydon Drive to connect to the University of Canberra, CIT Bruce and the AIS.

The budget also includes funding for feasibility and early design of the garden city cycle route, a major new trunk route down the eastern side of the inner north that will connect the inner north from Braddon through to Watson. In the Gungahlin town centre we are investing in route planning to identify missing links and issues of safety concern in the shared path network with a study. This will complement the travel modelling we are also undertaking in the town centre and will inform future infrastructure investments. These investments demonstrate that the government is committed to taking real action to make our city more connected and sustainable for generations to come.

DR PATERSON: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Dr Paterson.

DR PATERSON: Minister, how can we encourage more Canberrans to take up active travel?

MR STEEL: I thank Dr Paterson for her question and note her interest in this with her recent “Her Way” report. We know that, when it comes to deciding whether people walk or cycle, two of the most important things that people consider are safety and convenience. We are making it safer to hop on a bike through our upgrades to cycle crossings across the city, like the new priority crossings at Loftus and Schlich streets in Yarralumla, in my electorate, and also along Theodore Street and Melrose Drive in Woden. We have also recently delivered a protected cycleway through the Woden town centre to separate cyclists from motorists and help them feel safer when moving through this very busy and growing precinct.

Madam Speaker, we also know that convenience is a big factor in deciding whether to cycle to work, to go shopping or to go to social commitments. That is why we have been investing in bike storage facilities, like bike and rides near the ANU. Our bike and rides help people to use active travel and public transport in the one journey easily and conveniently. We have also just announced that we are going to put three bike cages into the new Woden CIT and bus interchange precinct.

We recognise that not everyone wants to or is able to commute a long distance on a bike, but they might be able to use their bike in their local area. That is really important. To support that we are making sure that we invest in both new trunk paths that connect different regions of Canberra and also those local connections with our town centres. For example, recent upgrades in Tuggeranong, Woden and Belconnen are helping Canberrans to make these shorter trips. I am really looking forward to the Tuggeranong upgrades being completed in your electorate, Madam Speaker, down on Anketell Street and Soward Way.

Access Canberra—services

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Business Better Regulation. We have been contacted by a constituent who moved to Canberra from Melbourne earlier this year. His Victorian drivers licence was due to expire in October, so he contacted Access Canberra ahead of time about transferring it to the ACT. Access Canberra advised that due to lockdown nothing could be done and he would have to go without a licence. The constituent then contacted VicRoads. Victoria was also in lockdown at this time. Within one week he had a new 10-year Victorian drivers licence with a Canberra address. He has now been into an Access Canberra shopfront and has been told that his Victorian licence with his Canberra address is not allowed as proof of residency. Minister, how can this happen, and are you at all embarrassed about it?

MS CHEYNE: This is the first I have heard of this, so I will take advice. I do not comment publicly on individual matters due to privacy, but I am happy to have a further conversation with Ms Lawder to try to get to the bottom of this. It does sound highly unusual, and I am very happy to work with her and her constituent to sort out this matter.

MS LAWDER: Minister, have you contacted Victorian government agency VicRoads to understand how they have been able to issue licences during this period?

MS CHEYNE: No, Madam Speaker.

DR PATERSON: Minister, are the Access Canberra shopfronts open and functioning as per usual now?

MS CHEYNE: Yes, Access Canberra shopfronts are open and functioning. I am pleased to say the wait times continue to decrease as the latent demand has been serviced. Shopfronts are open in Gungahlin, Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden. The Dickson one is only open for certain purposes at this stage, but it will reopen fully in February.

I remind Canberrans that almost all transactions with Access Canberra can be done online. It is really just licence plates and where photo ID is required that people need to be present at a shopfronts. But, of course, if people would like to go to a shopfront and need that face-to-face assistance Access Canberra stands ready to assist all Canberrans.

Land—valuations

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Treasurer. Are Canberrans' privately owned homes valued each year for rates purposes? If not, how are valuations adjusted in the years when no valuation is done?

MR BARR: People's homes are not valued; the land is subject to an annual valuation process. That process includes an assessment taken by expert valuers, and it is informed by market transactions across the territory.

MS CASTLEY: Chief Minister, what benchmarking or testing, if any, does ACT Revenue do on draft independent valuations to validate them before issuing new rates?

MR BARR: There is a process each year where valuations are adjusted, reflecting market conditions. There is a process where those valuations can be appealed by individual landowners. Of course, the overall land values in the territory simply reflect the proportion of the total rates base that is paid by each individual landowner. The government sets a revenue target; that revenue target is then divided by all of the rateable properties according to their unimproved land value. Higher land values do not, in and of themselves, lead to an increase in total revenue. Simply, the relative amount of the total capped rates collected each year is redistributed based on the relative movement of unimproved land value between different properties.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, are there any years when land is not valued for rates purposes? If so, how are the rates set?

MR BARR: I perhaps pre-empted Ms Lee's supplementary question with the answer to the previous question. Land values are, of course, in the context of rates, set on a rolling five-year average. So if there is not a change to the land value, of course, that individual year would constitute one-fifth of the average unimproved land value that is the basis on which that property's relative share of the total rates collection would be determined.

There is a rolling average; where a land value is assessed to have changed, that would apply in the year in which that change is accredited. But it would only have a one-in-five rolling effect because the previous four years, as well as the current year, would be taken, and then divided by five to give an average unimproved value, which would be the basis of the current year and the previous four. As we move forward each year, one year drops off and the new, current fiscal year comes in, allowing for a rolling five-year average.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—programs

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, can you please provide some information on the AMC indoor rowing program that has recently been nominated for an award?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Paterson for the question and for her continued interest in the welfare of detainees at the AMC. In early 2021, Rowing ACT and ACT Corrective Services came together to introduce a rowing program for detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, outdoor water rowing events in the community were moved to indoor rowing machines and online events. The change to indoor online rowing created a unique opportunity for detainees to participate in organised fitness-based competitions from inside the AMC.

Since February, members from Rowing ACT have offered their time to prepare and share their knowledge of rowing with the detainees at the AMC. Participants were given instruction by qualified rowing coaches at an introductory rowing class which started with familiarisation of the indoor rowing machines, safety techniques and the terms used to describe rowing movements.

Not only is the indoor rowing program a great opportunity for the detainees to learn a new skill and improve their physical and mental wellbeing; it provides the detainees with an opportunity to participate in community-based activities and work towards a measurable goal.

DR PATERSON: Minister, are you able to update the Assembly on any other new programs or trial programs that are improving the lives of detainees at the AMC?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Paterson for the supplementary question. ACT Corrective Services has been working hard on modernising and improving programs available to detainees at the AMC. I am delighted that this work has commenced and look forward to watching it continue and develop.

Recently, an alcohol and other drug pilot program commenced with Karralika, previously run through Solaris. The program was developed by ACT Corrective Services staff and is based on current dialectical based therapy and mindfulness techniques which are evidence based for the specific cohort. I have been advised that the detainees who participated in the pilot provided feedback after the initial four sessions which has been very positive.

The pilot program is participant centred, focusing on the individual and their responses to specific situations, unlike traditional drug and alcohol education programs. The

different approach seems to have made it more engaging for the participants and allows them to think about certain skills and how to focus on them. Detainees also felt that the program allows them to be more involved and provides an opportunity to self-reflect and better understand their emotions.

The program is in the pilot phase, but I am pleased to see a different, more individualised approach to programs being incorporated by ACT Corrective Services.

MS ORR: Minister, what programs are available specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Orr for the question. There are a number of culturally specific programs offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the AMC. These include the elders visitation program, the elders healing program, the elders songlines program, the culture and land management program and the elders yarning circle program. I would like to thank everyone involved in running these programs and providing support and mentorship to detainees.

We also have a number of art programs on offer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees. The elders Aboriginal art program operates weekly with support from the AMC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services unit, and external cultural services provide “Culture on the move”. ACT Corrective Services also facilitate the Dream Gallery public exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainee art within the foyer of 2 Constitution Avenue. The public display averages the sale of around three detainee art works per month. The annual NAIDOC community art exhibition ran from July to August this year. 2022 is the 10-year celebration of this important community partnership.

These programs are an opportunity for detainees to connect with their culture and with the broader community through their art. The feedback in relation to them is overwhelmingly positive.

COVID-19—testing centre fees

MR CAIN: My question is the Minister for Health: last week you said that people would not have to pay for the COVID-19 test but they would have to pay for a certificate if they needed one. Then you said people would get a refund of the whole \$112, including the cost of the certificate. I invite you to be crystal clear, minister: will people have to pay anything for either a COVID-19 test or a certificate if needed for interstate or international travel?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Cain for the question. In line with the announcement that was made by Minister Hunt on behalf of all state and territory health ministers—thank you very much—the announcement was that the national partnership agreement funding would cover the cost of COVID-19 testing if it was required under a public health order and did not require the provision of a certificate.

On that basis Queensland also clarified that they would not be requiring the provision of a certificate and would only require text message proof of testing to enter Queensland. I understand other jurisdictions were clarifying their requirements. But if

is that all people need for interstate travel and that is a result of a public health order in Australia, then they will be able to get their testing for free at ACT government-run sites. That information is all available on the COVID-19 website.

For international travel there is no change—certificates are clearly required for international travel. The requirement to have a test prior to international travel is not a requirement under any Australian jurisdictions' public health orders, and people will need to pay for that test and certificate in the way that they have been required to throughout the pandemic. Again, that information is very clearly outlined on the ACT's COVID-19 website.

MR CAIN: Minister, how will you be refunding all of the 314 people who have paid the fees given that some of these people will be from interstate and their addresses might be unknown?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Given ACT Pathology were invoicing people I imagine they would have the details required to send the invoice in the first place to bill people so they would, therefore, have the required details to contact those people to make the refunds.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, how many of the refunds have been paid to date?

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

Mr Barr: The absence of Mr Braddock means there are no further questions, so I ask that any further questions be placed on notice paper.