



QUESTION TIME
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

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Thursday, 2 June 2022

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Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (2.00): Madam Speaker, again Minister Vassarotti is unable to be at question time, so the questions will be to Minister Gentleman and Minister Berry, as per yesterday.

Questions without notice

Building—combustible cladding

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction, whether it is Minister Gentleman or Minister Vassarotti.

Minister Gentleman, yesterday you said, at the conclusion of question time:

Madam Speaker, in relation to my answer to Mr Cain on combustible cladding, I can advise that no DA fees are applicable.

However, at a recent combustible cladding forum where over 100 people attended, Minister Vassarotti said that development application fees cannot and will not be waived. Which statement is correct—yours or Minister Vassarotti's?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lee for the question. The position is that DA fees are not applicable for the removal of asbestos cladding or combustible cladding.

MS LEE: Minister, can you please clarify whether DA fees are applicable for remediation works on combustible cladding, and why is your government putting forward confusing information that is contradictory?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lee for the follow-up question. To make it very clear, there is no DA applicable for the removal of combustible cladding on those buildings; so, therefore, no fees apply.

MR PARTON: Minister, who is really making decisions on the combustible cladding issue? Is it you or is it Minister Vassarotti?

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister Vassarotti has the portfolio for this particular subject. I have the planning portfolio. I am in control of the planning portfolio, which includes development applications. But in this case, if you were removing combustible cladding you would not need a development application.

Fadden Pond—play space upgrade

MS LAWDER: My question is to the minister for city services. Minister, after copious amounts of correspondence from me to you, and also a community petition, about the tower in the playground at Fadden Pond, I note that the tower has been removed this week. When can residents expect a replacement for the tower to be available for community use?

MR STEEL: The ACT government has outlined the playgrounds that we intend to upgrade throughout this term. We are in the process of consulting with communities in each of those locations around what they would like to see as part of those upgrades; and, of course, we also consulted on a new play space strategy, which has been finalised and released to the community, and which will inform future play space upgrades going forward. At this stage there are no plans to provide further upgrades at Fadden.

MS LAWDER: Minister, to be quite clear, are you saying that the tower has been removed but at this point there is no replacement equipment planned for that playground?

MR STEEL: As Ms Lawder is aware, the tower has not been in use for some time, having been blocked off for safety reasons. But there is existing equipment in that park. It may be that further improvements are identified in the future, but the ACT government has outlined which playgrounds will be upgraded over this term, and they are the ones that we brought to the election, based on an evidence base around community input—the play spaces forum that we undertook was part of a deliberative democracy process with the community. Of course, there are ongoing condition audits of our existing play spaces.

MR PARTON: Minister, why aren't you listening to the residents and installing a new piece of equipment for the Fadden community, as they have requested?

MR STEEL: We have listened, by removing that particular item in the play space, which is still broadly functional.

Cultural Facilities Corporation—superannuation payments

MR CAIN: My question is to the Minister for the Arts. Minister, an article in the ABC was released today, stating that the ACT government has admitted to underpaying superannuation for the past 13 years to 663 current and former staff members of the Cultural Facilities Corporation, for which you are the responsible minister. The Cultural Facilities Corporation was made aware of this error in 2020. Minister, why has it taken two years for this issue to be addressed by the ACT government?

MS CHEYNE: To clarify, there was an unfortunate misreporting in the ABC article this morning. This was an issue that was self-identified by the CFC in March 2020 through an internal audit, and the CFC subsequently engaged external expertise to ensure that all staff are correctly repaid. It has taken a long time—it has taken until now—to resolve this issue, but that is due to the volume and complexity of data analysis and the cross-checking that was needed, including reviewing 69,000 individual pay slips. The CFC also needed to engage external expertise to fully identify and to quantify the underpayments, including a specific dollar figure for each person whose super payments were affected.

I note, as well, that not only has the CFC been investigating this issue, but they have resolved the issue in the time that has passed.

MR CAIN: Minister, what assurance can you give Canberrans that this is not happening to other ACT public service employees?

MS CHEYNE: This was a result of an incorrect software setting that came about due to human error.

MS LAWDER: I have a supplementary question. Minister, by what date will this issue be completely fixed, and how much is owing to ACT PS employees at the CFC.

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Lawder for the question. The CFC has already paid the total underpayment sum to the Australian Taxation Office, and they will pay it, with interest, into the super accounts of the impacted staff in the coming months. So the timing of this is now in the ATO's hands. The CFC has done everything it is required to do.

I note that this has been a regrettable situation. I know that CFC has apologised, and I would like to echo that apology. All past and present affected CFC staff have been contacted. There was an all-staff meeting earlier this week and there will be another one next week. The combined underpayment amounts total \$315,704, and the average underpayment is just under \$500. As Mr Cain noted before, there are 633 staff. But, to the extent that the CFC has done all that it can to resolve this issue, it has.

Health—alcohol and other drugs strategy

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, given Mr Pettersson's private member's bill to decriminalise the possession of drugs and the subsequent committee inquiry, I have been meeting with a lot of stakeholders in the alcohol and other drug sector space. One of the things that have been brought up with me regularly is their ambition to see the government do more around tobacco control and smoking cessation. Can you outline how tobacco control and smoking cessation are going to be included in the next ACT drug strategy?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Davis for the question. I note that he is asking for an announcement of future policy, which I will not be making at this point in time. But what I can inform him is that the drug strategy action plan 2018-2021 includes objectives to reduce the exposure of the ACT community, including children, to second-hand smoke and to reduce smoking rates, particularly among high-risk population groups, through both population and targeted measures. This is already a priority under the drug strategy action plan and I have no doubt that it will continue to be a priority for the ACT government.

I expect to table the outcomes and progress made against the actions in the first drug strategy action plan in the coming week, which will demonstrate that almost all of the actions were completed or partially completed, even accounting for and despite the impact of COVID-19. The next drug strategy action plan is currently being developed across government and with key stakeholders and partners in the alcohol and other drug treatment sector.

The ACT Health Directorate is working with other directorates to act on disrupting the uptake of vaping in particular, a relatively new challenge in this space,

encouraging smokers to reduce or quit risky behaviour such as smoking and vaping and to continue reducing the impact of nicotine products in the ACT. I introduced the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 in April, which includes provisions to improve compliance around e-cigarettes and sales of those to those under 18. Indeed, just the other day I had some correspondence to my office from a parent expressing concern about the ease with which their young person under the age of 18 could get hold of vaping products. This is a significant challenge for the community. Without making any specific policy announcements, I have no doubt that this has been raised by stakeholders and will be part of the response in the next drug strategy action plan.

MR DAVIS: Minister, will the government consider an evaluation of the Smoke-Free Public Places Act as part of the next drug strategy?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I am happy to take on board that suggestion from Mr Davis and from the community around considering the impact of the Smoke-Free Public Places Act and whether that needs to be amended or expanded or changed in some way. Of course, that is around the impact of second-hand smoke on people. A key policy emphasis that we have had over the last little while is ensuring that those people who have higher rates of smoking, or those groups in our community who have higher rates of smoking, are specifically supported through campaigns and services.

While smoking rates in the community have generally fallen over the last period of time—and I think it is important to recognise the success in the ACT where the proportion of daily smokers fell by more than half between 2001 and 2019, from 18.4 per cent to 8.2 per cent—we see an ongoing challenge in those groups in our community who experience various forms of disadvantage and discrimination. That is why a number of the measures that we take, including our Healthy Canberra grants, are particularly focused on that. For example, the Directions “butt it out!” smoking support program is an evidence-based program aiming to address tobacco dependency in a busy alcohol and other drug treatment and primary care service. It is really leading to a sustained practice of tobacco use intervention and supporting clients to successfully quit smoking. The Cancer Council’s “tackling tobacco in the ACT” is an integrated program aiming to reduce health and social inequalities through addressing smoking in disadvantaged communities. There is also Worldview Foundation’s work on a pre-release non-Indigenous supplement, along with post-release activity support.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, has the ACT government costed the impact of tobacco on the ACT community?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take that question on notice. I am not sure whether we have done a specific costing, but we do know, of course, that tobacco smoking is and has been one of the most significant impacts on the health system and on people’s individual health. It remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Australia. There is a lot of work nationally, of course, about the impact of tobacco smoking on the health of Australians and the cost of that to our community. I will take Mr Braddock’s question about whether we have a specific costing in the ACT on notice.

Federal government—territory rights

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, given the federal election result, is the ACT in a better position to have its territory rights restored? What is the ACT government doing in anticipation of this change?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. The clear answer is yes, we are in a better position to have territory rights restored, both in the house and in the Senate. It would be necessary for a repeal bill to pass both houses to remove the clause from the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act that prevents the ACT, and the equivalent clause in the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act that prevents the Northern Territory parliament, from making laws with respect to voluntary assisted dying.

Every other jurisdiction in Australia has now gone down this legislative path, to the extent that there are now six working models or legislative examples. We are in a position to commence work on the preparation of a consultation document and our own draft legislation that would enable voluntary assisted dying in the territory. This needs to begin with a comparative examination of the laws passed in the six states and to draw from the evidence and community views heard during the end of life choices inquiry held in the last term of this place.

In short, we want to be ready with a draft piece of legislation by the time the federal parliament completes its process around, hopefully, removing the legislative barrier to the territory parliament debating this. We do not want a linear process where we wait for that to happen and then we commence work. We will commence work now so that we are ready to debate this matter as soon as we are allowed to.

There will of course be a need for due process in relation to any piece of legislation that comes into this place. That would, inevitably, given its complexity and seriousness, involve a referral to an Assembly committee for examination, but we need to have a draft piece of legislation ready for that committee to examine. That work gets underway as soon as possible.

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, what previous attempts have been made to restore territory rights and why did they fail?

MR BARR: Since 1997 there have been many efforts, in terms of persuasion, following almost every federal election, seeking for the parliament of that new term to address this issue. The most recent attempt to restore territory rights was in 2018, with a private member's bill from a Liberal Democrats senator, David Leyonhjelm. I do not think many people in this place would have much in common with the views of David Leyonhjelm, but in this instance "any port in a storm"! So we were very happy to swing in behind that legislative reform.

It got very close. Firstly, credit to former Senator Leyonhjelm for bringing it forward. He did not represent the ACT; he was a New South Wales senator. So the fact that we got support from outside the territories for this was encouraging. The disappointing matter was that one of the territory's own senators voted against that legislation and that turned out to be the decisive vote in defeating it.

We then saw a former Northern Territory senator, CLP Senator Sam McMahon, introduce a private member's bill last year. Following a discussion with our former senator, it included the Northern Territory but excluded the ACT, extraordinarily. So we have had a few efforts in recent times. I think the people of Canberra have pretty conclusively settled this matter by voting out the senator who stood in the way, so we are now a step closer to getting this done for the people of the ACT.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, why is it important that the ACT can consider making laws with respect to voluntary assisted dying?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. We know that Canberrans care about this issue. We know that community opinion is 80 and 90 per cent in support. We have seen that in many surveys. There is no statistical error here. It is not even close. It is overwhelming: the community wants to see this change. It has occurred in every Australian state. The views of Canberrans and the Australian people are very clear.

I know we have enough respect for ourselves in this chamber—and I think that is held across all parties—that we are mature enough to legislate on this issue. So I am glad that the new Prime Minister agrees with that. I hope that my friend and colleague Andrew Leigh will be able to introduce a private member's bill into the lower house, the House of Representatives, very soon after the house reconvenes, which I understand will be in late July. It will obviously need to pass through both the house and the Senate in order to repeal the Andrews bill.

I know it is on the way, so we need to get ready for this change—to the extent that this is putting everyone in this place on notice that we need to turn our minds to this issue and to have a good process to develop the best piece of legislation in Australia. I think we are up to that task.

Government—land and property reports

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. In your government's response to the 2020 Auditor-General's report on land supply and release, you agreed to table land and property reports as quickly as possible, in the name of transparency around land sales. Minister, it is now June, and the land and property report for July to December 2021, which is nearly six months ago, has not yet been published. Why not?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Milligan for his question. I will take that on notice.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, will you also delay publication of the report for January to June 2022 by 12 months?

MR GENTLEMAN: That is a hypothetical question. We have not made any decisions on that yet.

MS LEE: Minister, when will you publish the report for July to December 2021? Why does it take six months to compile a report on land sales?

MR GENTLEMAN: As soon as the work is completed, we will be able to publish that report. There has been quite a bit of work to do in ensuring that we have all of the correct data for publishing, to make sure that Canberrans understand what we are doing.

Dhulwa Mental Health Unit—safety

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. On Monday you released the terms of reference for the Dhulwa inquiry. As well as nurses being attacked, security guards have been assaulted while protecting staff, including a guard who had his cheekbone shattered defending a doctor. Guards have suggested measures to improve safety, including cameras in seclusion rooms, carrying handcuffs, and body-worn cameras, but all have been declined. Minister, have you spoken to security guards who have been attacked, and what did they tell you?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for the question. I have been advised of a number of things that are being done to improve safety at Dhulwa, and I will be very happy to talk further with representatives of the security guards if they would like to. The safety strategies include reinvigorating the SafeWards methodology, dynamic ISBAR—which stands for “Introduction, Situation, Background Assessment Recommendations”—and read back has been introduced, which is being used by clinical and security teams to assess risk and develop a plan before approaching or undertaking any conversations with someone who is receiving care that might result in agitation or violence towards team members, including security. There are a number of other activities that are improving security. I could go through them all now, but I suspect that these have all been answered in a question on notice, already. I hope that that has satisfied you.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, will the Dhulwa inquiry examine safety measures which security guards have called for, including body-worn cameras, handcuffs and cameras in seclusion rooms?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you. The nature of appointing an independent chair means that they will address whatever issues they feel are relevant within the terms of reference, and the terms of reference do address the human rights of people receiving care as well as the safety of people who are working in Dhulwa, and that would include all of the staff there. I will leave it to the independent chair to determine who they need to speak to and what issues in detail need to be addressed. But there will be opportunities for submissions and for hearings, and I would hope that anyone who feels that they have relevant information to contribute will be able to make a submission.

MR CAIN: I have a supplementary question. Minister, will you commit to implementing all of the recommendations in the preliminary and final reports?

MS DAVIDSON: I am expecting to receive the preliminary report around 12 weeks after the inquiry has started, and I am very much looking forward to receiving that report and being able to then engage in conversation with the ANMF and with CHS about how we can go about implementing the recommendations that will be made. But now knowing what the recommendations are yet, I will have to wait until I have

received the report.

Light rail—stage 2

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, recently an FOI request led to the release of the Mecone consultancy report, an urban infill capacity assessment. The report was released under FOI where it was determined that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government's accountability as well as contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest. Why was the report not pro-actively released?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. This document was not prepared by my directorate, either Major Projects Canberra or Transport Canberra and City Services. It was prepared for the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. So I will not specifically talk to that document and the decision-making, which is not in my power under the FOI Act anyway.

What I would say in relation to the light rail project is that we have shown an unparalleled level of transparency in releasing the business case for both stage 1 and stage 2A to the community. No other government does that for light rail projects and other major infrastructure projects. It is reasonable to allow the government a period of time in order to consider documents, particularly those that relate to cabinet decision-making, and to be able to make policy decisions based on those documents.

We will be engaging extensively on the light rail stage 2A project and, following that, through to stage B, because this is the most complex project from a planning approvals point of view in the whole of Australia. There are going to be multiple points where we engage with the community on much of the technical documentation that is being prepared for the project as part of works approvals, as part of development application approvals and as part of Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act approvals. That is part of the work that will be required by both houses of the parliament in the future.

We look forward to having more engagement than that on the project as well. There has also been ample opportunity for people to engage with the government with the pop-ups and through the extensive release of information that we have already made available on this project. There is a sensitive commercial element to it, so there will not be an opportunity to release some of that information while we are in that commercial process.

MS CLAY: Minister, are there other reports which the government is using to make informed decisions on the future of light rail stage 2 which are not yet released?

MR STEEL: There will be extensive reports will be made available to government, many of which will inform the commercial process that is underway as part of the procurement with Canberra metro for stage 2A and then in the future procurement on stage 2B. Of course, that information may be sensitive. In order to achieve the best value for money for the people of the Australian Capital Territory it will be necessary in some circumstances not to disclose that information, which could be of a

commercial sensitive nature and could cause us to get a much poorer outcome from a value for money perspective on the project.

There will be extensive opportunities for people to engage on the various works approvals. We have had the works approval process already for raising London Circuit. All of the technical documentation was quite extensive. We are looking forward to engaging with the community on further works approvals for stage 2A as well as all the other planning approvals—consultation leading up to those approvals and engagement on the future design of this project going forward. There will be a lot of information that we are going to need to explain and put some context around as well. We will look at how we can provide as much information as we can to the community to help them engage with the design and implementation. We are committed to this project and bringing it down to Woden. We want to hear the community's engagement now on the design of that project.

MR CAIN: Minister, when is the expected delivery date for stage 2A?

MR STEEL: That is the process that we are going through as part of the procurement on stage 2A with Canberra Metro, so it is subject to that procurement process that is underway. Of course, we have already received works approval from the NCA on raising London Circuit. That will be the first major piece of work that has happened. Early works are already underway. We are looking forward to that occurring around the middle of this year, so very soon. We are getting started on RLC and, following that, we will get started on stage 2A.

Mr Parton interjecting—

Transport Canberra—fuel costs

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Parton, do you have a question, not an interjection?

MR PARTON: Yes, I do. Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, what is the impact of rising fuel prices on Transport Canberra's bus operations, on two fronts: (a) obviously the increased cost associated with running the timetables and (b) the potential drift back to public transport because of the impact on the individual budgets of would-be public transport users?

MR STEEL: We know that rising fuel prices, particularly due to the war in Europe, are having an impact on many people across our city, including those businesses and organisations like Transport Canberra that use large amounts of fuel, particularly diesel fuel but also compressed natural gas, to run heavy vehicles. That would be having an impact on the price. I do not have any figures in front of me that I can provide on that, but that would certainly be adding to the fuel expenses, the operational expenses of Transport Canberra over this period of time.

We have the long-term Zero-Emission Transition Plan for Transport Canberra in place, to transition away from diesel and CNG buses to zero emissions buses, which have the potential to substantially bring down operating costs for vehicles, particularly through battery electric buses. We will be using the 100 per cent renewable electricity

in our grid. These are very efficient forms of public transport. Through the government's zero emissions action plan for other vehicles as well, we will be supporting the transition of the broader community onto those more affordable forms of transport to operate from a fuel point of view as well.

MR PARTON: Minister, what is the strategy in place to manage the cost increase from the rising fuel price? Can the minister take on notice the actual amount of the cost blowout because of that?

MR STEEL: I can. Obviously, it will change from day to day as fuel prices change, but I can have a look at, for a period in time, what the increase in the cost has been. If the opposition spokesperson is suggesting that we cut bus services if there is an increase in the fuel price, we are simply not going to do that. We know that these are critical bus services that people rely on and we are still going to provide those regardless of what the cost of fuel is on a daily basis.

We do have a long-term transition plan to transition to zero emissions. We have secured 12 electric buses to arrive this year. We are in the market at the moment to purchase a further 90 battery electric buses as well. We will keep on delivering the services that people rely on and that are providing a really great option for people who want to get on to public transport and do not want to use their private vehicle at the moment because it is expensive to operate. We are providing those services for them at the moment, despite the challenges that we have with COVID-19 and the number of people that we have seen furloughed during this period.

MR CAIN: Minister, has this drift back to public transport inspired a more definitive date for the end of the interim bus timetable and the resumption of normal services?

MR STEEL: It has been a very gradual shift back to public transport. I was at a conference in Sydney the other week, talking with other transport operators about the return to public transport. They are experiencing, in cities like Auckland and other cities around Australia, a similar very gradual shift, but we are still quite significantly down on what we were. From the patronage figures that I saw the other day, it is about 38 per cent down on where we were in 2019, which is of course the year before the pandemic that we are comparing ourselves to. So there is a long way to go.

What we are not going to do is bring back services to a full timetable if we cannot deliver those services, because it is critical, if buses are timetabled, that they actually show up. The interim timetable is giving us a level of flexibility to be able to still deliver those services while we have around 35 bus drivers furloughed or off on leave at any one time, caring for others who may be sick as well. We will not be stepping up until we have the certainty that we can deliver the services under the full timetable. Of course, services already run frequently. The rapids still run frequently and the route bus services on weekdays. We will be stepping that up as soon as we have the reliability that we can offer to the community.

Grace Community Recreation Park—lighting

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. We have been corresponding about a constituent concern regarding the lighting at

Crace Community Recreation Park, and I would like to thank him for adding those lights to the regular inspection program. My question is: when, as a result of this program, will those lights be operational again, so that constituents will be able to utilise those facilities after dusk?

MR STEEL: I will take that on notice.

MR BRADDOCK: Can you please advise why these lights were not already in the regular inspection program?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. My understanding is that, with this particular place, the recreation park, the custodian of this asset changed hands to Transport Canberra and City Services, away from the sport and recreation facilities area. As a result it was not on the regular inspection program. That has been corrected. We do not think this is necessarily a systemic issue elsewhere; it has been an issue specifically related to this park, and that has been resolved. I will get back to you in relation to the specific issues regarding these lights and when they will be fixed.

MS CLAY: Minister, which parks around Canberra are part of the regular inspection program?

MR STEEL: I think the member asked me which are not on the regular inspection program?

Ms Clay: Either way. I asked which are, but whichever suits you.

MR STEEL: I will have to take that on notice. I expect there will be a very extensive list of parks that on there. I am happy to dig out that level of information. As I said I do not think it is necessarily a systemic issue. It is something that has arisen as a result of a change in custodianship.

LGBTIQ+ community—federal government

MS ORR: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, the ACT has led the nation in many areas of reform for LGBTIQ+ Canberrans. How will the change of federal government lead to further opportunity for reform in this area?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question. I think there are a range of areas where we can collaborate with the commonwealth to achieve further progress for LGBTIQ+ Canberrans. Some of those examples include following the ACT's lead on legislating discrimination protections for LGBTI children and staff in education institutions. I think there is an opportunity to get a nationally consistent approach, looking at the ACT legislation as a potential template.

I think we can work together to improve access to gender-affirming care under Medicare for trans and gender-diverse Australians. I think we can work together to review and reform documentation requirements, including the use of passports and birth certificates as they affect trans and intersex communities. Importantly, also, we can look forward to the end of the culture wars and the attempts to use the LGBTIQ+ community—politically the trans community—as a political wedge, as we saw in the

last federal campaign. It was all about creating division in the community—unnecessary division. I hope we will see that ugly chapter of Australian politics closed, and the door slammed shut on that forever—forever!—because those communities feel it so much, and they do not deserve to be used as political wedges.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, how did this divisive debate around trans kids and religious discrimination affect our community and the election outcome?

MR BARR: It is clear the people felt quite intensely that their lives and their personal circumstances were the subject of wedge politics with desire to run a particular debate with one candidate in one seat, who was never going to win, in order to try and shift votes, presumably under the assumption that the Australian people would buy into that sort of hatred. I think we can draw a conclusion from the failure of that political strategy, and hopefully it will never, ever be used again.

That was combined with what was a prolonged debate during the last federal parliamentary term over the Morrison government's religious discrimination bill and the lead-up to the vote that was held. I want to acknowledge the courage of those Liberal MPs who crossed the floor to stop it happening. That took great courage, and I hope that we never again, as a nation, have to go through that ugly debate. Again, it was all about driving a political wedge of difference in the community

If there is anything that can be read out of the federal election result across seats far and wide across the nation—city and country, regional and rural—it is that Australians are sick and tired of this sort of politics. Hopefully, as I said, the door is now slammed shut on this forever.

MR DAVIS: Chief Minister, would you support the Australian Greens' calls for the establishment of a federal minister for equality and LGBTQIA+ human rights commissioner?

MR BARR: It certainly is important that those issues are examined. I take the role seriously, and I am the territory's minister for equality. That is part of my portfolio responsibilities as the first minister. Given the Prime Minister's track record over his career as an advocate for our community, he may well wish to take a leadership role there or, potentially, give responsibility to a particular minister, or—depending on the nature of reforms that are being pursued—it would be appropriate that a number of ministers contribute to work to improve outcomes for LGBTIQ+ people in Australia.

In relation to a human rights commission, it is really not for me to comment. I do not run that organisation, but I know that the arrangements that we have in place in the ACT work effectively. To the extent that other jurisdictions want to pick up on our arrangements, I would welcome that.

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