



**QUESTION TIME**  
OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

Edited proof transcript

Tuesday, 28 November 2023

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<b>Questions without notice .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Canberra Institute of Technology—chief executive officer .....	1
Sport and recreation—international events .....	1
Light rail—stage 2B .....	2
Public and social housing—funding.....	3
Light rail—stage 2A .....	3
Transport Canberra—ticketing .....	4
Government—Intelligent Regulator Project.....	5
ACT Health—workforce .....	5
ACT Health—staff survey .....	7
Commissioner for Fair Trading—conflict of interest.....	9
Animals—medical research testing .....	9
Economy—performance.....	10

## **Questions without notice**

### **Canberra Institute of Technology—chief executive officer**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, during annual reports hearings last week, it was revealed that the CEO of the Canberra Institute of Technology has been awarded a 3.5 per cent pay rise by the Remuneration Tribunal, despite having been stood down pending the outcome of an Integrity Commission inquiry. Chief Minister, did your government make a submission to the Remuneration Tribunal to argue against this pay rise?

**MR BARR:** No, the government made a submission to the Remuneration Tribunal in relation to the totality of their determinations, as we normally do. No, I did not make a specific reference to the stood down CEO of the CIT.

**MS LEE:** Chief Minister, given that you did not make a submission against the proposed pay rise, specifically, and this latest pay rise now brings the stood down CEO's remuneration package to over \$373,000 a year, do you support it?

**MR BARR:** It is not really for me to comment on Remuneration Tribunal decisions. I would not make a habit of doing that. The tribunal is independent for very good reason, and it makes its determinations across the board in an impartial way.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Chief Minister, will you, as head of this government, now insist to the chair of the CIT board that this ridiculous engagement of having the former CEO on a paid leave for over 18 months has to end?

**MR BARR:** I think we are all looking forward to the Integrity Commission's report on the matter, which, I understand the commissioner advised in annual report hearings, is impending.

### **Sport and recreation—international events**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Sport. Minister, Football Australia's Chief Executive has said that he is very confident that Australia will host the 2026 Women's Asian Cup. Australia will also, of course, be hosting the 2027 Rugby World Cup. Will the ACT government bid to host games in both these significant tournaments, following the community's disappointment that Canberra did not host any of the Women's FIFA World Cup games?

**MR BARR:** I will take the question as it falls within the major events portfolio responsibilities I have. The Deputy Chief Minister and I will certainly look at the bidding opportunities that exist around those tournaments and if they represent value for money, as assessed through our process which we undertake to assess all ACT government major event funding—were they to come up with a positive return on investment, then most certainly we would be bidding.

**MS LEE:** Chief Minister, have you had held any meetings with Rugby or Football Australia specifically with regard to Canberra hosting matches for either tournament?

**MR BARR:** I have certainly been engaged with Rugby Australia in recent times on

other matters. I do note the change in board chair in relation to Rugby Australia. We see that organisation has undergone a massive upheaval as a result of its member jurisdictions being unhappy with the approach and direction that was being pursued. We will let the dust settle on that, but I look forward to engaging with Rugby Australia, most importantly on the future of the Brumbies, which is far and away the most important issue for rugby in the ACT at this point in time.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Chief Minister, are you confident that the ACT's sporting venues will meet the requirements of those bodies to host games for these major tournaments?

**MR BARR:** Well, both Asian Cup soccer and Rugby World Cup football have been held at Canberra Stadium before.

### **Light rail—stage 2B**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, in annual report hearings we learnt that the business case for stage 2B of the tram will not be released until after the 2024 election. This is despite the fact that in 2019 you stated that the tram would arrive in Woden in 2025. You are asking Canberrans to go to the next election on the promise of the tram to Woden, yet you cannot commit to anything past a vague promise and some shiny pictures. Chief Minister, will you release a cost estimate of stage 2B before the next election?

**MR BARR:** What I can absolutely confirm is that, if you support light rail and want to see it extended, you certainly should not vote for the Canberra Liberals. We will be progressing, firstly, the contract signing on stage 2A and then the necessary work associated with the EPBC referrals and engagement with the National Capital Authority and the federal parliament as it relates to stage 2B.

**Ms Lee:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question was very, very straightforward: will the Chief Minister release a cost estimate for stage 2B before the next election—yes or no?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** He is relevant to the topic.

**MR BARR:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I advise the Leader of the Opposition that any appropriations that we make in relation to stage 2B light rail will be in the budget.

**MS LEE:** Chief Minister, will you release the business case for stage 2B and, if so, when?

**MR BARR:** As the minister has indicated, once certain matters are resolved—namely, EPBC, route alignment, NCA and any federal parliamentary requirements—it would be our intention to provide further information that would inform a budget business case decision.

**MR PARTON:** Chief Minister, what will it take for you to step away from this project, or will you simply just do it at any cost?

**MR BARR:** The government continues to progress the extension of light rail and we will do so through a robust process that engages with relevant stakeholders, approval authorities and the commonwealth government, as a co-funding partner for the project.

### **Public and social housing—funding**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, last week the commonwealth government announced the states and territories Social Housing Accelerator implementation plan. Can you tell us what the plan is for the ACT?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Ms Orr for her question. The ACT government will deliver at least 60 extra public housing homes as part of the federal government's social housing accelerator program. The \$50 million social housing accelerator payment will be used for the purchase of 20 to 25 newly built or off-the-plan dwellings, as well as the construction of a further 35 to 40 new dwellings for public housing. This will be in addition to the ACT government's Growing and Renewing Public Housing program, which is set to deliver 1,400 new or redeveloped public homes by 2027. I am proud of this government's record investment in public housing, and, now, with the support of the federal Labor government, we can build even more public housing properties.

**MS ORR:** Minister, why has the ACT government opted to spend its \$50 million social housing accelerator payment on public housing rather than community housing?

**MS BERRY:** Whilst the whole country is feeling the housing crisis at the moment, every jurisdiction has a different set of challenges and opportunities to work with. In the ACT, the government has decided to invest all of the ACT's social housing accelerator payment into public housing. Our community housing providers will have access to the ACT government's \$60 million affordable housing project scheme, as well as the commonwealth Housing Australia Future Fund, and we simply must continue to grow public housing in the ACT. This approach will facilitate the construction of new social and affordable homes over the short, medium and long term.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, what will more public housing mean for Canberrans who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Dr Paterson for her question. The Social Housing Accelerator investment will deliver at least 60 more homes for Canberrans on the wait list for public housing, but with a growing population and escalating costs of living, the demand for housing assistance is only increasing. This government believes that every Canberran deserves a safe and comfortable place to live so that they have the same chance at happiness as everyone else. That is why we are using this fund to continue to prioritise building even more public housing.

### **Light rail—stage 2A**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, during annual reports hearings, the Chief Project Officer said that cost

blowouts in relation to the raising of London Circuit were because of unexpected findings in relation to asbestos and other issues. What was the total cost of removing asbestos from London Circuit?

**MR STEEL:** I thank the member for his question. I will take that on notice.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, what is the extent of the delay to this project as a consequence of these unexpected findings?

**MR STEEL:** We will be making some further announcements about where raising London Circuit, stage 2A, is up to in the coming weeks. The exact timing of the completion, obviously, in terms of any delays that may be experienced due to wet weather or finding of asbestos, will not be fully known until the end of the project. But we will be making some announcements about the expected timing for stage 2A in the coming weeks. I will leave those announcements for another time.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, what was the cost to ACT taxpayers of the other findings, such as variations from utilities?

**MR STEEL:** I will take that on notice.

### **Transport Canberra—ticketing**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, at a recent press conference, you stated that MyWay+ was on schedule for implementation in the second half of 2024. Of course, this is in spite of the fact that MyWay+ was originally announced by your predecessor, Megan Fitzharris, in 2016, for implementation with stage 1 of the tram. It is now nearly five years since stage 1 of the tram commenced operation, yet there is still no MyWay+, and now the TCCS annual report indicates yet another delay to the MyWay+ project. Minister, when can Canberrans realistically expect to start using MyWay+?

**MR STEEL:** I am very pleased that, in February, we signed a contract with NEC Australia to deliver a new modern and accessible ticketing solution for Transport Canberra. We are currently working with NEC to design and implement that system. Hardware has been ordered. As advised, we expect implementation to be in the second half of next year, with customers being able to use those services. We will be making further announcements about the exact timing of that closer to that point.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, how can you continue to say that the MyWay+ project is on schedule, given the significant delays already experienced?

**MR STEEL:** Because we have been clear with the community about procurement for this project—that we wanted to get the best value-for-money solution for Canberrans in implementing a new modern ticketing system that can use a variety of options for people to tap on and off our public transport systems, whether it is buses or light rail. We made a decision that we would not go with a provider when we went out for open-market procurement. We then looked at a solution with a single provider. Again, we were not able to achieve value-for-money outcomes through that process, so we went out to market again, and now we have been able to secure a partner in NEC

Australia and we are on track with delivering that solution.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, what will come first: the tram to Woden or MyWay+?

**MR STEEL:** Both are being built at the same time: the building of an ICT system with MyWay+, a new ticketing system for Canberra, at the same time that we are also under construction with the Raising London Circuit enabling project that will support Light Rail Stage 2A to Commonwealth Park, which is a critical first stage in delivering light rail to Woden. What is absolutely certain is that, if a Liberal government existed, there would be no light rail to Woden. I also suggest that they probably would not have purchased a value-for-money ticketing solution either.

### **Government—Intelligent Regulator Project**

**MR COCKS:** My question is to the minister for regulation. Minister, during annual report hearings last week, you were asked about the \$2.3 million intelligent regulator project, which has been discarded. In your response, you said:

However, we understand it to be a project from before when I was minister and before Ms McKinnon was in her job. That is why we do not know.

Minister, how, as the minister responsible, are you not aware of a \$2.3 million project that had been written-off in your portfolio?

**MS CHEYNE:** I thank Mr Cocks for the question. I did take this question on notice, so that response is working its way through the system. I have further consulted the records that I have, and I believe I have received one brief on this about the funding that had been expended on this project. I will wait until I have finalised the response to the question taken on notice, because I do not want to speak “out of school”—if I get something incorrect here. But I am aware that I received a short brief about some of the remaining funds of that project, I believe, at the beginning of last year. This has not been a project that has been largely progressed in my time as minister.

**MR COCKS:** Minister, what is the total amount of the scrapped intelligent regulator project?

**MR COCKS:** I will take that on notice.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, are you confident that there are not more scrapped projects that you are not aware of?

**MS CHEYNE:** I think Access Canberra has done an extraordinary job with the available resources in progressing what they can, and where they can, and they have made a huge number of improvements over recent times. I am not aware of any other projects which have been scrapped that I am not aware of, obviously, but if there is something that I can share with the chamber, I will.

### **ACT Health—workforce**

**DR PATERSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, can you please

provide further information about how the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Study Incentive program will support health students and the health workforce in the ACT?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Dr Paterson for the question. Through the 2023-24 budget the ACT government invested \$3 million in attracting and retaining nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students in the ACT. We know Canberra is the best place to live and work and we are supporting more people to become health professionals here. We know cost of living pressures are affecting university students' ability to complete their courses and to participate in clinical placements. We also know that students do their best when they are under less stress and pressure. The ACT government has a comprehensive plan for the health system with record investments in our health services, building health infrastructure for the future and growing our health workforce to support our community. This investment is just one part of a broader program to bring in more frontline health workers to our public health services and the ACT more broadly.

The study incentive program will support new and existing students through two streams: a cost-of-living stipend of up to \$3,000 each year over three years for eligible students, commencing in 2024; and placement support grants of up to \$1,000 per clinical placement for continuing students. We have focused on areas of critical workforce need in the ACT across allied health, nursing and midwifery. This includes a broad range of allied health professionals such as occupational therapy, sonography, social work and optometry. We have worked with the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University to support students and to enable our universities to remain competitive in the market. We have also ensured cost of living stipends prioritise students from backgrounds that may need additional support to attend university. We have heard from students and their families about their needs and the ACT government has listened and acted.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, what did you hear from health students during consultation on the ACT Health Workforce Strategy?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Dr Paterson for the supplementary. During consultation on the ACT Health Workforce Strategy, we heard from health students and stakeholders about the need to consider all parts of the health workforce pipeline. An early action in the strategy was convening a student roundtable to hear more from health students about their needs in the ACT. We completed this action earlier this year with students and education providers from across the ACT in attendance.

The students spoke to me and the roundtable panel about clinical placement poverty that impacted their decisions about whether to remain in health profession courses. They said that meeting the clinical placement requirements often caused financial pressure, especially if the placements were outside the ACT and most particularly towards the end of training, as the placement blocks are longer. Often students have part time jobs to support themselves and at times the length of the placement or location puts their jobs at risk. A key recommendation from the roundtable was therefore, to provide financial support to students during clinical placements to address what they describe as, and is known as, "placement poverty." The students considered that the type of financial assistance that would be most beneficial and



result in the reduction of student attrition would be in the form of clinical placement grants. Through the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Study Incentive program we can now support our future health workforce with cost of living and through their clinical placements.

We are growing our health workforce right here in the ACT. Through targeted programs across each stage of student development, and the range of opportunities in our ACT public health services, we are ensuring the ACT is seen as a great place to study and work in health care.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, how will the ACT Health Workforce Strategy and recent budget investments support students and build a sustainable health workforce in the ACT?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. The ACT government overall has a robust plan to support the health workforce now and into the future. ACT Labor committed to an additional 400 full-time equivalent health professional positions at the last election, and we have more than delivered on that commitment ahead of time. Alongside our record investments in health, we are delivering more jobs for graduates and more support for health workers, to attract and retain them in the ACT. Our priorities have been on building a culture of learning and development, leadership, innovation and inclusion. We are listening to our health workers, we are investing in their needs and we are advocating at a national level.

We are focused on every stage of training and development. From high school to postgraduate, we have ensured there is support for our current and future health workers: like \$2.2 million for the ACT Health Workforce Strategy for early actions, including workforce data, promotion of health careers and review of incentives; like \$1.25 million for the continuation of the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Academy program; dedicated articulation programs from high school through to graduate positions in our health services for nurses; fee-free TAFE places at the Canberra Institute of Technology, in partnership with the Albanese government; and of course, Madam Speaker, our \$3 million investment in the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Study Incentive program that I have just spoken about.

We are also establishing the new undergraduate student of nursing and undergraduate student of midwifery positions in our ACT public health services to support students to work and earn, but also have flexible jobs that will enable them to do their study and their placements. Of course, we have also announced \$8.6 million in support for our junior medical officers in direct response to feedback from them; more than \$8 million for the Health Workforce Wellbeing and Recovery Fund; and more in boosting pay and conditions, providing scholarships and funding for development opportunities, introducing ratios for nurses and midwives, and being focused on making the ACT the best place to live and work.

### **ACT Health—staff survey**

**MS CASTLEY:** My question is to the Minister for Health. The ACT Ombudsman overturned ACT Health's decision to redact negative comments from the staff survey of the Digital Solutions Division, sought under FOI. The Ombudsman said

“considerable public interest in the information at issue which could be reasonably likely to contribute to positive and informed debate,” and:

Publication could also have a necessarily positive effect on response rates if honest and negative feedback is published and issues raised within said feedback is then acted upon by the agency.

Minister, if you disagreed with your directorate’s original decision, why didn’t you exercise your discretion, referred to in the Freedom of Information Act, to release additional information?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I have publicly said that I was not convinced by the decision-maker’s reasoning in relation to this matter. But I do respect the independence of the public service in acting under the Freedom of Information Act and the responsibility of information decision-makers under that act to make decisions. The reality is that the decision-maker, even on considering my feedback and the feedback of others, determined that they had good reason for their decision. I understood what they were saying—that some of the comments that they had redacted not only provided some robust views about their experiences in the Digital Services Division but also were potentially identifiable. This was a tricky balance that we need to strike in releasing information from these types of staff surveys.

Part of the Ombudsman’s decision related to the fact that the logic that the decision-maker had used did not really stack up when some positive direct quotes were released and some more negative direct quotes were not released. Part of the Health directorate’s concern was that some of those quotes could potentially identify who made that quote but also who they were talking about and that that would actually be detrimental to the work that they were trying to do within the division to support a positive culture. I respected that the Health directorate is responsible for making this decision, while expressing my own view that I was not convinced by their logic but also while understanding that the applicant had the opportunity to go to the Ombudsman to seek review, which they did.

**MS CASTLEY:** Minister, do you agree with the Ombudsman that publishing negative and positive feedback contributes to an informed debate on workforce issues in your directorate?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I am a strong supporter of transparency; hence the feedback that I provided to the Health directorate at the time. But I also understand that there are times when publishing specific information about culture surveys in specific areas of specific agencies is actually detrimental to the culture journey that those parts of the organisations are on. Particularly at a time when often those agencies or those parts of agencies are actually moving forward in a positive direction and when agencies are already acting on the outcome of the survey, having this commentary rehashed in a public way is not in the interests of that positive culture journey.

Is it in the public interest to be transparent? Yes, it is. Is there an obligation when you tell people that you are going to hold their responses in confidence to actually hold their responses in confidence? Yes, there is. I think there is an opportunity now for the ACT public service more broadly, and the Health directorate in particular, to consider

how culture surveys are undertaken, the obligations that they have around confidentiality, the information that is provided to staff in undertaking those surveys and then the way that those surveys are written up, with the understanding that they will be potentially subject to freedom of information—and rightly so.

It is important that we are transparent about these things. But it is also important to recognise that sometimes the type of transparency that Ms Castley engages in—which is only talking about the negative and constantly talking down our health system, talking down our Health directorate and talking down Canberra Health Services—is not positive for culture.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, will you now withdraw your previous accusations that discussion of negative aspects of Canberra Health Services' culture is scaremongering?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I think I will refer Mrs Kikkert to my previous two answers.

### **Commissioner for Fair Trading—conflict of interest**

**MR CAIN:** My question is to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Minister, in annual report hearings last week, the Head of Service, Ms Kathy Leigh, confirmed that she did not personally investigate the ongoing conflict of interest matter involving Fair Trading Commissioner, Ms Derise Cubin, and rather solely relied on advice from the ACT Government Solicitor. Minister, you reiterated on multiple occasions in annual report hearings that you stand by the advice you received from the Head of Service on the basis that she had investigated this matter. Given what she revealed in the hearings, do you still stand by your view?

**MR RATTENBURY:** I have been clear with Mr Cain—and on multiple occasions—that I have sought advice from the Head of Service as the appropriate point in considering this matter and providing advice to the minister. I continue to make that point.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, have you been misled by the Head of Service and the ACT Government Solicitor? If not, how can you be sure?

**MR RATTENBURY:** I do not believe that I have been.

**MR COCKS:** Minister, why did you not properly brief the Chief Minister on this issue? Is this a case of “The less the Chief Minister knows, the better”?

**MR RATTENBURY:** This is a matter within my portfolio, and I worked with government agencies to address a matter for which I held responsibility.

### **Animals—medical research testing**

**MS CLAY:** My question is to the Minister for Health. The National Health and Medical Research Council code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes has not been reviewed in 10 years and it is now in need of review. There are many advancements in medical research and alternative technologies, and many people

around the country are calling for the recognition of animals as sentient beings, which is something that we have recognised here in the ACT. Minister, do you support revision of the code and will you speak to the federal minister for health to request that the National Health and Medical Research Council initiate a review?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Clay for the question. I do note, and I know that she is aware of this, that the NHMRC code of practice for the use of animals in medical and scientific research is, in the ACT, actually included as a code of practice under the Animal Welfare Act 1992, which is the responsibility of Minister Steel. So, while it is a commonwealth Health responsibility, actual implementation of it in the ACT sits in another portfolio.

I would say to Ms Clay that if she has concerns about this matter, she is a citizen of Australia. She is perfectly entitled to write to the commonwealth health minister and express those concerns. I am not a conduit for her concerns. If she wants me to do something about it, she could organise a meeting with me to explain to me why she holds these concerns and what she would like me to do.

**MS CLAY:** How does the ACT government advocate for our medical and health research to be more considerate of animal welfare?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** In the ACT, as I have indicated, the NHMRC code of practice for the use of animals in medical and scientific research is included as a code under the Animal Welfare Act. The ACT government does have a strong commitment to animal welfare. The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee supports this work and provides advice to the Minister for Transport and City Services, and would be consulted, if there were any changes to the NHMRC code of conduct, on how those were implemented in the ACT.

I would note that it was a motion at the ACT Labor conference that called on us to recognise animals as sentient beings. We strongly support the view that Ms Clay has put about this matter. Again, if she has some specific concerns around strengthening the code, I would be very happy to have a conversation with her about that. I absolutely strongly support the ethical treatment of animals in medical research and the use of alternative technologies where those are available. At the moment it is also the reality that we do sometimes need to see animals used in scientific research. That is not only in the ACT government's areas of responsibility; primarily, within the ACT, that is largely around the Australian National University and the CSIRO, who would be undertaking that work, although there is some undertaken within the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services' responsibilities.

### **Economy—performance**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, could you update the Assembly on the Australian National Accounts: State Accounts released last Tuesday?

**MR BARR:** I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. Yes, I am very happy to update the Assembly on the national accounts data. I am pleased to advise colleagues that the territory's gross state product increased by 4.3 per cent in the fiscal year 2022-23 and

that this was the highest rate of economic growth achieved by all states and territories. The Bureau of Statistics also advised up our growth for fiscal year 2021-22 from 1.9 per cent to 2.8 per cent.

Over the past decade, the territory's economy has grown by 40.8 per cent. Nationally, the growth rate is 26.8 per cent. We have grown by nearly 41 per cent over the last decade and the national economy has grown by 26.8 per cent over the last decade. The state that came closest to our 40.8 per cent growth over the decade was Victoria, and it achieved 30.7 per cent. So the ACT has been far and away the fastest growing economy in Australia for a decade. Pleasingly, this growth has seen a GSP per capita increase in the ACT, which is again nation-leading. Population growth does contribute to economic growth. Here in the territory, our GSP per capita growth was 2.4 per cent in fiscal year 2022-23. So, not only is our economy the fastest growing but also our economic growth is far outpacing our population growth.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Treasurer, what industries are driving the continuing growth in the ACT's economy?

**MR BARR:** This growth is broadly based. Both the public and the private sectors have been contributing. Public administration and safety saw a strong increase, clearly reflecting government policies at both the territory and the commonwealth level. Professional, scientific and technical services grew by 4.3 per cent, with continued demand for specialist skills in information technology, cloud computing and the defence sector driving this growth. Accommodation and food service growth was driven by the continued recovery in the tourism and hospitality industries following the easing of COVID restrictions and the recovery in business travel to Canberra, with a 24.2 per cent increase in the previous financial year. Growth in storage and hosting services, growth in information, media and telecommunication industry sectors and construction growth reflected a rise in public investment.

Particularly pleasing also in the data was the continued recovery of air passenger travel growth, which saw the transport, postal and warehousing industry sector increase by 15 per cent in fiscal year 2022-23.

**MS ORR:** Treasurer, how do these results compare to results across the country?

**MR BARR:** As I referenced, this was the strongest performance of any state or territory economy in the nation last year and over the last decade, and it was accompanied by a lift in the revised final outcome for GSP for the year before, 2021-22. For the last completed financial year, our growth at 4.3 per cent was the strongest. South Australia was next at 3.8 per cent and New South Wales was at 3.7 per cent. Perhaps to give some context to the extent of the ACT's economic growth, if you compare us with the next smallest jurisdiction, which is Tasmania, we have 100,000 fewer people but our economy is 25 per cent bigger than Tasmania's is now. If you go back 20 years to the commencement of this century, the ACT and Tasmanian economies were the same size. The ACT economy is now 25 per cent bigger than Tasmania's, and we have grown so rapidly that it is faster than every other state and territory.

Whilst gross state product measures domestic production, the real purchasing power

of income generated from that production is affected by changes to the prices of international and interstate imports and exports, but the real gross state income, which therefore adjusts the gross state product with changes in jurisdictions' terms of trade, showed that, again, the ACT led the nation with growth rates well above the national average and well above the other states and territories.

In conclusion, we have the fastest-growing economy in the nation, not for one year and not for 10 years; we have had 33 consecutive years of economic growth. No other jurisdiction in Australia can match this performance and it is unlikely that there is another jurisdiction in the world that has had 33 years of consecutive economic growth.

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