



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**2012–2013–2014**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**No. 45**

**WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2014**

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- 1 The Assembly met at 10 a.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Mrs Dunne) took the Chair and asked Members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.
- 2 **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR**  
Mr Coe, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:
  - (1) notes:
    - (a) the importance of the construction sector in Canberra;
    - (b) that the ACT Government’s excessive fees, charges, taxes and regulations are crippling the building industry; and
    - (c) that much residential development activity has moved across the border to Queanbeyan and surrounds; and
  - (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
    - (a) repeal Territory Plan Variation 306 which puts unreasonable demands on solar aspect, unit complexes and estate plans;
    - (b) significantly reduce the lease variation charge which contradicts the Government’s infill policy and serves as a disincentive for investment;
    - (c) put a hold on any further increases in levies for portable long service leave;
    - (d) significantly reduce commence and complete fees for commercial properties;
    - (e) abandon the Government’s monopoly of land supply and commit to a land supply model which is accessible for builders of all business sizes;



- (f) improve ACTPLA's performance by minimising their demands and improving decision times; and
- (g) simplify the Territory Plan so that it is more easily comprehended by those in the building industry and residents.

Debate ensued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 6		NOES, 7	
Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher
Mr Doszpot	Mr Wall	Ms Berry	Ms Porter
Mrs Dunne		Dr Bourke	Mr Rattenbury
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	

And so it was negatived.

### 3 SINGLE CONSERVATION AGENCY

Ms Lawder, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) the current structure of the ACT Government, where conservation functions are divided between the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate;
  - (b) the importance of our local environment to the wellbeing of the people of the ACT;
  - (c) that the Assembly voted on 20 March 2013 for the Government to establish a single nature conservation agency; and
  - (d) the support for a single nature conservation agency from environmental organisations in the ACT; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to establish a nature conservation agency, located within the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, which will be responsible for all conservation services in the ACT by the financial year beginning on 1 July 2014.

Ms Gallagher (Chief Minister) moved the following amendment: Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“notes:

- (1) the debate in the Assembly on 20 March 2013 in relation to the Government's consideration of establishing a single conservation agency to achieve better integration of biodiversity policy, planning, research and management;
- (2) the implementation of the proposal continues to be currently under consideration by Government; and
- (3) that the timing for administrative changes is at the discretion of the Chief Minister.”.

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly notes:

- (1) the debate in the Assembly on 20 March 2013 in relation to the Government’s consideration of establishing a single conservation agency to achieve better integration of biodiversity policy, planning, research and management;
- (2) the implementation of the proposal continues to be currently under consideration by Government; and
- (3) that the timing for administrative changes is at the discretion of the Chief Minister.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

#### **4 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT**

Ms Berry, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) that employment in the ACT has grown to an all-time high of 213 300 positions in January 2014 from 172 600 positions in October 2001;
  - (b) the recent growth in the Australian Public Service from 56 648 Canberra-based positions in 2007 to 65 353 in 2013;
  - (c) the ACT unemployment rate in January 2014 was 3.8% and the lowest in the country;
  - (d) the impacts that 12 000 job cuts from the Australian Public Service will have on the economy;
  - (e) the infrastructure investments of the ACT Government in the 2013-2014 Budget; and
  - (f) the ongoing work of business and government to strengthen the ACT economy; and
- (2) calls on the Government to continue to:
  - (a) invest in infrastructure projects that provide high quality employment opportunities in the ACT;
  - (b) work with business and unions to create new economic and employment opportunities;
  - (c) support the growth of key sectors such as education, information and communication technology and professional services;
  - (d) support the growth of exports from the Territory; and
  - (e) continue to work with local business to seek transitional support from the Federal Government to offset the negative impact caused to the ACT economy by cuts to the Australian public sector.

Debate ensued.

Mr Hanson (Leader of the Opposition) moved the following amendment: Omit all words after subparagraph (1)(c), substitute:

- “ (d) the impacts that Federal Labor’s 14,500 job cuts from the Australian Public Service will have on the ACT economy;

- (e) the infrastructure investments of the ACT Government in the 2013-2014 Budget; and
  - (f) the ongoing work of business and government to strengthen the ACT economy; and
- (2) calls on the Government to continue to:
- (a) invest in infrastructure projects that provide high quality employment opportunities in the ACT;
  - (b) work to create new economic and employment opportunities;
  - (c) support the growth of key sectors such as education, information and communication technology and professional services;
  - (d) support the growth of exports from the Territory; and
  - (e) support the diversification of the territory's economy.”.

Debate continued.

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

## 5 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice were asked.

## 6 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Ms Berry, and on the amendment moved by Mr Hanson (Leader of the Opposition) (*see entry 4*)—

Debate resumed.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 8		NOES, 9	
Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth	Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	Dr Bourke	Ms Porter
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury
Mrs Jones		Mr Corbell	

And so it was negatived.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and passed.

## 7 LAND RENT SCHEME

Mr Smyth, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) the Government's changes to its Land Rent Scheme as of 1 October 2013 by discontinuing the four per cent rate and increasing the household income threshold by \$65 000; and

- (b) the new initiative's perverse outcome, whereby lessees who earn less money under the pre 1 October 2013 scheme are paying double the land rent rate than lessees in the new scheme; and
- (2) calls on the Government to amend the *Land Rent Act 2008* to include an option for qualifying lessees under the pre 1 October 2013 Land Rent Scheme to change their leases to reflect post 1 October 2013 conditions.

Debate ensued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 8		NOES, 9	
Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth	Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	Dr Bourke	Ms Porter
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury
Mrs Jones		Mr Corbell	

And so it was negatived.

## 8 BUDGET REVIEW 2013-2014

Mr Smyth, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that in the Government's 2013-14 Budget Review released on Wednesday, 12 February 2014:
- the Territory's budget deficit has blown out from \$253.6 million to \$360.6 million (by \$107 million);
  - the Territory will not reach its promised surplus in 2015-16, but will run deficits until 2016-17, forecasting a modest \$11.2 million surplus;
  - during the period between last June's 2013-14 ACT Budget, and the recent Budget Review, the Government's expenses have increased by approximately \$91 million;
  - the Government's poor management of ACTEW has led to dividends being revised downwards by approximately \$121 million over four years and income tax equivalents by \$54.3 million over the same period;
  - the Government continues to slug Canberra residents and businesses with increased taxes, anticipating a \$7.3 million increase in taxation revenue from the 2013-14 ACT Budget; and
  - the Government intends to identify \$38.1 million of savings across the forward estimates period through initiatives such as staffing efficiencies, streamlining of services, and cessation of projects; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- provide a financial breakdown on the elements contributing to its:
    - deficit blow out;
    - increased expenses;
    - increased tax revenues; and
    - savings initiatives; and

- (b) detail the impact of the Budget Review on the community.

Debate ensued.

Mr Barr (Treasurer), by leave, moved the following amendment: Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

- “(1) notes the Government’s 2013-2014 Budget Review released on Wednesday, 12 February 2014 and that:
- (a) the Territory will reach a balanced budget in 2016-17;
  - (b) in 2013-14 the Territory’s budget deficit has increased from \$253.6 million to \$360.6 million. This increase is explained primarily by parameter adjustments, including amended timing in the payment of Commonwealth grants and higher than expected superannuation expenses;
  - (c) in addition, due to the release of the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission’s water and sewerage pricing determination, the dividend and income tax equivalents paid to Government have been revised downwards, respectively, by \$120.7 million and \$54.3 million over four years; and
  - (d) the Review incorporates savings decisions of \$38.1 million of savings across the forward estimates period that focus on improving the administration of Government programs with minimal impact on service delivery and can be broadly categorised as staffing and organisational efficiencies, better targeting of services and other savings, including the cessation of lower priority projects. Further details will be provided in 2014-15 Budget; and
- (2) calls on the Government to continue to manage the ACT Budget in a prudent, open and responsible manner, in particular given uncertainty around continuing contraction by the Commonwealth Government and its current Commission of Audit.”.

Debate continued.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 9		NOES, 8	
Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher	Mr Coe	Ms Lawder
Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman	Mr Dospot	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Porter	Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	
Mr Corbell		Mrs Jones	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the Government’s 2013-2014 Budget Review released on Wednesday, 12 February 2014 and that:
- (a) the Territory will reach a balanced budget in 2016-17;

- (b) in 2013-14 the Territory's budget deficit has increased from \$253.6 million to \$360.6 million. This increase is explained primarily by parameter adjustments, including amended timing in the payment of Commonwealth grants and higher than expected superannuation expenses;
  - (c) in addition, due to the release of the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission's water and sewerage pricing determination, the dividend and income tax equivalents paid to Government have been revised downwards, respectively, by \$120.7 million and \$54.3 million over four years; and
  - (d) the Review incorporates savings decisions of \$38.1 million of savings across the forward estimates period that focus on improving the administration of Government programs with minimal impact on service delivery and can be broadly categorised as staffing and organisational efficiencies, better targeting of services and other savings, including the cessation of lower priority projects. Further details will be provided in 2014-15 Budget; and
- (2) calls on the Government to continue to manage the ACT Budget in a prudent, open and responsible manner, in particular given uncertainty around continuing contraction by the Commonwealth Government and its current Commission of Audit."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

## 9 END-OF-LIFE ISSUES

Ms Porter, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) that the ACT has one of Australia's fastest growing populations of people aged 60 and over, with numbers expected to increase to almost 20% of the population by 2020;
  - (b) that with such an ageing population the need to sustain a conversation, in the general community, on palliative care and end-of-life issues is pertinent;
  - (c) that in September 2013 the Palliative Care Conference that was held in the ACT highlighted the need for such community conversations;
  - (d) that mid next month I'll be hosting a roundtable stakeholder forum on End-of-Life issues;
  - (e) that the Government recently released its comprehensive Palliative Care Services Plan 2013-2017; and
  - (f) that the plan will provide strategic direction for the continued development of palliative care services in the ACT, now and into the future; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
  - (a) continue raising end-of-life, palliative care, and advanced care planning as issues within the ACT community;

- (b) continue to implement recommendations from the ACT Local Hospital Network Council's End-of-Life Issues and Decision Making Forum that was held in May 2013; and
- (c) seriously consider the report resulting from the September 2013 Palliative Care Conference as well as that from next month's End-of-Life forum.

Debate ensued.

Mr Rattenbury addressing the Assembly—

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*Adjournment negatived:* It being 6 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Ms Gallagher (Chief Minister) requiring the question to be put forthwith without debate—

Question—put and negatived.

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Mr Rattenbury continued.

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

## 10 ADJOURNMENT

Ms Gallagher (Chief Minister) moved—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6.45 p.m., adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

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**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE:** All Members were present at some time during the sitting.

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**Tom Duncan**  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly