LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2024–2025

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No 13

THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 2025

1 The Assembly met at 10 am, pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Mr Parton) took the Chair and made the following acknowledgement of country in the Ngunnawal language:

Dhawura nguna, dhawura Ngunnawal.
Yanggu ngalawiri dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari.
Nginggada Dindi wanggiralidjinyin.

This is Ngunnawal country.
Today we are all meeting on Ngunnawal country.
We always pay respect to Elders, female and male.

The Speaker asked Members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

2 PUBLIC UNLEASED LAND ACT—REVIEW—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Ms Cheyne (Minister for City and Government Services) made a ministerial statement concerning the progress of the review and reform of the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013* and presented the following paper:

Review of the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013*—Ministerial statement, 20 March 2025.

Ms Cheyne moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

3 SOCIAL HOUSING ENERGY PERFORMANCE INITIATIVE EXPANSION—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Ms Orr (Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water) made a ministerial statement concerning the expansion of the Social Housing Energy Performance Initiative and presented the following paper:

Social Housing Energy Performance Initiative Expansion—Ministerial statement, 20 March 2025.

Ms Orr moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

4 ARTIST REGISTRY AND SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Mr Pettersson (Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries) made a ministerial statement concerning artist registry and support for the arts and presented the following paper:

Artist Registry and Support for the Arts—Ministerial statement, 20 March 2025.

Mr Pettersson moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

5 HOMELESSNESS—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Ms Berry (Minister for Homes and New Suburbs) made a ministerial statement concerning the Government's commitment to address homelessness and presented the following paper:

Homelessness—Ministerial statement, 20 March 2025.

Ms Berry moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

6 HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICIES—REVIEWS—ORDER TO TABLE

Ms Castley (Leader of the Opposition), pursuant to notice, moved—That, in accordance with standing order 213A, the Assembly orders the Minister for Health to provide the Assembly with:

(1) a list of any inquiries, reviews, and other initiatives which have been commissioned by the Government since 1 July 2019 and relate to the ACT health system;

(2) a list of the recommendations made by each, including the Government's response (if any), the implementation status of each recommendation, and a timeframe for the implementation of any outstanding recommendations; and

(3) a list of any recommendations which were accepted by the Government but which will not be implemented.

Ms Stephen-Smith (Minister for Health) moved the following amendment: Omit all text in paragraphs (1), (2) and (3), substitute:

"(1) a list of any inquiries or reviews commissioned by the Government since 1 July 2019, which relate to the ACT Health Directorate or Canberra Health Services, and that made policy recommendations to the Government;

(2) a list of the recommendations made by each, including the Government's response (if any), the implementation status of each recommendation, and an expected timeframe for the implementation of any incomplete recommendations;

(3) a list of any recommendations which were accepted by the Government but which will not be implemented; and

(4) not withstanding provisions of standing order 213A, material is to be provided by Friday, 2 May 2025.".

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

"That:

(1) in accordance with standing order 213A, the Assembly orders the Minister for Health to provide the Assembly with:

(a) a list of any inquiries or reviews commissioned by the Government since 1 July 2019, which relate to the ACT Health Directorate or Canberra Health Services, and that made policy recommendations to the Government;

(b) a list of the recommendations made by each, including the Government's response (if any), the implementation status of each recommendation, and an expected timeframe for the implementation of any incomplete recommendations;

(c) a list of any recommendations which were accepted by the Government but which will not be implemented; and

(2) not withstanding provisions of standing order 213A, material is to be provided by Friday, 2 May 2025."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

7 SHORT-TERM RENTAL ACCOMMODATION LEVY BILL 2025

Mr Steel (Treasurer), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to impose a levy on short-term rental accommodation bookings, and for other purposes.

Paper: Mr Steel presented the following paper:

Explanatory statement to the Bill, incorporating a compatibility statement, pursuant to section 37 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Title read by Clerk.

Mr Steel moved—That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Debate adjourned (Mr Cocks) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

8 HERITAGE AND PLANNING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Mr Steel (Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend legislation about heritage and planning.

Paper: Mr Steel presented the following paper:

Explanatory statement to the Bill, incorporating a compatibility statement, pursuant to section 37 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Title read by Clerk.

Mr Steel moved—That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Debate adjourned (Mr Cocks) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

9 APPROPRIATION BILL 2024-2025 (NO 2)

The Assembly, according to order, resumed consideration at the detail stage—

Detail Stage

Clauses 1 to 7, by leave, taken together—debated and agreed to.

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure—

Part 1.1—ACT Local Hospital Network and Part 1.2—ACT Health Directorate, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Part 1.3—Community Services Directorate—debated and agreed to.

Part 1.4—Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate—

Debate continued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 14		NOES, 9	
Yvette Berry	Michael Pettersson	Chiaka Barry	Mark Parton
Andrew Braddock	Shane Rattenbury	Peter Cain	
Tara Cheyne	Chris Steel	Fiona Carrick	
Jo Clay	Rachel Stephen-Smith	Leanne Castley	
Thomas Emerson	Caitlin Tough	Ed Cocks	
Laura Nuttall	Taimus Werner-Gibbings	Jeremy Hanson	
Suzanne Orr		James Milligan	
Marisa Paterson		Deborah Morris	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Part 1.5—Justice and Community Safety Directorate—debated and agreed to.

Total appropriated to territory entities—agreed to.

Part 1.6—Treasurer's Advance—agreed to.

Total appropriations—agreed to.

Title—debated and agreed to.

Question—That this Bill be agreed to—put and passed.

10 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice were asked.

11 QUESTION TIME—CONDUCT—STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

The Speaker made a statement concerning the conduct of question time.

12 PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Ms Cheyne (Manager of Government Business), pursuant to standing order 211, presented the following papers:

Education and Care Services Ombudsman and National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information & Privacy Commissioners—Annual Report—

2022-2023, dated 14 March 2024.

2023-2024, dated 3 December 2024.

13 PLANNING (AINSLIE VOLCANICS) AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Mr Rattenbury, pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend the *Planning Act 2023*.

Paper: Mr Rattenbury presented an explanatory statement to the Bill.

Title read by Clerk.

Mr Rattenbury moved—That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Debate adjourned (Mr Steel—Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

14 COERCIVE CONTROL—CRIMINALISATION

Ms Castley (Leader of the Opposition), pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) coercive control is a pattern of abusive behaviour used to dominate, intimidate, and manipulate victims, often leading to significant psychological and emotional harm;

(b) domestic and family violence remains a pressing concern in the ACT, with coercive control being a key factor in many abusive relationships, and a precedent for almost all intimate partner domestic violence homicides;

(c) several Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania have moved to criminalise coercive control to provide better protection for victims and hold perpetrators accountable; and

(d) law reform in this area must balance the need to protect victims with safeguards to uphold due process, ensuring that laws are clear, enforceable, and do not inadvertently criminalise ordinary relationship disputes or misunderstandings;

(2) acknowledges that:

(a) there is strong community and expert support for criminalising coercive control as part of a broader strategy to combat domestic and family violence, including support from the Australian Federal Police Association;

(b) the ACT Government has a responsibility to ensure its legal framework adequately protects victims while safeguarding individual liberties and preventing wrongful convictions; and

(c) effective reform requires thorough consultation with legal experts, law enforcement, victims' advocates, and the broader community to ensure a workable and effective legislative response, supported by a community education campaign; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) introduce legislation to criminalise coercive control in the ACT, ensuring it is clearly defined and includes appropriate evidentiary standards and legal safeguards, consistent with the approach of New South Wales;

(b) conduct a comprehensive review of existing domestic violence laws to identify gaps and ensure consistency with any new coercive control offence;

(c) provide improved support and resources for victims, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, through education, advocacy services, and enhanced law enforcement training to better identify and respond to coercive control; and

(d) report back to the Assembly within six months on progress towards drafting and introducing this legislation.

Dr Paterson (Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) moved the following amendment: Omit all text after "That this Assembly:", substitute:

"(1) notes that:

(a) coercive control is a pattern of abusive behaviour used to control and dominate a person by creating fear and denying their liberty and autonomy. Coercive control can involve physical or non-physical violence or a combination of both and has a devastating impact on a victim's identity, their physical health and social and emotional wellbeing, and their connection with friends, family and culture;

(b) domestic and family violence is a national crisis, and multiple Death Review Reports have found that coercive control is present in almost all intimate partner homicides;

(c) several Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania have moved to criminalise coercive control to provide better protection for victims and hold perpetrators accountable; and

(d) law reform in this area must be carefully considered to avoid misidentification of the primary aggressor and ensure police and other justice stakeholders are equipped to understand and enforce the law appropriately;

(2) acknowledges that:

(a) there is community and expert support for criminalising coercive control as part of a broader strategy to combat domestic and family violence, including support from the Australian Federal Police Association; and

(b) effective reform requires thorough consultation with legal experts, law enforcement, victims' advocates, and the broader community to ensure a workable and effective legislative response, supported by a community education campaign; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) consult with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council in relation to best practice responses to coercive control;

(b) continue to develop the ACT's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy with specialist ACT agencies to ensure a coordinated response to domestic, family and sexual violence;

(c) conduct a review of legislation relating to the criminalisation of coercive control nationally to assess implementation, effectiveness and identify any gaps, assess the ACT's current legislative framework in so far as it captures coercive control, and introduce legislation informed by the review;

(d) enhance support and resources for people experiencing coercive control and improve awareness of, and responses to, coercive control in the ACT community;

(e) increase the capacity of frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services to respond to coercive control;

(f) improve the provision of training and education to police and other justice agencies, including the judiciary, in relation to coercive control; and

(g) report back to the Assembly within six months on progress in relation to these activities, including in relation to a timeline for legislation.".

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

"That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) coercive control is a pattern of abusive behaviour used to control and dominate a person by creating fear and denying their liberty and autonomy. Coercive control can involve physical or non-physical violence or a combination of both and has a devastating impact on a victim's identity, their physical health and social and emotional wellbeing, and their connection with friends, family and culture;

(b) domestic and family violence is a national crisis, and multiple Death Review Reports have found that coercive control is present in almost all intimate partner homicides;

(c) several Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania have moved to criminalise coercive control to provide better protection for victims and hold perpetrators accountable; and

(d) law reform in this area must be carefully considered to avoid misidentification of the primary aggressor and ensure police and other justice stakeholders are equipped to understand and enforce the law appropriately;

(4) acknowledges that:

(a) there is community and expert support for criminalising coercive control as part of a broader strategy to combat domestic and family violence, including support from the Australian Federal Police Association; and

(b) effective reform requires thorough consultation with legal experts, law enforcement, victims' advocates, and the broader community to ensure a workable and effective legislative response, supported by a community education campaign; and

(5) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) consult with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council in relation to best practice responses to coercive control;

(b) continue to develop the ACT's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy with specialist ACT agencies to ensure a coordinated response to domestic, family and sexual violence;

(c) conduct a review of legislation relating to the criminalisation of coercive control nationally to assess implementation, effectiveness and identify any gaps, assess the ACT's current legislative framework in so far as it captures coercive control, and introduce legislation informed by the review;

(d) enhance support and resources for people experiencing coercive control and improve awareness of, and responses to, coercive control in the ACT community;

(e) increase the capacity of frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services to respond to coercive control;

(f) improve the provision of training and education to police and other justice agencies, including the judiciary, in relation to coercive control; and

(g) report back to the Assembly within six months on progress in relation to these activities, including in relation to a timeline for legislation."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

15 PRESENTATION OF PAPER

The Clerk presented the following paper, pursuant to standing order 213A and the resolution of the Assembly of 6 March 2025, together with the transmittal letter from the Head of Service, ACT Government to the Clerk, dated 20 March 2025:

Ministerial staffing expenditure—Order to table—Copy of statement of response from the ACT Chief Minister—Breakdown of ministerial staffing expenditure for the current financial year and last five financial years.

16 WODEN TOWN CENTRE WORKING GROUP—ESTABLISHMENT

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

(1) notes that:

(a) the Woden Town Centre has undergone dramatic physical and demographic change over recent years, with the construction of dozens of high-density apartment towers;

(b) there has been a significant loss of sport and recreation facilities from the Woden Town Centre including the basketball stadium, bowling greens, bowling alley, tennis courts, YMCA gym, pitch and putt, and the outdoor 50 metre Phillip pool and ice rink which are planned to close;

(c) public transport services within the Woden Town Centre have been reduced, with no services currently providing access to the supermarkets, health centre and library located on the western side of the town centre;

(d) there is serious traffic congestion within the Woden Town Centre, with long queues affecting Corrina Street and often backing onto Melrose Drive;

(e) the community has reported growing anti-social behaviour around the Woden Town Centre, including the burning of a car within the Melrose Drive underpass which has led to the closure for many months of this critical pedestrian and cycling access point; and

(f) homeless people are sleeping rough in and around the Woden Town Centre;

(2) further notes that the:

(a) new campus of the Canberra Institute of Technology is due to open this year to deliver education and training to 6,500 students; and

(b) the lack of holistic, coordinated planning has contributed to a significant decline in community amenity in the Woden Town Centre; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to establish a cross-directorate working group by June 2025 to identify opportunities to improve the town centre, including its adjacent residential communities, incorporating a holistic view of the physical, business and social aspects of the Woden Town Centre, including:

(a) articulating the direction of future land uses, major transport networks, open space and activity centres within the precinct, including highlighting opportunities for the planning system to support social and economic activity;

(b) in consultation with the community, identify sites for an aquatic centre, indoor sports stadium and arts centre to meet the needs of the growing community in the town centre's large catchment;

(c) identifying improvements to the pedestrian, vehicle, public transport and social connectivity within and through the town centre that will be required to meet the current and future needs of the community;

(d) enhancing the tree canopy and biodiversity through the Woden Town Centre and surrounding areas, particularly Yarralumla Creek;

(e) coordinating with the development of the Southern Gateway Planning Framework; and

(f) providing a progress report to the Assembly by the last sitting day of 2025.

Ms Carrick sought leave to be granted an extension of time to conclude her speech.

Objection being raised, leave not granted.

Suspension of standing orders—Extension of time to conclude speech: Mr Hanson moved—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Ms Carrick from being granted an extension of time to conclude her speech.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and negatived.

Debate continued.

Mr Steel (Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development) moved the following amendment: After paragraph (3)(f), add new paragraph:

"(4) further calls on the Government to consider the declaration of an urban renewal precinct for the Light Rail Stage 2B corridor between the city and the Woden Valley.".

Ms Carrick moved the following amendment to Mr Steel's proposed amendment: After "Woden Valley", add "including the Woden Town Centre".

Debate continued.

Amendment to amendment agreed to.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Ms Clay, by leave, moved the following amendments to the motion, as amended, together:

1. In paragraph (3), after "June 2025", omit "to", substitute "and in consultation with the community".

2. In paragraph (3)(b), omit "in consultation with the community".

3. After paragraph (3)(d), insert the following new paragraphs:

"(e) investigating residential towers in the Woden Town Centre to ensure they are socially and environmentally sustainable and well-adapted to the changing climate;

(f) reviewing current levels of homelessness and community sector support services and identifying sites for new homelessness and community services as part of the Woden Town Centre development;

(g) ensuring there are adequate sites available for public housing, for community housing and for affordable housing so people stay in their community if they wish to and there are affordable options for people moving into the area;".

Debate continued.

Amendments agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

"That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) the Woden Town Centre has undergone dramatic physical and demographic change over recent years, with the construction of dozens of high-density apartment towers;

(b) there has been a significant loss of sport and recreation facilities from the Woden Town Centre including the basketball stadium, bowling greens, bowling alley, tennis courts, YMCA gym, pitch and putt, and the outdoor 50 metre Phillip pool and ice rink which are planned to close;

(c) public transport services within the Woden Town Centre have been reduced, with no services currently providing access to the supermarkets, health centre and library located on the western side of the town centre;

(d) there is serious traffic congestion within the Woden Town Centre, with long queues affecting Corrina Street and often backing onto Melrose Drive;

(e) the community has reported growing anti-social behaviour around the Woden Town Centre, including the burning of a car within the Melrose Drive underpass which has led to the closure for many months of this critical pedestrian and cycling access point; and

(f) homeless people are sleeping rough in and around the Woden Town Centre;

(2) further notes that the:

(a) new campus of the Canberra Institute of Technology is due to open this year to deliver education and training to 6,500 students; and

(b) the lack of holistic, coordinated planning has contributed to a significant decline in community amenity in the Woden Town Centre; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to establish a cross-directorate working group by June 2025, and in consultation with the community, identify opportunities to improve the town centre, including its adjacent residential communities, incorporating a holistic view of the physical, business and social aspects of the Woden Town Centre, including:

(a) articulating the direction of future land uses, major transport networks, open space and activity centres within the precinct, including highlighting opportunities for the planning system to support social and economic activity;

(b) identifying sites for an aquatic centre, indoor sports stadium and arts centre to meet the needs of the growing community in the town centre's large catchment;

(c) identifying improvements to the pedestrian, vehicle, public transport and social connectivity within and through the town centre that will be required to meet the current and future needs of the community;

(d) enhancing the tree canopy and biodiversity through the Woden Town Centre and surrounding areas, particularly Yarralumla Creek;

(e) investigating residential towers in the Woden Town Centre to ensure they are socially and environmentally sustainable and well-adapted to the changing climate;

(f) reviewing current levels of homelessness and community sector support services and identifying sites for new homelessness and community services as part of the Woden Town Centre development;

(g) ensuring there are adequate sites available for public housing, for community housing and for affordable housing so people stay in their community if they wish to and there are affordable options for people moving into the area;

(h) coordinating with the development of the Southern Gateway Planning Framework; and

(i) providing a progress report to the Assembly by the last sitting day of 2025; and

(4) further calls on the Government to consider the declaration of an urban renewal precinct for the Light Rail Stage 2B corridor between the city and the Woden Valley, including the Woden Town Centre."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

17 PAPERS PRESENTED ON 20 MARCH 2025—PAPERS NOTED

The Speaker, pursuant to standing order 211A, proposed—That the papers presented under standing order 211 during the presentation of papers in the routine of business today be noted.

Question—put and passed.

18 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Members' statements were made.

19 ADJOURNMENT

Ms Cheyne (Manager of Government Business) moved—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6.11 pm, adjourned until Tuesday, 8 April 2025 at 10 am.

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

*on leave.

Tom Duncan
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly