



Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

Sitting week—23-27 September 2019

Issue 11/2019

Government Business

Includes business items presented to the Assembly by the Executive including bills, motions, and papers

Bills introduced

[Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2019](#) (presented 26 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Electoral Act 1992* and the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013*. The amendments include allowing voters to enrol to vote in an election up to and including on election day, require the full given name and surname of a person and the name of an entity (where electoral matter is published on behalf of an entity) to be shown in an authorisation statement, and allows an authorised person to immediately remove electoral advertising signs from public unleased land, where the signs are not compliant with statutory requirements, without providing prior notice to the owner of the sign.

[Evidence \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Amendment Bill 2019](#) (presented 24 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1991* and the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulation 2009*. The bill will establish the legislative framework for the use of intermediaries and ground rules hearings in criminal proceedings, which will include requiring intermediaries to be appointed for all child complainants in sexual offence proceedings and all child witnesses in homicide proceedings, subject to some exceptions.

[Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2019](#) (presented 26 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to give effect to legislative recommendations from the 2016 review of the Act. These amendments include reducing the maximum rent payable in advance to two weeks, adds cooling to the list of urgent repairs, and increases the notice period required for landlords to terminate a periodic lease where the landlord or a person close to them wishes to move into the premises from four weeks to eight weeks.

Bills debated

[Animal Welfare Legislation Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend a number of Territory laws relating to animal management and welfare in the Territory to strengthen the legislation and improve the quality of life for animals

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 26 September with the bill being agreed to in principle. Amendments were then moved and debated by the Government, Opposition and ACT Greens.

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

[Courts \(Fair Work and Work Safety\) Legislation Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend a number of Territory laws to support the instigation and conduct of fair work proceedings in the Magistrates Court and facilitate the trial of corporations for industrial manslaughter under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 24 September with the legislation receiving tri-partisan support. The bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly.

[Freedom of Information Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* to improve and streamline processing of freedom of information access applications and reviews, and to provide greater flexibility in managing workflows, which includes allowing respondent agencies to manage situations where they are not able to contact an applicant to clarify the scope of the information sought, or to confirm that an applicant wishes to proceed where an estimate of fees has been issued.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 26 September with the legislation receiving tri-partisan support. The bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly.

[Health Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Health Act 1993* and the *Sex Work Act 1992*. The amendments will include nurse practitioners as a class of health practitioners that may be reviewed and credentialed for clinical privileges by a Scope of Clinical Practice Committee.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 24 September with the legislation receiving tri-partisan support and the bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly.

[Public Sector Management Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* to strengthen the existing ACT Public Service employment framework and provide greater alignment within the existing employment framework to ensure that the legislation operates effectively. The amendments include authorising the sharing of new-starter information with the relevant unions and changing how long service leave is calculated.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 26 September with the Opposition indicating they would not support the legislation. The ACT Greens indicated they would support the legislation. Following a vote of the Assembly the bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly.

[Sentencing \(Drug and Alcohol Treatment Orders\) Legislation Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend a number of Territory laws to establish processes for issuing a Drug and Alcohol Treatment Order (DATO) as an alternative sentence to imprisonment. The amendments include, providing legislative authority for the ACT Drug and Alcohol Court to operate in the Supreme Court, creating eligibility criteria in relation to offences and offenders, and creating a new sentence of a stand-alone DATO.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 24 September with the Opposition and the ACT Greens indicating they would be supporting the legislation and the Government's further amendments. The bill was then agreed to in principle. The Government moved amendments to the bill, which were agreed to by the Assembly.

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

A full record of the debates can be accessed at [Hansard](#).

Ministerial statements

The Minister for Health made a ministerial statement on 24 September providing an update on a **meningococcal B vaccination program for babies**. The Minister stated that the meningococcal B strain has now become extremely rare, with only four confirmed cases of the strain since 2014. However, rates of other meningococcal diseases have increased in Australia. The Minister also stated that the ACT Government responded to this emerging threat with the introduction of a free adolescent MenACWY vaccination program in place of a MenB vaccination for babies, and that in its first year, the MenACWY adolescent vaccination program reached close to 80 percent of the ACT year 10 student population group.

On 24 September the Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety provided an annual ministerial statement to the Assembly on the **Workplace Safety Performance for 2018-19**. The Minister stated that more than 1 600 ACT private sector workers were injured so badly at work that they had to take time off and in the same period, an additional 200 ACT public sector workers were injured so seriously that they

were unable to return to their jobs for more than a week. The Minister also stated that the 2018-19 financial year saw a range of ACT Government initiatives make a positive contribution to injury prevention and management performance, such as the ACT Government implementing a contractor certification scheme that requires all tenderers and contractors for ACT Government construction, cleaning, security and traffic management work to be periodically audited against workplace standards.

The following ministerial statements were made on 26 September—

2019-20 Bushfire season made by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Biannual update on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Final Report—Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services made by the Minister for Health.

The full text of the statements made by Ministers and Members can be accessed from the [Assembly Hansard](#) site.

Private Members' Business

Includes items presented to the Assembly by all non-Executive Members, including bills and motions

Bills debated

[Drugs of Dependence \(Personal Cannabis Use\) Amendment Bill 2018](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the Drugs of Dependence Act 1989 to allow for the personal use and carrying of cannabis up to a limit of 50 grams. The bill will also allow individuals to grow up to four cannabis plants, excluding artificial crop growing.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 25 September with the Opposition indicating they would oppose the bill. The ACT Greens indicated they would support the legislation but would also be moving amendments to bill. Following a vote by the Assembly the bill was agreed to in principle. The Government and the ACT Greens then moved amendments to the bill.

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

Motions debated

On 25 September, Ms Lawder moved a motion for debate in relation to the **deaf and deafblind community**. The motion including calling on the ACT Government to immediately provide appropriate mental health services for deaf and deafblind ACT residents, preferably through re-instating the previous contracted psychologist with Auslan skills. During debate the Government moved amendments to the motion which called on the ACT Government to consult with key stakeholders, including the Deaf Society, Office for Disability, and mental health and disability services, to ascertain any concerns held by the deaf and deafblind community in the ACT about mental health service provision or gaps that may exist, and report back to the Assembly by the last sitting week of the year. The Opposition moved an amendment to the proposed Government amendment's which would add the deaf and deafblind consumer and their representative organisations into the list of stakeholders the Government is to consult with. The amendments were agreed to.

The amended motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

The **ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25** was the subject of a motion debated on 25 September by Mr Gupta MLA. The motion included noting that the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25 is implementing measures that support all Canberra households in the ACT and is improving the liveability of the entire city in response to global climate change, and outlines how achieving 100 percent renewable electricity, a 40 per cent reduction in emissions by 2020, and zero net emission by 2045 will assist households to save on energy costs. During debate the ACT Greens indicated their support for the motion. The Opposition moved an amendment to the motion which noted that the comprehensive awareness program must be undertaken before 31 December 2019 and the Government must provide a report to the Assembly in February 2020 about the activities undertaken. The motion was then adjourned until the next sitting.

On 25 September the Speaker **ruled that Notice No 5, Private Members' business, was out-of-order** as it contravened standing order 136, in that it was the same in substance as previous motions that were debated in the Assembly in May and August of this year in relation to Network19 school bus and weekend bus services. The Opposition moved that the Speaker's ruling be dissented from. During debate the Government and ACT Greens indicated they would not support the dissent motion.

Following a vote, the motion was not agreed to by the Assembly.

Other motions debated on 25 September related to:

Alexander Maconochie Centre—Accommodation and facilities for women—Mrs Jones MLA

The full debate on the above motions can be accessed from the Assembly [Hansard](#) site.

Matters of public importance

The following matters of public importance were discussed in the Assembly this week—

The importance of Canberrans understanding their obligation to report suspected child abuse following implementation of the Royal Commission recommendation—Mr Pettersson MLA.

The importance of considering loneliness as a public health issue—Ms Le Couteur MLA

Papers Presented

The following are papers of interest that were presented during the sitting week:

- Auditor-General's Reports—
No 5/2019—Management of the System-Wide Data Review implementation program—
Government response
No 6/2019—ICT Strategic Planning—Government response (*presented by the Manager of Government Business on 24 September 2019*)
- Network19—Impact on students—Response to the resolution of the Assembly of 15 May 2019 (*presented by the Manager of Government Business on 24 September 2019*)
- ACT Ombudsman—Report on the operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016—2018-19*, dated 30 September 2019 (*presented by the Speaker on 26 September 2019*)

- Estimates 2019-2020—Select Committee—Report—Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2019-2020—Information in accordance with the Government response to Recommendations 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 (*presented by the Manager of Government Business on 26 September 2019*)

Committee Activities

Committee reports presented

Scrutiny Committee

[Scrutiny Report 35](#) (*presented 24 September*)

This report contained the committee's comments on nine pieces of subordinate legislation, proposed government amendments to two bills and seven government responses.

Committee statements

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

The chair of the Committee made a statement on 24 September in relation to the consideration of statutory appointments by the Committee for the period 1 January to 30 June 2019.

Responses to committee reports

Estimates 2019-2020—Select Committee

Report—Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2019-2020—[Government Response to Recommendations 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69](#) (*presented by the Manager of Government Business on 26 September*)

Committee membership

Integrity Commission—Standing Committee

Mr Wall MLA has been discharged from the Committee and Ms Lee MLA has been appointed in his place.

Education Activities

Information on our various program offerings are available on the Assembly's [website](#).

Members of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Electorate of Brindabella

Ms Joy Burch (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Mick Gentleman (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Nicole Lawder (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Mark Parton (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Andrew Wall (Canberra Liberals)

Electorate of Ginninderra

Ms Yvette Berry (Australian Labor Party)
Ms Tara Cheyne (Australian Labor Party)
Mrs Vicki Dunne (Canberra Liberals)
Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert (Canberra Liberals)
Mr Gordon Ramsay (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Kurrajong

Mr Andrew Barr (Australian Labor Party)
Miss Candice Burch (Canberra Liberals)
Ms Elizabeth Lee (Canberra Liberals)
Mr Shane Rattenbury (ACT Greens)
Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Murrumbidgee

Ms Bec Cody (Australian Labor Party)
Mr Jeremy Hanson CSC (Canberra Liberals)
Mrs Giulia Jones (Canberra Liberals)
Ms Caroline Le Couteur (ACT Greens)
Mr Chris Steel (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Yerrabi

Mr Alistair Coe (Canberra Liberals)
Mr Deepak Gupta (Australian Labor Party)
Mr James Milligan (Canberra Liberals)
Ms Suzanne Orr (Australian Labor Party)
Mr Michael Pettersson (Australian Labor Party)

Next Sitting

Tuesday, 22 October 2019.

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