



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2020–2021

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No 10

WEDNESDAY, 21 APRIL 2021

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- 1 The Assembly met at 10 am, pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Ms Burch) 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 dhawura Ngounaawalbun yindjumaralidjinyin.

*This is Ngunnawal Country.*

*Today we are gathering on Ngunnawal country.*

*We always pay respect to Elders, female and male, and Ngunnawal country.*

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

### 2 CORRECTION—STATEMENT BY MEMBER

Mr Parton, by leave, made a statement regarding a quote he had misattributed to Mr Davis the previous day.

### 3 APPROPRIATION BILL 2020-2021

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

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*Detail Stage*

**Schedule 1—Appropriations—**

Consideration resumed on Part 1.5— Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Debate continued.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Part 1.6—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Debate continued.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Part 1.7—Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

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.

**4 QUESTIONS**

Questions without notice were asked.

**5 PUBLIC HOUSING—MAINTENANCE**

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

(1) notes:

- (a) the importance of public housing residents' reasonable entitlement to a dwelling that is structurally safe to live in;
- (b) the Government's obligation to provide public housing dwellings that are free of risks to the health and safety of their residents;
- (c) the Government requires its public housing maintenance contractor to comply with rigorous standards for rectification of health and safety risks;
- (d) in 2019-20, Housing ACT reported it had received more than 1 100 complaints related to maintenance and property condition issues, amounting to almost 42 percent of all complaints;
- (e) many residents advise that neglect of their dwellings creates stress and fears for their safety particularly where they are living in dangerous or intimidating neighbourhoods;
- (f) public housing tenants say they feel helpless and are being ignored when they seek help on fixing the poor condition of their dwellings; and
- (g) significant numbers of public housing tenants are reaching out to their local members for help on remediating critical health and safety issues;

- (2) further notes the Government:
  - (a) is allocating more than \$650 million capital expenditure on new construction and public housing renewals, but at the same time, forcing some residents to live in unsatisfactory conditions; and
  - (b) has an ethical and social obligation to ensure its public housing tenants are living in safe and health compliant dwellings; and
- (3) calls on the Government as a matter of urgency to:
  - (a) undertake a stocktake of its public housing to determine the condition of each dwelling;
  - (b) commit to a program to determine the actions and work required to rectify all dwellings that are in breach of, or below health and safety standards;
  - (c) allocate sufficient funds to have all significant maintenance requests including for health and safety defects resolved no later than 31 August 2021;
  - (d) ensure the provisions and performance benchmarks in the facilities maintenance contract for public housing are enforced; and
  - (e) report back to this Assembly before mid-October on progress made in resolving maintenance backlog impacting on tenants' health and safety.

Ms Berry moved the following amendment: Omit all words after "(1) notes:" and substitute:

- “(a) the importance of all tenants', public and private, reasonable entitlement to a dwelling that is structurally safe to live in;
  - (b) a landlord's obligation to provide dwellings that are free of risks to the health and safety of their residents;
  - (c) the Government requires its public housing maintenance contractor to comply with rigorous standards for rectification of health and safety risks; and
  - (d) in 2019-20, Housing ACT reported it had received more than 1 100 complaints related to maintenance and property condition issues, amounting to almost 42 percent of all complaints;
- (2) notes:
    - (a) the ACT Government is investing over \$1 billion over 10 years to grow and renew public housing to provide more homes and meet the needs of tenants;
    - (b) the ACT Government invests over \$40 million every year to maintain public housing properties;
    - (c) the ACT Government spent an additional \$8.9 million in public housing maintenance and energy efficiency upgrades and to support local jobs through COVID-19; and

- (d) all landlords have an ethical and social obligation to ensure tenants are living in safe and health compliant dwellings; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:
  - (a) continue the stocktake of public housing dwellings to determine the condition and future of each dwelling;
  - (b) reaffirm its commitment that all public housing dwellings meet health and safety standards;
  - (c) explore options to provide further support to local industry through public housing maintenance and upgrades;
  - (d) continue to ensure the provisions and performance benchmarks in the facilities maintenance contract for public housing are enforced; and
  - (e) report back to this Assembly by the last sitting week in October on progress of the growth and renewal program and public housing stock.”

Debate continued.

Question—That Ms Berry’s amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 15		NOES, 8
Mr Barr	Ms Orr	Mr Cain
Ms Berry	Dr Paterson	Ms Castley
Ms Burch	Mr Pettersson	Mr Hanson
Ms Cheyne	Mr Rattenbury	Mrs Jones
Ms Clay	Mr Steel	Mrs Kikkert
Ms Davidson	Ms Stephen-Smith	Ms Lawder
Mr Davis	Ms Vassarotti	Mr Milligan
Mr Gentleman		Mr Parton

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) the importance of all tenants’, public and private, reasonable entitlement to a dwelling that is structurally safe to live in;
  - (b) a landlord’s obligation to provide dwellings that are free of risks to the health and safety of their residents;
  - (c) the Government requires its public housing maintenance contractor to comply with rigorous standards for rectification of health and safety risks; and
  - (d) in 2019-20, Housing ACT reported it had received more than 1 100 complaints related to maintenance and property condition issues, amounting to almost 42 percent of all complaints;

- (4) notes:
- (a) the ACT Government is investing over \$1 billion over 10 years to grow and renew public housing to provide more homes and meet the needs of tenants;
  - (b) the ACT Government invests over \$40 million every year to maintain public housing properties;
  - (c) the ACT Government spent an additional \$8.9 million in public housing maintenance and energy efficiency upgrades and to support local jobs through COVID-19; and
  - (d) all landlords have an ethical and social obligation to ensure tenants are living in safe and health compliant dwellings; and
- (5) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) continue the stocktake of public housing dwellings to determine the condition and future of each dwelling;
  - (b) reaffirm its commitment that all public housing dwellings meet health and safety standards;
  - (c) explore options to provide further support to local industry through public housing maintenance and upgrades;
  - (d) continue to ensure the provisions and performance benchmarks in the facilities maintenance contract for public housing are enforced; and
  - (e) report back to this Assembly by the last sitting week in October on progress of the growth and renewal program and public housing stock.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

## 6 DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE

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

- (1) notes that:
- (a) there is a need for improved design and infrastructure to meet the needs of individuals with dementia in Canberra;
  - (b) having “dementia-friendly design” (as recommended by Dementia Australia) of venues and infrastructure will decrease the risk of social isolation for older individuals;
  - (c) social inclusion is an integral part of improving mental health in older Canberrans;
  - (d) access to places that provide social opportunities such as our national institutions and tourist locations should be open to everyone;
  - (e) there are currently no set standards for physical environments to ensure that they allow for people with dementia to engage safely and as independently as possible with these built environments; and

- (f) the Federal Government committed an additional \$132.2 million to Dementia Australia in December 2020 in response to the Aged Care Royal Commission’s recommendations on COVID-19; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
  - (a) investigate how to make Canberra a more dementia-friendly city;
  - (b) formally incorporate these findings into the Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024 and outline a timeframe for when the implementation process must be completed by; and
  - (c) report these findings and table the updated Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024 to the Assembly by the end of September 2021.

Ms Davidson moved the following amendment: Omit (2) (b) and (c) and substitute:

- “(b) progress these findings within the Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024 actions; and
- (c) report these findings as part of regular annual reporting on the Age Friendly City Plan 2020-2024.”

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that:
  - (a) there is a need for improved design and infrastructure to meet the needs of individuals with dementia in Canberra;
  - (b) having “dementia-friendly design” (as recommended by Dementia Australia) of venues and infrastructure will decrease the risk of social isolation for older individuals;
  - (c) social inclusion is an integral part of improving mental health in older Canberrans;
  - (d) access to places that provide social opportunities such as our national institutions and tourist locations should be open to everyone;
  - (e) there are currently no set standards for physical environments to ensure that they allow for people with dementia to engage safely and as independently as possible with these built environments; and
  - (f) the Federal Government committed an additional \$132.2 million to Dementia Australia in December 2020 in response to the Aged Care Royal Commission’s recommendations on COVID-19; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
  - (a) investigate how to make Canberra a more dementia-friendly city;
  - (b) progress these finding within the Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024 actions; and

- (c) report these findings as part of regular annual reporting on the Age Friendly City Plan 2020-2024.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

## **7 APPROPRIATION BILL 2020-2021**

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

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*Detail Stage*

Schedule 1—Appropriations—

Consideration resumed on Part 1.7—Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Debate continued.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Consideration resumed on Part 1.8—Community Services Directorate.

Debate continued.

Debate adjourned (Mr Gentleman—Manager of Government Business) and resumption of debate made an order for the next day of sitting.

## **8 ADJOURNMENT**

Mr Gentleman (Manager of Government Business) moved—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6:38 pm adjourned until tomorrow at 10 am.

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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