Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

Non sitting and sitting weeks—2 December 2018 to 15 February 2019
Issue 1/2019

Condolence Motion

On 14 February a condolence motion was moved by the Chief Minister in relation to the death of the former Magistrate Mr Shane Madden.

The Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the ACT Greens also spoke to the motion and at the conclusion all Members of the Assembly stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Government Business

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

Bills introduced

Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 (presented 14 February)

This bill will amend a number of Territory laws to improve the administration and operation of the ACT tax system for the benefit of both taxpayers and administrators. The amendments include providing the ACT Revenue Office with the ability to inform parties who have an interest in the property of a defaulting taxpayer, such as mortgagees or credit providers, of the amount of an outstanding tax debt and the existence of a statutory first charge. It also allows for a limited exemption from land tax for private properties rented through a community housing provider.

Bills debated

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment Bill 2018

Summary: This bill will amend the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1997 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Regulation 1998 to provide birth parents the right to choose whether to register a fetus as a stillborn child where it showed no sign of heartbeat before reaching 20 weeks’ gestation but was born during or after 20 weeks’ gestation.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 14 February with all parties in the Assembly supporting the passage of the proposed legislation.

The bill was agreed to by the Assembly without amendment.
Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Bill 2018

Summary: This bill will amend the Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987 by substituting references to “institute” with CIT and to align language in the Act to better reflect CIT’s established policies. The amendments will also reduce the minimum number of board members, discontinue ACT Government board member appointments and revise board membership eligibility criteria.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 12 February with all parties in the Assembly supporting the passage of the proposed legislation and the bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was agreed to by the Assembly without amendment.

Consumer Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Summary: This bill will amend the Eggs (Labelling and Sale) Act 2001, the Fair Trading (Fuel Prices) Act 1993 and the Animal Welfare Act 1992 by improving consumer protection to ensure consumers are provided clear and accurate information when purchasing free-range eggs and fuel. The bill will also update the Territory’s regulation of free-range eggs and create the new Eggs (Labelling and Sale) Regulation 2018. Changes to the Territory’s regulation of the display of fuel price boards are also included in the bill.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 14 February with all parties in the Assembly supporting the passage of the proposed legislation and the bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was agreed to by the Assembly without amendment.

Electoral Amendment Bill 2018

Summary: This bill will amend the Electoral Act 1992 to prohibit property developers and close associates giving gifts to political entities and will place a prohibition on political entities accepting such gifts. The bill also amends the definition of gift and amends the timeframe for reporting of gifts received over the $1,000 threshold.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 12 February with the bill being agreed to in principle followed by the bill being adjourned for debate at a later sitting.

A full record of the debates can be accessed at Hansard.

Ministerial statements

The Government priorities for 2019 was the subject of a ministerial statement made by the Chief Minister on 12 February. During the statement the Chief Minister outlined what the Government had promised Canberrans in 2016 and is now delivering, including development of an integrated public transport network for Canberra, a fairer tax system, increased investment in better local schools and public healthcare, the shift to powering Canberra with 100 per cent renewable electricity, inclusive social policies, attracting new businesses and creating good jobs in key industry sectors by opening Canberra to the world.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services made a ministerial statement on 12 February relating to the report on the ACT Ambulance Service Blueprint for Change. The Minister provided an update to the
Assembly on each of the eight recommendations from the report which included adoption of an implementation charter, professionalism as a cultural standard, ACTAS/Emergency Services Leadership Framework, 360 degree feedback of leaders, leadership development, staff workshop series, communication strategy and governance and measurement.

The following ministerial statements were made on 14 February—

**Reconciliation Day: Bringing the Community Together** made by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

**Wellington Mission—November 2018** made by the Chief Minister.

**Future of Education Implementation update** made by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development.

**Outcome of the ACT Auditor-General’s Performance Audit into Housing ACT’s Procurement of a Total Facilities Manager** made by the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development.

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*

**Motions debated**

A motion relating to **safety in school zones** was moved by Ms Lee MLA on 13 February. The motion included noting that in the first week of the 2018 school year more than 400 fines were issued to drivers exceeding the 40kph speed limit in school zones. It also included calling on the Government to ensure all school zones are more visibly identified through additional road markings and flashing lights with the work to be finalised before the start of the 2020 school year. During debate amendments were moved by the Government that called on the Government to provide a report to the Assembly by the last sitting week of 2019 on the results of the School Crossing Program evaluation and preparation of traffic management plans for schools and on an implementation plan for additional actions, informed by the evaluation and traffic management planning process.

Following a vote of the Assembly the motion was passed with amendments.

A motion was moved on 13 February by Ms Cheyne MLA in relation to the **Murray Darling Basin** in the ACT. The motion noted the grave issues raised in the South Australian **Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission Report** relating to the negligence and maladministration from the Murray Darling Basin Authority and Federal Government including failing to ensure the Murray Darling Basin Plan was lawful. The motion called on all Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly to condemn the maladministration of the Murray Darling Basin. During debate the ACT Greens stated their support for the motion whilst the Opposition stated that the Royal Commission report provides an opportunity to review current arrangements.

The motion was then agreed to without amendment.
Light Rail Stage 1 was the subject of a motion moved by Mr Milligan MLA on 13 February. The motion included calling on the Government to acknowledge that Light Rail Stage 1 has had a negative impact on local business and the delayed delivery has compounded this impact. The motion also called on the Government to implement the lessons learnt document within the Business Impact Assessment of ACT Government-led construction activities in Gungahlin and to report back to the Assembly on the implementation of these lessons learnt when Light Rail Stage 1 is fully operational. During debate the Government moved amendments to the motion which included noting that infrastructure projects are benefiting directly from lessons learnt during light rail construction and the way the ACT Government engages and supports businesses has changed. The ACT Greens indicated support for the Government’s amendments whilst the Opposition indicated they would not support the amendments.

Following a vote of the Assembly, the amended motion was passed.

Other motions debated on 13 February related to:

- **Continued commitment to the local jobs code**—Ms Cody MLA
- **Services for children in middle level schooling**—Mrs Kikkert MLA
- **Population increases at the Alexander Maconochie Centre**—Mrs Jones MLA

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

**Assembly Business**

*Includes any business relating to the establishment or membership of a committee or the proposed referral of a matter to a committee. It also includes business which proposes to amend, disallow, disapprove or declare void any instruments which are made under specific Acts agreed to by the Assembly. Assembly business also includes any notice or order of the day which deals with the administration of the Assembly or how the Assembly conducts its proceedings*

**Motions debated**

A motion was moved on 14 February establishing a Select Committee on Fuel Pricing to inquire into and report on fuel prices in the ACT. The Select Committee is to report by the last sitting day in June 2019.

Following debate the motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

On 14 February a motion was moved proposing the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure examine whether the protocols in place around the permissions for MLAs to visit or attend school events constitute an impediment to the Members performing their function as MLAs and in complying with the Code of Conduct for all Members of the Legislation Assembly. During debate the Government moved amendments, followed by the ACT Greens moving further amendments to the Government’s amendments. The amendments moved by the ACT Greens included calling on the Standing Committee on Administration to report back to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the protocols in place around permissions for MLAs to visit or attend school events by the last sitting day in May 2019. The amendments moved by the ACT Greens were then agreed to.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.
The full terms of the above motions can be found in the Minutes of Proceedings.

**Matter of public importance**

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

The importance of supporting Canberra’s multicultural community—Mrs Kikkert MLA

The importance of harm minimisation and harm reduction initiatives in the ACT—Mr Pettersson MLA

**Papers Presented**

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


- Half-yearly performance reports—
  - ACT Local Hospital Network Directorate
  - Canberra Health Services
  - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
  - Community Services Directorate
  - Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
  - Health Directorate
  - Housing ACT
  - Justice and Community Safety Directorate
  - Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- Variations to the Territory Plan—
  - No 342—Belconnen Town Centre: Zone changes and amendments to the Belconnen precinct map and code, dated 11 February 2019
  - No 359—Changes to the Tharwa Precinct Map and Code and removal of public land overlay, dated 6 February 2019

- Budget 2018-19—Budget review *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 12 February)*

- ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2017-18, dated 21 November 2018, prepared by Dr Hugh Saddler *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 14 February)*

- Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme—Implementation—Report—1 July to 31 December 2018 *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 14 February)*

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act, pursuant to subsection 10B(3)— ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body—Report on the outcomes of the ATSIEB Hearings 2018—Eighth Report to the ACT Government *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 14 February)*

- City Renewal Authority—Land acquisitions quarterly report— 1 October to 31 December 2018, dated 2 January 2019 *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 14 February)*
Petitions and petition response

The following e-petitions were lodged on 12 February—

- Request for additional motorcycle parking in Forrest, ACT—lodged by Ms Cody MLA.
- Light Rail stage 2 – direct alignment—lodged by Ms Le Couteur MLA.

The following petition was lodged on 12 February—

- Improvement of Canberra Sexual Health Centre—lodged by Ms J Burch MLA.

The following petitions were lodged on 13 February—

- Light Rail stage 2 – direct alignment—lodged by Ms Le Couteur MLA.
- School bus services between Fairburn and Campbell schools—lodged by Ms Lee MLA.

The following ministerial responses to petitions were lodged on 12 February—

- Cease Project Wing Drone Delivery Trial in Bonython ACT.
- Reduce height and reposition buildings for the WOVA development (Tradies site).
- More fully fenced play spaces.
- Fair treatment for international students in Canberra.
- ACT Clubs’ community contributions scheme.
- Further public consultation on proposed school bus changes.

A copy of this response can be found on the Assembly *Hansard* site.

Committee Activities

**Committee reports presented**

**Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee**

Report 5—[Inquiry Into the Future Sustainability of Health Funding in the ACT](#) *(presented 12 February)*

**Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee**

Report 4—[Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the Motor Accident Injuries Bill 2018](#) *(presented 12 February)*

**Scrutiny Committee**

*Scrutiny Report 26* *(presented 12 February)*

This report contained the committee’s comments on 11 bills, one set of proposed amendments, 19 pieces of subordinate legislation, three national regulations, three regulatory impact statements and one Government response.

**Committee referrals**

**Fuel Pricing—Select Committee**

A motion was passed on 14 February proposing that the committee report on fuel prices in the ACT including but not limited to; fuel price methodology and key determinants, characteristics of the ACT fuel market, including historical changes and the impact of fuel prices on the ACT community.
Committee statements

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee made a statement on 12 February relating to the committee’s statutory appointments for the period of 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee made a statement on 14 February relating to the committee’s statutory appointments for the period of 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018.

Responses to committee reports

Public Accounts—Select Committee

Report 4—Inquiry into the Methodology for determining rated and land tax in strata residences—Government response (presented by the Manager of Government Business on 12 February)

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)
Ms Meegan Fitzharris (Australian Labor Party)
Mr James Milligan (Canberra Liberals)
Ms Suzanne Orr (Australian Labor Party)
Mr Michael Pettersson (Australian Labor Party)

Next Sitting

Tuesday, 19 February 2019.

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