Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

Non-sitting and sitting weeks—26 August-20 September 2019

Issue 10/2019

Government Business

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

Bills introduced

Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill 2019 (presented 19 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will amend the Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act 2011 to replace the fixed 650 MW limit in the Act with a limit determined by the Minister by disallowable instrument.

Sentencing (Parole Time Credit) Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 (presented 19 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will amend the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 and the Crimes (Sentencing) Act 2005 to introduce a parole time credit scheme to give certain offenders credit for the period of time served on parole complying with their parole obligations.

Statute Law Amendment Bill 2019 (presented 19 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will make minor and technical amendments to a number of laws to enhance the Territory’s statute book.

Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2019 (presented 19 September 2019)

Summary: This bill will amend the Workers Compensation Act 1951 to ensure that the Act continues to cover all workers by aligning important definitions with contemporary work arrangements and also makes a number of technical amendments to assist administrative clarity and transparency.

Bills debated

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Amendment Bill 2019

Summary: This bill will amend the Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012 to extend and enhance the operation of the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme. The amendments include defining the energy savings obligation as an energy metric instead of the current greenhouse gas emissions metric, amending how eligible classes of priority households are determined and allowing the scheme to offer transport activities.
Proceedings: Debate resumed on 19 September with the Opposition indicating they would not support the legislation. The ACT Greens indicated support for the legislation and following a vote of the Assembly the bill was agreed to in principle. The Government then moved amendments that clarified the intent of the original bill. The amendments were agreed to. 

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

**Fisheries Legislation Amendment Bill 2019**

*Summary:* This bill will amend the *Fisheries Act 2000*, *Fisheries Regulation 2001*, *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005* and the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*. The bill will update important aspects of fisheries management such as aquaculture and cultural fishing by Aboriginal people, and improve provisions associated with environmental protection, sustainable recreational fishing, compliance and enforcement and commercial trade.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 17 September with the Opposition indicating they would cautiously support the bill, acknowledging that some of the provisions appear unnecessary. The ACT Greens indicated their support for the bill and it was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly.

**Official Visitor Amendment Bill 2019**

*Summary:* This bill will amend the *Official Visitor Act 2012* and the five operational Acts of the ACT Official Visitor Scheme (*Children and Young People Act 2008*, *Corrections Management Act 2007*, *Disability Services Act 1997*, *Housing Assistance Act 2007* and *Mental Health Act 2015*). The amendments will give effect to the legislative recommendations from the 2017 Review of the Official Visitor Scheme, including removing restrictions on official visitors visiting other operational areas when required to allow for greater flexibility and coverage.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 17 September with the legislation receiving tri-partisan support. The bill was then agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly.

**Planning and Development (Community Concessional Leases) Amendment Bill 2019**

*Summary:* This bill will amend the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and the *Planning and Development Regulation 2008* to establish the new policy framework for the sale of land to not for profit community organisations at less than market value. The policy framework supersedes the prior mechanism of directly granting land at less than market value to community organisations.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 17 September with the Opposition indicating they would not be supporting the legislation and the ACT Greens indicating their support for the legislation and its amendments. The bill was agreed to in principle following a vote of the Assembly. The Government then moved amendments to the bill, which were agreed to by the Assembly.

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.
Ministerial statements

Minister Orr made a ministerial statement concerning her ministerial priorities across the portfolios of Disability, Community Services and Facilities, Employment and Workplace Safety, and Government Services and Procurement. During the statement the Minister gave an overview of the priorities from each of the four ministerial portfolios and stated that she is looking forward to working with and for all Canberrans, be they individual people with disability, their families, volunteers, working Canberrans, Canberra businesses, property and procurement services, service providers and the Commonwealth.

On 17 September the Minister for Children, Youth and Families gave a ministerial statement in relation to the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. The Minister provided the Assembly with information about a major incident that occurred at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre on 26 August 2019. An interim report was completed on 16 September 2019 by Mr Peter Muir who conducted an independent review into the circumstances of the incident. The Minister gave an overview of the findings of the interim report which noted several issues for further discussion and exploration and some identified areas for improvement. This included the need for further discussion on the adequacy of therapeutic support available to the Centre and consideration of Bimberi’s capacity to assess information and manage emerging risks. The Minister then tabled the executive summary of the interim report along with the Bimberi Headline Indicators Report.

The Minister for Building Quality Improvement gave a ministerial statement providing a six-monthly update to the Assembly in relation to building regulatory reforms on 19 September. The Minister updated the Assembly on building regulatory reforms and other work to improve practices in the building industry and compliance with building standards. The update included noting that a further 15 reforms were completed by the end of the last financial year, a new code of practice for building surveyors started on 1 September 2019 and that a new online course was developed on the ACT’s building regulatory system for people intending to operate as building surveyors in the ACT, or work in the ACT building industry.

The following ministerial statements were made on 19 September—

Scar Trees made by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

Protecting older Canberrans from abuse made by the Attorney-General.

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

On 18 September, Mrs Dunne MLA moved a motion in relation to infrastructure projects at The Canberra Hospital (TCH). The motion included noting that in Canberra’s Emergency Departments the
median waiting time for patients in the urgent category is longer than the median waiting time in the non-urgent category and the motion included calling on the Minister for Health to report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of 2019 on the progress in developing other significant health infrastructure programs such as plans to upgrade infrastructure at Bruce. During debate the Government moved amendments to the motion which included noting that the ACT Government has invested more than $1 billion in health infrastructure since 2009, including upgrading Calvary’s maternity ward, the expansion of TCH’s Emergency Department, the delivery of a new rehabilitation facility at the University of Canberra Hospital and the establishment of the nurse-led Walk-in Centre network. The ACT Greens and the Opposition indicated support for the Government amendments and the amendments were agreed to by the Assembly.

The amended motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

The use of sustainable products in government infrastructure was the subject of a motion moved by Ms Cody MLA on 18 September 2019. The motion noted that wood products in building and construction offer a pathway to achieving zero net emissions, particularly when compared to other building materials such as cement and steel. The motion also called on the ACT Government to work with the building and construction industry to promote the use of Australian Forestry products. During debate, Ms Cody MLA moved an amendment to the motion which called on the ACT Government to develop sustainability guidelines for the sustainable use of building materials in the ACT, in accordance with the Building Act 2004. The amendment was agreed to by the Assembly. The ACT Greens also moved amendments to the motion as they did not agree to the motion in its original form, and stated that the motion tried to closely link forestry operations with sustainability and reducing carbon emissions, painting forestry as a key initiative in the battle against climate change. The Government indicated they would not support the ACT Greens amendments as the wording of the original motion adequately conveyed the issue at hand. The Opposition also indicated they would not support the ACT Greens amendments and the amendments were then negatived by the Assembly.

The amended motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

Other motions debated on 18 September related to:

- Wanniassa Park and Ride access—Ms Lawder MLA
- Fertility preservation—Ms Cheyne MLA
- Out-of-home Care review—Mrs Kikkert MLA
- Housing affordability—Mr Coe MLA

The full debate on the above motions can be accessed from the Assembly Hansard site.

Matter of public importance

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

- The importance of coordinated planning for Stromlo Forest Park sport and recreation facilities—Miss Candice Burch MLA.
The importance of the ACT leading the nation on the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy sources—Mr Gupta MLA

**Papers Presented**

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

- *A limited electronic voting option for electors who are overseas*—ACT Electoral Commission report to the Legislative Assembly, dated 11 September 2019 *(presented by the Speaker on 17 September)*
- Commissioner for Standards—Annual report 2018/2019, dated 31 August 2019 *(presented by the Speaker on 17 September)*
- Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act, pursuant to subsection 20(1)—Independent Reviewer—Report for the period 1 January to 30 June 2019, dated 21 August 2019 *(presented by the Speaker on 17 September)*
- Estimates 2019-2020—Select Committee—Answer to question on notice E19-207—Correction—Copy of letter from the Chief Minister to the Speaker, dated 26 August 2019 *(presented by the Speaker on 17 September)*
- Weekend bus service reliability—Action Plan—Response to the resolutions of the Assembly of 14 and 20 August 2019, dated September 2019 *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 17 September)*
- ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group—Annual report 2018-19 *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 19 September)*
- ACT Policing Confiscation of Criminal Assets Reports for the financial years 2003-04 to 2016-17 *(presented by the Manager of Government Business on 19 September)*

**Petitions**

The following ministerial responses to e-petitions and petitions were lodged on 17 September—

- Cross border proposal—Proposed buffer zones.
- Phillip Easty Street—Proposed N10 and N12 developments.
- Hydrotherapy services in south Canberra.

The following ministerial response to an e-petition and petition was lodged on 18 September—

- Community engagement on redevelopment of Chisholm Village.

The following petition was lodged on 19 September—

- Wanniassa bus route changes—lodged by Ms Lawder MLA.

A copy of the petitions and responses can be found on the Assembly *Hansard* site.
Committee Activities

Committee reports presented

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

Report 6—Management and Minimisation of Bullying and Violence in ACT Schools (presented 19 September)

Fuel Pricing—Select Committee

Report—Inquiry into ACT Fuel Pricing (presented 17 September)

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee

Report 9—Draft variation No. 360 – Molonglo River Reserve: changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment (presented 19 September)

Report 10—Draft variation No. 355 – Calwell group centre: zone changes and amendments to the Calwell precinct map and code (presented 19 September 2019)

Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Report 34 (presented 17 September)

This report contained the Committee’s comments on nine Bills, three proposed Government amendments, 16 pieces of subordinate legislation, three regulatory impact statements and seven Government responses.

Committee statements

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

The chair of the Committee made a statement on 17 September in relation to the consideration of statutory appointments by the Committee, and the chair then tabled a schedule of statutory appointments for the period of 1 January to 30 June 2019.

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee

On 17 September the chair made a statement in relation to the consideration of statutory appointments by the Committee. The chair then tabled a schedule of statutory appointments for the period of 1 January to 30 June 2019.

Committee referrals

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

On 19 September, petition No 27-19 was referred to the Committee that requested that the Assembly call on the ACT Government to reinstate some, if not all, Wanniassa bus routes and bus stops to enable social inclusion, ease of transport, and accessibility for Wanniassa residents.
Responses to committee reports

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

Report 7—Inquiry into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018—
Government response (presented by the Manager of Government Business on 19 September)

Committee membership

On 17 September the following changes to a number of standing committees was agreed to by the Assembly:

Ms Orr MLA be discharged from the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services, the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal, and the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr Gupta MLA be appointed to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism and the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety.

Mr Pettersson MLA be appointed to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal and discharged from the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety;

Ms Cheyne MLA be appointed to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services.

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, 24 September 2019.

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