LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2024–2025–2026

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No 67

THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2026

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1 The Assembly met at 10 am, pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Mr Hanson) 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 CORONERS ACT—REPORT OF CORONER—INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF PAUL EDWARD STOREY—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND PAPERS—PAPER NOTED

Ms Cheyne (Minister for City and Government Services) made a ministerial statement concerning the Government response to the Coroner's report on the inquest into the death of Paul Edward Storey and presented the following papers:

Coroners Act, pursuant to section 57—Report of Coroner—Inquest into the death of Paul Edward Storey—

Report, dated 20 March 2026.

Government response, undated.

Government response—Ministerial statement, 17 September 2026.

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

Question—put and passed.

3 NDIS FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORTS—IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING—ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION OF 24 SEPTEMBER 2025 AND NDIS—PROPOSED CHANGES—REFORM—ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION OF 10 JUNE 2026—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Ms Orr (Minister for Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity) made a ministerial statement concerning the Government response to two Assembly resolutions relating to the implementation of NDIS Foundational Supports and reform to proposed changes to NDIS and presented the following paper:

NDIS Foundational Supports—Implementation and reporting—Assembly resolution of 24 September 2025 and NDIS—Proposed changes—Reform—Assembly resolution of 10 June 2026—Government response—Ministerial statement, 17 September 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

4 ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURE—STANDING COMMITTEE—REPORT 5—REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF MS CARRICK MLA—REPORT ADOPTED

Mr Hanson (Chair) presented the following report:

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee—Report 5—*Report on the conduct of Ms Carrick MLA,* dated 16 September 2026, together with extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

Miss Nuttall, by leave, moved—That the report be adopted.

Question—put and passed.

5 ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURE—STANDING COMMITTEE—CONTINUING RESOLUTION 4—CITIZEN'S RIGHT OF REPLY—STATEMENT BY CHAIR

Mr Hanson (Chair), pursuant to standing order 246A, informed the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure had considered an application for a citizen's right of reply that was made pursuant to Continuing Resolution 4 and resolved that the matter did not warrant a reply.

6 VICTIMS OF CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026

Ms Tough (Minister for Human Rights), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend legislation about victims of crime, and for other purposes.

Paper: Ms Tough 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.

Ms Tough moved—That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

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

7 HOUSING AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026

Ms Cheyne (Attorney-General), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend legislation about housing and consumer affairs.

Paper: Ms Cheyne 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.

Ms Cheyne 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 ROAD TRANSPORT (SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT) (VALIDATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2026

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That this Bill be agreed to in principle—

Debate resumed.

Mr Steel (Treasurer) addressing the Assembly—

Member named and suspended: The Speaker named Ms Lee for persistently and wilfully disregarding the authority of the Chair.

The Speaker, pursuant to standing order 203, proposed—That Ms Lee be suspended from the service of the Assembly.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 16		NOES, 5
Andrew Barr	Suzanne Orr	Peter Cain
Chiaka Barry	Marisa Paterson	Ed Cocks
Andrew Braddock	Michael Pettersson	Elizabeth Lee
Fiona Carrick	Chris Steel	Deborah Morris
Leanne Castley	Rachel Stephen-Smith	Mark Parton
Tara Cheyne	Caitlin Tough	
Jo Clay	Rebecca Vassarotti	
Thomas Emerson		
Laura Nuttall		

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Ms Lee was therefore suspended at 11.37 am for three sitting hours in accordance with standing order 204, and she accordingly withdrew from the Chamber.

Debate continued.

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

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

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

9 APPROPRIATION BILL 2026-2027

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

Detail Stage

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure—

Consideration resumed at Part 1.1—Education Directorate—

Debate continued.

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

10 MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Barr (Chief Minister) informed the Assembly of the absence of Minister Orr and advised the Assembly that questions without notice normally directed to Minister Orr could be directed to Minister Steel.

11 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice were asked.

12 STANDING ORDER 241(B)—DISCLOSURE OF PROCEEDINGS, EVIDENCE AND DOCUMENTS—STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

The Speaker made a statement concerning the confidentiality of Committee documents and deliberation under standing order 241(b).

13 PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

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

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028—National Agreement on Closing the Gap—Annual Report 2024-2025, undated, together with a statement.

Climate change—Adaption and emissions reduction—Planning—Assembly resolution of 23 September 2025—Government response, dated September 2026.

Climate Change Strategy—Consideration for the next strategy—Assembly resolution of 17 March 2026—Government response, dated September 2026.

Early Childhood Education and Care Sector—Child safety and safeguarding measures—Improvement—Assembly resolution of 24 February 2026—Government response, together with a statement, dated September 2026.

Motorcycle injuries inquiries—Audit of responses, dated September 2026

Motorcyclist safety—Improvement—Assembly resolution of 18 March 2026—Government response, dated September 2026.

Tuggeranong Ice Sports Facility development—Assembly resolution of 26 June 2025—Government response—Quarter 3 Update, dated 17 September 2026.

Urban growth boundary—Establishment—Assembly resolution of 10 April 2025—Government response—Half yearly statement—Statement on progress in considering an urban growth boundary, dated July 2026.

14 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE REBATE

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

(1) notes that:

(a) the Australian Government has introduced the Private Health Insurance Amendment (Modernising the Private Health Insurance Rebate) Bill 2026, which would remove the higher private health insurance rebate currently available to Australians aged 65 and over, with the proposed changes to commence on 1 April 2027;

(b) the Australian Government estimates the measure will affect approximately 3.2 million Australians aged 65 and over and result in approximately 44,000 fewer older Australians holding private health insurance by 2028-2029;

(c) recent polling indicates that almost 40 percent of seniors surveyed in outer-suburban and regional electorates are more likely to drop their private health insurance as a result of the proposed changes; and

(d) the ACT has one of the highest rates of private hospital insurance coverage in Australia, with 54.2 percent of the population holding hospital treatment cover as at December 2025, compared with 45.6 percent nationally;

(2) recognises that:

(a) private health insurance makes an important contribution to healthcare capacity in the ACT by supporting access to private hospital and specialist services and helping to reduce demand on the public hospital system; and

(b) the ACT public health system is already under significant strain, including workplace culture and morale challenges, the threat of occupational violence on the workforce, prolonged elective surgery waiting times and pressure on emergency departments, hospital beds and specialist services;

(3) further notes with concern the warnings from the New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmanian health ministers that removing the higher rebate for older Australians risks increasing demand for public hospitals and shifting additional costs and demand from the Commonwealth to state and territory health systems;

(4) considers that increasing the cost of private health insurance for older Australians risks encouraging some people to downgrade or abandon their private cover, placing additional pressure on the ACT's public hospitals and potentially increasing demand for public hospital services; and

(5) calls on the Government to:

(a) make representations to the Australian Government urging it to abandon the proposed removal of the higher private health insurance rebate for Australians aged 65 and over;

(b) write to the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler MP, outlining the ACT Government's opposition to the proposed changes and the potential impact on the ACT public health system; and

(c) provide a copy of that correspondence to the Assembly within 30 days of this motion passing.

Dr Paterson (Minister for Health) moved the following amendment: Omit all text after "That this Assembly", substitute:

"(1) notes that:

(a) the Australian Government has introduced the Private Health Insurance Amendment (Modernising the Private Health Insurance Rebate) Bill 2026 ('the Bill'), which would reduce the higher private health insurance rebate currently available to Australians aged 65 and over, with the proposed changes to commence on 1 April 2027;

(b) the Australian Government estimates the measure will affect approximately 3.2 million Australians aged 65 and over and result in approximately 44,000 fewer older Australians holding private health insurance by 2028-2029;

(c) recent polling indicates that almost 40 percent of seniors surveyed in outer-suburban and regional electorates are more likely to drop their private health insurance as a result of the proposed changes; and

(d) the ACT has one of the highest rates of private hospital insurance coverage in Australia, with 54.2 percent of the population holding hospital treatment cover as at December 2025, compared with 45.6 percent nationally; and

(e) the Commonwealth Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs' inquiry into the Bill is ongoing;

(2) recognises that:

(a) private health insurance makes an important contribution to healthcare capacity in the ACT by supporting access to private hospital and specialist services and helping to reduce demand on the public hospital system; and

(b) the ACT public health system is already under significant strain, including workplace culture and morale challenges, the threat of occupational violence on the workforce, prolonged elective surgery waiting times and pressure on emergency departments, hospital beds and specialist services;

(3) further notes with concern the warnings from the New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmanian health ministers that removing the higher rebate for older Australians risks increasing demand for public hospitals and shifting additional costs and demand from the Commonwealth to state and territory health systems;

(4) considers that increasing the cost of private health insurance for older Australians risks encouraging some people to downgrade or abandon their private cover, placing additional pressure on the ACT's public hospitals and potentially increasing demand for public hospital services; and

(5) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) monitor data on private health insurance coverage amongst people over 65 in the ACT after 1 April 2027 to determine whether the rebate reduction reduces coverage over time;

(b) write to the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler MP, raising potential impacts of the proposed removal of the higher private health insurance rebate for Australians aged 65 and over on ACT residents;

(c) provide a copy of that correspondence to the Legislative Assembly within 30 days of this motion passing;

(d) advocate for increased Commonwealth investment in aged care capacity in the ACT; and

(e) continue to work with the Commonwealth to address issues relating to delayed discharge patients impacting ACT public hospital capacity.".

Debate continued.

Mr Parton moved the following amendment to Dr Paterson's proposed amendment:
Omit all text in paragraph (5)(a), substitute:

"(a) make representations to the Australian Government urging it to abandon the proposed removal of the higher private health insurance rebate for Australian aged 65 and over.".

Amendment to amendment negatived.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

"That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) the Australian Government has introduced the Private Health Insurance Amendment (Modernising the Private Health Insurance Rebate) Bill 2026 ('the Bill'), which would reduce the higher private health insurance rebate currently available to Australians aged 65 and over, with the proposed changes to commence on 1 April 2027;

(b) the Australian Government estimates the measure will affect approximately 3.2 million Australians aged 65 and over and result in approximately 44,000 fewer older Australians holding private health insurance by 2028-2029;

(c) recent polling indicates that almost 40 percent of seniors surveyed in outer-suburban and regional electorates are more likely to drop their private health insurance as a result of the proposed changes; and

(d) the ACT has one of the highest rates of private hospital insurance coverage in Australia, with 54.2 percent of the population holding hospital treatment cover as at December 2025, compared with 45.6 percent nationally; and

(e) the Commonwealth Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs' inquiry into the Bill is ongoing;

(2) recognises that:

(a) private health insurance makes an important contribution to healthcare capacity in the ACT by supporting access to private hospital and specialist services and helping to reduce demand on the public hospital system; and

(b) the ACT public health system is already under significant strain, including workplace culture and morale challenges, the threat of occupational violence on the workforce, prolonged elective surgery waiting times and pressure on emergency departments, hospital beds and specialist services;

(3) further notes with concern the warnings from the New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmanian health ministers that removing the higher rebate for older Australians risks increasing demand for public hospitals and shifting additional costs and demand from the Commonwealth to state and territory health systems;

(4) considers that increasing the cost of private health insurance for older Australians risks encouraging some people to downgrade or abandon their private cover, placing additional pressure on the ACT's public hospitals and potentially increasing demand for public hospital services; and

(5) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) monitor data on private health insurance coverage amongst people over 65 in the ACT after 1 April 2027 to determine whether the rebate reduction reduces coverage over time;

(b) write to the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler MP, raising potential impacts of the proposed removal of the higher private health insurance rebate for Australians aged 65 and over on ACT residents;

(c) provide a copy of that correspondence to the Legislative Assembly within 30 days of this motion passing;

(d) advocate for increased Commonwealth investment in aged care capacity in the ACT; and

(e) continue to work with the Commonwealth to address issues relating to delayed discharge patients impacting ACT public hospital capacity."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

15 PAPERS PRESENTED ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2026—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.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

16 APOLOGY—STATEMENT BY MEMBER

Ms Carrick, in accordance with Recommendation 1 of Report 5 of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, made an apology to the Assembly.

17 APPROPRIATION BILL 2026-2027

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

Detail Stage

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure—

Consideration resumed at Part 1.1—Education Directorate—debated and agreed to.

Part 1.2—Local Health Network—debated and agreed to.

Part 1.3—Infrastructure Canberra—debated and agreed to.

Part 1.4—City and Environment Directorate—

Debate adjourned (Ms Cheyne—Minister for City and Government Services) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

18 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Two Members' statements were made.

19 ADJOURNMENT

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

Debate ensued.

Mr Cain, by leave, was granted an extension of time.

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 5.59 pm, adjourned until Tuesday, 22 September 2026 at 10 am.

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE: All Members were present at some time during the sitting, except Ms Berry* and Mr Werner-Gibbings*.

*on leave.

Hamish Finlay
Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly