



Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

Sitting week—21 to 25 March 2022

Issue 2/2022

Ukraine Conflict

The Chief Minister, on 23 March, moved a motion that included voicing support for the democratically elected Ukrainian Government, the Ukrainian people and the Canberra’s Ukrainian Community. The motion requested that the Speaker convey to the Ukrainian Government, via the Embassy in Canberra, the support of the Assembly included in the motion. A number of other members of the Assembly spoke on the motion which received the support of all parties in the Assembly.

The motion was passed without amendment.

Government Business

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

Bills introduced

[Domestic Violence Agencies Amendment Bill 2022](#) (presented 24 March)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* by introducing provisions to bring the Act’s objectives and functions in line with the current domestic and family violence policy and service landscape. These provisions will include reforms to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to ensure it continues to guide and improve the ACT’s response to domestic and family violence. The bill will also make consequential amendments to a number of other ACT statutes.

[Radiation Protection Amendment Bill 2022](#) (presented 24 March)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Radiation Protection Act 2006* and the *Radiation Protection Regulation 2007* to strengthen controls on the safe use and ownership of radiation sources, improve licensing and registration processes and align regulatory controls with other jurisdictions. The bill will also seek to provide greater regulatory transparency and improve business and government efficiencies, radiation safety controls, and stakeholder relations. The bill will make a consequential amendment to the *Public Health Act 1997*.

Bills debated

[Crimes \(Policing\) Legislation Amendment Bill 2021](#) *(presented 1 December)*

Summary: This bill will amend a number of Territory statutes by enhancing the ability of ACT Policing to protect the lives and sexual safety of children by providing higher levels of compliance with reporting obligations by those convicted of child sex offences. The bill will also make amendments to firearms legislation by introducing a permanent amnesty so that a person will not face penalty under an offence provision if unregistered firearms are surrendered to police. The bill includes provisions for the Firearms Registrar to destroy or dispose of firearms surrendered under the amnesty, without requiring a court order to do so.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 23 March with all parties in the Assembly indicating support for the proposed legislation which was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

[Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2021](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the Territory's road transport legislation to improve road safety by strengthening the regulatory and enforcement framework for dangerous driving and other unsafe behaviours on the Territory's road network.

The amendments include establishing a new offence for negligent driving that causes actual bodily harm, increasing existing minimum automatic licence disqualification periods for the offences of culpable driving and negligent driving and establishing two new offences to address unsafe behaviours of other transport modes.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 23 March and received the support of all parties in the Assembly with the bill being agreed to in principle.

During the detail stage debate, amendments moved by both the Government and the ACT Greens were agreed to.

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

Ministerial statements

The Chief Minister made a ministerial statement on 22 March outlining the **ACT's economic development priorities for 2022-2025**. During the statement the Chief Minister provided an economic update across a number of indicators that shaped the development of the priorities for 2022-2025.

On 22 March, the Minister for Health provided an update on the ACT Government's **response to the COVID-19 emergency**. During the statement the minister presented the following paper:

- Chief Health Officer's Report on the Status of the Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19— Report 24—March 2022

The Minister for Women made an **annual statement on the status of women and girls 2022** to the Assembly during her ministerial statement on 22 March and acknowledged that International Women's Day was held on 8 March. During the statement the minister reflected on some of the challenges and achievements of 2021. Ms Lawder MLA also spoke to the ministerial statement.

Mental health in the ACT was the subject of a ministerial statement made by the Minister for Mental Health on 22 March with the minister outlining the challenges faced by Canberrans since November 2019, that included bushfires, storms, the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic, societal and personal challenges arising from these challenges. During the statement the minister outlined the steps the Government had taken to support those in the Territory suffering from mental health issues.

The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence made a ministerial statement on 23 March concerning the **Family Violence Safety Action Pilot**. During the statement the minister informed the Assembly that the ACT Government is committed to testing new approaches than can address domestic and family violence in the community and outlined the purpose of the Family Violence Safety Action Pilot and indicated it is the only service of its type in the Territory.

On 23 March, the Minister for Transport and City Services made an **Active Travel Statement** which outlined the ACT Government's active travel priorities for 2022. During the statement the minister highlighted the ACT Transport Strategy, released in 2020, and stated that through the plan, the Government will set a new policy direction for active travel in the Territory with the Government intending to consult on the strategy with the community around the middle of 2022.

Draft Variation 369 to the Territory Plan, **Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones**, was the subject of a ministerial statement made by the Minister for Planning and Land Management on 24 March. During the statement the Minister outlined the contents of the draft variation and stated that changes made by the draft variation would have a significant impact across the Territory, with the Minister adding he has asked officials to consider how industry and homeowners can best transition to this new system before finalising the draft variation. Ms Vassarotti MLA also spoke to the ministerial statement.

Further ministerial statements made during the sitting week related to:

2021-22 Budget Review—Treasurer (24 March)

ACT Eating Disorders Position Statement—Update—Minister for Mental Health (23 March)

ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy—Minister for Mental Health (23 March)

Development and implementation of the Best Start for Canberra's Children: First 1000 Days Strategy—Minister for Health (24 March)

Our public health workforce—Minister for Health (24 March)

The full text of the statements can be found on the Assembly [Hansard](#) site once finalised.

Private Members' Business

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

Motions debated

A motion concerning **detached housing affordability** was moved by Ms Lee on 22 March. The motion sought to note the demand for detached housing in the Territory is significantly exceeding supply and that the ACT Government's land development targets are not based on projected market demand, forcing many Canberrans into apartments.

The motion also, among other things, noted that the ACT Government's conveyance duty concessions on multi-unit dwellings do not alleviate demand for detached housing. The motion called on the Government to acknowledge there is a housing affordability crisis in Canberra and the demand for detached housing in Canberra is significantly exceeding supply and called on the Government to not only use the policy levers it has available to ease the housing affordability crisis by releasing more land for detached housing but to also commission a new housing choice survey similar to the 2015 Winton Report. The motion called on the Government to release ACT land and property reports within one month of the end of the relevant reporting period.

During debate an amendment was moved by the Government that included noting that the ACT is affected by both nationally and internationally rising housing prices and that the ACT Government is using the levers available to it to improve housing affordability. The amendment also included, among other things, noting that the preparation of land for release is a considerable budget outlay for studies and infrastructure, concentrating development in existing urban footprint improves sustainability and allows a more affordable lifestyle. The amendment called on the Government to: call on the Commonwealth Government to address housing affordability using the economic levers available to it and waive the ACT's historic housing debt to the Commonwealth; continue to deliver land and housing options that provide diverse and affordable housing options to give Canberrans choice; and keep supporting environmentally sustainable development that offers the amenity and services Canberrans need and expect. The Government's amendment was agreed to following a vote.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

On 22 March, a motion concerning the proposed development of a **carbon footprint calculator for business** was moved by Dr Paterson MLA. The motion including noting that the ACT Government is committed to taking action for climate change adaptation and resilience and has in place a range of robust programs to support households and businesses to lower their energy consumption, including through ACTSmart and the Climate Choices program. The motion also noted that there are many organisations and stakeholder groups in the Territory undertaking important work to help individuals, households and businesses transition to renewable energy sources, lower transport emissions and take other climate change activities. The motion noted there are many online carbon footprint calculators, however, the majority of these are customised for household use and there is no clear, authoritative carbon calculator for businesses in the ACT (nor in any Australian jurisdiction or at the Federal level). The terms of the motion included calling on the ACT Government to bring forward the development or adoption of a carbon footprint calculator for businesses and report back to the Assembly during November 2022.

An amendment was moved during debate by Ms Lee MLA that included noting that the Legislative Assembly has tripartisan commitment for climate action and taking necessary future steps to achieving net zero emissions by 2045. The amendment was agreed to.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

Non-payment of fines for minor offences was the subject of a motion moved by Mr Braddock MLA on 24 March. The motion included noting the ACT Government's compliance model is based on *Engage, Educate, Enforce* and also noted that ACT Government legislation contained penalties in the form of fines for a wide range of offences in severity from serious to minor offences and that non-payment of fines can result in further financial penalties regardless of the offender's ability to pay and interaction with the court system. The motion went on to note that the systemic impacts of applying these penalties, and any consequential court action for non-payment of fines, may be inconsistent with the ACT Government's compliance model and principles. The motion called on the Government to provide information on the extent to which unpaid infringement or penalty notices for minor offences are pursued through the courts and the resource implications of that enforcement action, with regard to the magnitude of the fine. The motion also called on the Government to examine alternative options to improve equity and report back to the Assembly by 30 September 2022. The Opposition indicated they would support the motion with the Government also indicating support for the motion. Both parties outlined reasons for doing so during debate.

The motion was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

Further motions debated during the sitting week related to:

Defibrillators in government schools and workplaces—Ms Castley MLA (23 March)

Tenancy rights—Mr Pettersson MLA (23 March)

ACT Government procurement processes—Ms Lee MLA (24 March)

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

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

Bill debated

[Legislation \(Legislative Assembly Committees\) Amendment Bill 2022](#) (presented 10 February)

Summary: This bill will amend provisions in a number of ACT statutes to ensure that the Speaker of the Assembly would have the function of nominating, in writing, which Assembly standing committees are to perform particular statutory responsibilities and functions.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 24 March with all parties in the Assembly indicating support for the proposed legislation. The bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

Motions debated

A motion proposing that the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity inquire into and report on the adoption of a **fossil emblem** for the ACT, with regard to the publicly voted fossil emblem, Trilobite *Batocara mitchelli* was moved by Ms Vassarotti MLA on 24 March. During debate an amendment was moved by Ms Orr MLA seeking to request the committee to consider inquiring and reporting on the matter without obligating it to do so. The amendment was supported by all parties in the Assembly and was agreed to.

The amended motion was passed.

A motion referring the matter of **vacant housing and commercial properties** to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality for inquiry and report was moved by Mr Davis MLA on 24 March. During debate a number of amendments were moved by Mr Parton MLA including requesting that the committee consider inquiring into and reporting on the matter and if the committee resolved to undertake an inquiry, for the committee to determine a reporting date based on its capacity. The proposed amendments were agreed to.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

On 24 March, the Assembly agreed to the establishment of a **Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023** to examine and report on the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2022-2023, the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2022-2023 and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2022-2023 Budget. Amendments moved during debate which sought to reduce the proposed membership of the committee from five to three members and to set an establishment date of the committee of 1 July 2022 were agreed to. A further amendment that altered the reporting date from 29 July 2022 to 9 September 2022 was also 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](#).

Petitions and petition responses

The following petitions were lodged—

- Extension of Reid Oval fencing—lodged by Mr Rattenbury (22 March)
- Public space advertising—lodged by Ms Clay (22 March)
This petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services.
- Supply of free rapid antigen tests for community language schools—lodged by Mr Braddock (22 March)

The following ministerial responses to petitions were lodged—

- Convenience stores in Coombs—Increased police presence—Minister for Police and Emergency Services (22 March)
- Cricket infrastructure investment in eastern Belconnen—Minister for Sport and Recreation (22 March)
- Eating disorder services in the ACT—Minister for Mental Health (22 March)

- Multi-purpose indoor sports stadium in Woden Town Centre—Minister for Sport and Recreation (22 March)
- Phillip Pool—Upgrade—Minister for Sport and Recreation (22 March)
- Right for children with autism to play in a safe place—Minister for Transport and City Services (22 March)

A copy of the petitions and petition response can be found on the [Assembly website](#).

Papers Presented

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

- 2021-22 Infrastructure Program—Progress report for the year-to-date 31 December 2021
- ACT Audit Office—Progress report on the operations for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2021
- Auditor-General's Reports—
 - No 9/2021—Annual Report 2020-21—Corrigendum
 - No 10/2021—Financial Results and Audit Findings—Government response
 - No 11/2021—Digital Records Management—Government response
 - No 1/2022—Management of detainee mental health services in the Alexander Maconochie Centre
 - No 2/2022—Fraud Prevention
- Gungahlin Cinema Development—Response to resolution of the Assembly of 1 December 2021
- Remuneration Tribunal Determination 1 of 2022—Head of Service, Directors-General and Executives

Committee Activities

Committee reports

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee

[Report 4—Inquiry into the Public Health Amendment Bill 2021 \(No 2\)](#)

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

[Report 4—Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021](#)

Public Accounts— Standing Committee

[Report 6—Inquiry into the Financial Management Amendment Bill 2021 \(No 2\)](#)

Scrutiny Committee

[Scrutiny Report 13](#)

This report, presented on 22 March, contained the committee's comments on four bills, 31 pieces of subordinate legislation, two government responses and proposed Government and Private Members' amendments to one bill.

Committee statements

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee

The Speaker, as chair of the committee, made a statement on 22 March in relation to a recommendation for proposed committee arrangements for the consideration of the **2022-2023 budget estimates**.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

On 22 March, the chair made a statement informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved to conduct an inquiry into the **Family Violence Legislation Amendment Bill 2022**. The chair indicated that the committee would report by 14 April 2022.

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee, on 22 March, made a statement concerning the committee's consideration of **statutory appointments** for the period 1 July to 31 December 2021. At the conclusion of the statement the chair presented the following paper:

- Schedule of Statutory Appointments for the period 1 July to 31 December 2021—Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee informed the Assembly on 22 March that the committee had resolved to undertake an inquiry into **Auditor-General's Report No 13/2021—Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project Procurement**.

Government responses to committee reports

COVID-19 2021 pandemic response—Select Committee

Report—Inquiry into the COVID-19 2021 pandemic response

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee

Report 4—Inquiry into the Public Health Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Report 2—Inquiry into the 2020 ACT Election and the Electoral Act—Supplementary Government response

Report 4—Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

Report 7—Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Report 4—Inquiry into the Auditor-General's Report No. 6 of 2020: Transfer of Worker's Compensation Arrangements from Comcare

Membership of committees

The following members were appointed to the **Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023** to be formed on 1 July 2022:

- Mr Braddock
- Mr Milligan
- Dr Paterson

Members of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Electorate of Brindabella

Ms Joy Burch (Australian Labor Party)
Mr Johnathan Davis (ACT Greens)
Mr Mick Gentleman (Australian Labor Party)
Ms Nicole Lawder (Canberra Liberals)
Mr Mark Parton (Canberra Liberals)

Electorate of Ginninderra

Ms Yvette Berry (Australian Labor Party)
Mr Peter Cain (Canberra Liberals)
Ms Tara Cheyne (Australian Labor Party)
Ms Jo Clay (ACT Greens)
Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert (Canberra Liberals)

Electorate of Kurrajong

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

Electorate of Murrumbidgee

Emma Davidson (ACT Greens)
Mr Jeremy Hanson CSC (Canberra Liberals)
Mrs Giulia Jones (Canberra Liberals)
Dr Marisa Paterson (Australian Labor Party)
Mr Chris Steel (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Yerrabi

Mr Andrew Braddock (ACT Greens)

Ms Leanne Castley (Canberra Liberals)

Mr James Milligan (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Suzanne Orr (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Michael Pettersson (Australian Labor Party)

Next Sitting

Tuesday, 5 April 2022.

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