



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2012–2013–2014–2015

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No. 89

**WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2015**

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- 1 The Assembly met at 10 a.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Mrs Dunne) took the Chair and asked Members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.
  
- 2 **WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE CLEARANCE—BREACH—PROPOSED INDEPENDENT INQUIRY—MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING—CALL TO STAND DOWN**

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

  - (1) notes that:
    - (a) a community organisation has been fined for exposing ACT school children to a convicted criminal without the required Working with Vulnerable People clearance;
    - (b) the breach involved ACT schools under the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Training;
    - (c) the Minister has failed to adequately address her full involvement or any influence she had in these events; and
    - (d) the Minister has a significant conflict of interest with regard to these events; and
  - (2) calls on the Chief Minister to:
    - (a) establish an independent and transparent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding these events and to report in full to the Assembly by 30 June 2015;



- (b) stand Minister Burch down as ACT Education and Training Minister immediately pending the outcomes of that inquiry; and
- (c) consult with the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Rattenbury on the terms of reference for the inquiry and the selection of the individual to conduct the inquiry.

Debate ensued.

*Paper:* Mr Rattenbury (Minister for Territory and Municipal Services) presented the following paper:

Commissioner for Standards—Possible referral—Advice from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to Mr Rattenbury MLA, dated 18 February 2015.

Debate continued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 8		NOES, 9	
Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	Mr Barr	Ms Fitzharris
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth	Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	Dr Bourke	Ms Porter
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury
Mrs Jones		Mr Corbell	

And so it was negatived.

### 3 URBAN RENEWAL

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

- (1) notes:
  - (a) the Government has committed to urban renewal as a policy priority;
  - (b) that urban renewal is vital to growing Canberra's economy and strengthening its community by improving productivity, connectivity and sustainability;
  - (c) that much of the ACT's public housing stock was built to the standards of an earlier time, is reaching the end of its useful life, and is in need of renewal; and
  - (d) the importance of public transport, including light rail, to delivering good urban renewal outcomes; and
- (2) resolves to support the Government's work to:
  - (a) deliver urban renewal in Canberra's suburbs and town centres;
  - (b) renew Canberra's public housing stock; and
  - (c) assist urban renewal by delivering the first stage of a new light rail line.

Debate ensued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

	AYES, 8		NOES, 7
Mr Barr	Ms Fitzharris	Mr Coe	Mrs Jones
Dr Bourke	Mr Gentleman	Mr Doszpot	Ms Lawder
Ms Burch	Ms Porter	Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Mr Corbell	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

#### 4 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice were asked.

#### 5 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

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

(1) notes:

- (a) that last year there were several incidents with faulty gas, wiring and electrical equipment in Canberra schools that required evacuation and the attendance of emergency services;
- (b) research published in *The Canberra Times* in September 2014 indicated that many ACT public schools are at capacity or will reach capacity within a few years making overcrowding and hot classrooms even more of an issue; and
- (c) that, during 2014, the ACT Branch of the Australian Education Union (AEU) expressed concern that too many ACT public schools were without sufficient cooling in classrooms, meaning that on days of extreme hot weather students and staff were forced to work in temperatures above published AEU guidelines; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) provide details of which ACT public schools are without efficient air cooling in classrooms to allow students and staff to work in acceptable temperatures in line with AEU guidelines;
- (b) commit to deliver improvements to those schools that do not have them this school year; and
- (c) honour their 2012 election commitment to invest \$70m new funding for school infrastructure maintenance.

Ms Burch (Minister for Education and Training) moved the following amendment: Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“(1) notes:

- (a) that the 2014-15 ACT Budget invests \$1.06 billion in the ACT education system to improve our schools and training, support our educators and increase access to technology for our students;
- (b) that the Education and Training Directorate has an annual allocation of \$20.6 million for both planned and unforeseen repairs and maintenance works at ACT public schools and \$14 million for capital upgrades;
- (c) that the Education and Training Directorate constantly monitors future population growth, individual school capacity, and school environments

to guide planning for now and into the future, and is investing \$3.5 million over four years to make all our schools energy efficient; and

- (d) that the ACT branch of the Australian Education Union has a policy on extreme temperatures that is broadly in line with the Education and Training Directorate's Guidelines on Managing High Temperatures in ACT Public Schools; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) provide an update to the Assembly on improvements in energy efficiency and heating and cooling needs in ACT public schools by the last sitting day in June;
- (b) continue its work in providing safe and healthy school environments;
- (c) continue to deliver improvements to all schools; and
- (d) continue to deliver new, state-of-the-art schools such as the \$47 million new Coombs primary school, which is scheduled to open in the 2016 school year to accommodate growth in the Molonglo Valley, and will have a green star rating.”.

Debate continued.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 8		NOES, 7	
Mr Barr	Ms Fitzharris	Mr Coe	Ms Lawder
Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman	Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Porter	Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that the:
- (a) 2014-15 ACT Budget invests \$1.06 billion in the ACT education system to improve our schools and training, support our educators and increase access to technology for our students;
- (b) Education and Training Directorate has an annual allocation of \$20.6 million for both planned and unforeseen repairs and maintenance works at ACT public schools and \$14 million for capital upgrades;
- (c) Education and Training Directorate constantly monitors future population growth, individual school capacity, and school environments to guide planning for now and into the future, and is investing \$3.5 million over four years to make all our schools energy efficient; and
- (d) ACT branch of the Australian Education Union has a policy on extreme temperatures that is broadly in line with the Education and Training Directorate's Guidelines on Managing High Temperatures in ACT Public Schools; and

- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) provide an update to the Assembly on improvements in energy efficiency and heating and cooling needs in ACT public schools by the last sitting day in June;
  - (b) continue its work in providing safe and healthy school environments;
  - (c) continue to deliver improvements to all schools; and
  - (d) continue to deliver new, state-of-the-art schools such as the \$47 million new Coombs primary school, which is scheduled to open in the 2016 school year to accommodate growth in the Molonglo Valley, and will have a green star rating.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

## 6 HOMELESSNESS AND PUBLIC HOUSING

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

- (1) notes that:
- (a) the Productivity Commission Report on Government Services for 2013-14 highlights that 2300 people are on the ACT public housing waiting list;
  - (b) the ACT has Australia’s second highest rate of homelessness, at 50 people per 10 000 of the population;
  - (c) there has been an increase of more than 900 people on the ACT public housing waiting list since 2010;
  - (d) the number of public housing dwellings in the ACT has dropped by approximately 300 compared to 10 years ago;
  - (e) Canberra’s private rental housing market remains one of Australia’s least affordable for low and moderate income earners; and
  - (f) there are a significant number of ACT public housing properties with structural problems; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to provide detailed information, by the last sitting day in March, of what action it is taking in relation to:
- (a) providing exits from ACT homelessness services;
  - (b) helping all those leaving domestic violence, young people, families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities and the elderly to be housed in ACT public housing;
  - (c) rehousing tenants from the Northbourne Flats, ABC Flats and Strathgordon public housing properties;
  - (d) if required, helping South Canberra Motor Park residents, including where it will rehouse those residents; and
  - (e) maintenance and repairs of ACT public housing properties.

Ms Berry (Minister for Housing) moved the following amendment: Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) the Productivity Commission Report on Government Services (ROGS) for 2013-14 provided a snapshot of public housing and homelessness services in the ACT;
  - (b) the Government continues to work with the private and community sectors to improve access to high quality, affordable housing for all Canberrans, including those with low and medium incomes; and
  - (c) the housing and homelessness sector continues to be under pressure due to uncertainty over Commonwealth funding; and
- (2) calls on the Government to provide detailed information to the Legislative Assembly, by the last sitting day in March, about the Government's public housing and homelessness programs, including:
- (a) the Government's public housing renewal program;
  - (b) ACT homelessness services;
  - (c) assistance provided to people leaving domestic violence, young people, families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities and older people; and
  - (d) the maintenance and upgrade program across the public housing portfolio.”.

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that the:
  - (a) Productivity Commission Report on Government Services (ROGS) for 2013-14 provided a snapshot of public housing and homelessness services in the ACT;
  - (b) Government continues to work with the private and community sectors to improve access to high quality, affordable housing for all Canberrans, including those with low and medium incomes; and
  - (c) housing and homelessness sector continues to be under pressure due to uncertainty over Commonwealth funding; and
- (2) calls on the Government to provide detailed information to the Legislative Assembly, by the last sitting day in March, about the Government's public housing and homelessness programs, including:
  - (a) the Government's public housing renewal program;
  - (b) ACT homelessness services;
  - (c) assistance provided to people leaving domestic violence, young people, families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities and older people; and
  - (d) the maintenance and upgrade program across the public housing portfolio.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

**7 LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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

- (1) notes the importance of local community services in fostering inclusion and equality across the ACT community;
- (2) recognises the strong partnerships which exist between the ACT Government and community and not-for-profit sectors in the planning and provision of local services;
- (3) notes the work that the ACT Government is currently doing to:
  - (a) pursue reforms which support the long-term viability of the not-for-profit and community sector in a constrained fiscal environment; and
  - (b) lobby the Commonwealth for greater funding certainty; and
- (4) acknowledges the risks posed to important community services in the ACT by the continued uncertainty around Commonwealth funding.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

**8 BELCONNEN—URBAN AMENITY**

Mrs Dunne, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) the general poor state of urban maintenance in Belconnen, including:
    - (i) long grass;
    - (ii) weed infested median strips;
    - (iii) unkempt parks;
    - (iv) cracked and dangerous paths;
    - (v) the dilapidated state of many shopping centres; and
    - (vi) the build up of combustible material in urban open spaces; and
  - (b) the steady increase in rates for Belconnen residents; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to reprioritise the upkeep of the urban amenity of Belconnen.

Mrs Dunne addressing the Assembly—

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*Adjournment negated:* It being 6 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Ms Burch (Manager of Government Business) requiring the question to be put forthwith without debate—

Question—put and negated.

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Mrs Dunne continued.

Debate ensued.

Mr Rattenbury (Minister for Territory and Municipal Services) moved the following amendment: Omit all words after paragraph (1), substitute:

- “(a) that hard working Territory and Municipal Services staff and contractors work in all conditions to maintain the ACT’s parks and public places, including through the recent exceptional growing season in Belconnen;
- (b) the ACT Government’s continued investment in maintaining and improving Canberra’s shopping centres, parks, playgrounds, lakes and wetlands in all parts of Canberra, including Belconnen; and
- (c) that the quality of the environment and services were contributing factors to Canberra being selected by the Organisation for Economic Development as the best place in the world to live.”.

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

## 9 ADJOURNMENT

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6.50 p.m., adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

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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