



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2024–2025–2026

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No 61

THURSDAY, 28 MAY 2026

- 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 PETITIONS—PETITIONS NOTED

The Clerk announced that the following Member had lodged petitions for presentation:

Ms Carrick, from 535 and 19 residents, requesting that the Assembly call on the ACT Government to reject the proposed community housing development at the Curtin Presbytery site and develop better guidelines for social and community housing adjacent to schools and other sensitive sites (e-Pet 038-26 and Pet 052-26).

Pursuant to standing order 99A, these petitions stand referred to the Standing Committee on Standing Committee on Environment and Planning.

The Speaker proposed—That the petition so lodged be noted.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

3 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS—EXECUTIVE BUSINESS—PRECEDENCE

Ms Cheyne (Manager of Government Business) moved—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Notice No 1, Executive business relating to presentation of the Crimes (Coercive Control) Amendment Bill 2026 being called on forthwith.

Question—put and passed, with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

4 CRIMES (COERCIVE CONTROL) AMENDMENT BILL 2026

Dr Paterson (Minister for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend the *Crimes Act 1900*, and for other purposes.

Paper: Dr Paterson 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.

Dr Paterson moved—That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

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

5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Mr Barr (Chief Minister) made a ministerial statement concerning the ACT and the Commonwealth Governments' cooperation and presented the following paper:

Intergovernmental cooperation—Ministerial statement, 28 May 2026.

Mr Barr moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question—put and passed.

6 MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Ms Stephen-Smith (Minister for Mental Health) made a ministerial statement concerning mental health and suicide prevention and presented the following paper:

Mental health and suicide prevention—Ministerial statement, 28 May 2026.

Ms Stephen-Smith moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

7 TRANSPORT UPDATE—TERM 3 2026 BUS NETWORK AND TIMETABLE—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Mr Steel (Minister for Transport) made a ministerial statement concerning the revised construction bus network and timetable commencing on 20 July 2026 and presented the following paper:

Transport Update—Term 3 2026 Bus Network and Timetable—Ministerial statement, 28 May 2026.

Mr Steel moved—That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

8 RECONCILIATION WEEK 2026—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Ms Orr (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs) made a ministerial statement concerning Reconciliation Week 2026 and presented the following paper:

Reconciliation Week 2026—Ministerial statement, 28 May 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

9 CONTINUING RESOLUTION 7—FREEDOM OF SPEECH—STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

The Speaker made a statement concerning continuing resolution 7 relating to freedom of speech and drew the attention of the Assembly to the spirit and the letter of this resolution.

10 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS MOVED—PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE—PAPERS—PROPOSED PUBLICATION

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Mr Emerson—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the public interest disclosure documents tabled by Mr Emerson today from being authorised for publication (*27 May 2026*)—

Debate adjourned (Ms Cheyne—Manager of Government Business) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

11 ANIMAL WELFARE MANAGEMENT DATA—ORDER TO TABLE

Ms Castley, pursuant to notice, moved—That, with reference to standing order 213A, the Assembly directs the Chief Minister to table:

- (1) any metrics the Government has recorded or received in the last 10 years relating to companion animal welfare in the ACT, including investigations, surrenders, rehoming rates and euthanasia;
- (2) any service, funding, in-kind or other agreements the Government has entered into with animal welfare organisations in the last 10 years and associated accountability arrangements;
- (3) regarding the current Weston facility and site and proposed Pialligo facility and site for RSPCA ACT, any land valuations, business cases, contracts, costings, deeds of agreement, feasibility studies, invoices and correspondence, including any correspondence with the Commonwealth Government, from the last 10 years; and
- (4) a statement detailing any capital and recurrent impacts resulting from the proposal for a new facility for RSPCA ACT in Pialligo, including new funding, interest expenses and any impacts to other animal welfare expenditure over the forward estimates period.

Ms Cheyne (Minister for City and Government Services), by leave, moved the following amendments together:

1. In paragraphs (1), (2) and (3), omit “10”, substitute “7”.
2. Add:
 - “(5) notwithstanding standing order 213A(f), the indexed listing and all documents be provided to the Clerk within 30 business days.”.

Debate continued.

Amendments agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That:

- (1) with reference to standing order 213A, the Assembly directs the Chief Minister to table:
 - (a) any metrics the Government has recorded or received in the last 7 years relating to companion animal welfare in the ACT, including investigations, surrenders, rehoming rates and euthanasia;
 - (b) any service, funding, in-kind or other agreements the Government has entered into with animal welfare organisations in the last 7 years and associated accountability arrangements;
 - (c) regarding the current Weston facility and site and proposed Pialligo facility and site for RSPCA ACT, any land valuations, business cases, contracts, costings, deeds of agreement, feasibility studies, invoices and correspondence, including any correspondence with the Commonwealth Government, from the last 7 years; and
 - (d) a statement detailing any capital and recurrent impacts resulting from the proposal for a new facility for RSPCA ACT in Pialligo, including new funding, interest expenses and any impacts to other animal welfare expenditure over the forward estimates period; and
- (2) notwithstanding standing order 213A(f), the indexed listing and all documents be provided to the Clerk within 30 business days.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

12 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS—ASSEMBLY BUSINESS NOTICE NO 2—PRECEDENCE

Ms Lee moved—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Notice No 2, Assembly business relating to a motion to amend the reporting date of the Select Committee on Privileges 2026 being called on and debated forthwith.

Question—put and passed, with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

13 PRIVILEGES 2026—SELECT COMMITTEE—ESTABLISHMENT—AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION

Ms Lee, pursuant to notice, moved—That the resolution of the Assembly of 6 May 2026 establishing the Select Committee on Privileges 2026 be amended to omit “10 June 2026” and substitute with “15 September 2026”.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

14 MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Barr (Chief Minister) informed the Assembly of the absence of Minister Cheyne and advised the Assembly that questions without notice normally directed to the Minister for City and Government Services could be directed to Minister Steel, and those normally directed to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Human Rights could be directed to Minister Paterson. Further, questions without notice normally directed to the Minister for the Night-Time Economy could be directed to Minister Pettersson.

15 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

Paper: Mr Braddock, by leave, presented the following paper:

Copy of a photo of Mr Shane Rattenbury, former MLA.

Questions continued.

16 PRESENTATION OF PAPER

The Speaker presented the following paper:

Bills, referred to Committees, pursuant to standing order 174—Correspondence—Bills—Not inquired into—Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2026—Letter to the Speaker from the Chair, Standing Committee on Environment and Planning, dated 26 May 2026.

17 PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Mr Steel (Treasurer), pursuant to standing order 211, presented the following papers:

Drugs of Dependence Act, pursuant to section 205B—Final report on the Evaluation of the Operation of the ACT *Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Act 2022*, dated 31 March 2026, together with appendices.

ACT Housing Strategy—Year 7 Report Card, undated, together with a statement, dated May 2026.

Budget 2025-2026—Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 10—Budget Statement F—Education Directorate—Corrigendum.

Custodial Inspector Act—Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2025—Government response, dated May 2026.

Dog parks in Molonglo Valley and Woden Town Centre—Options report—Assembly resolution of 28 October 2025—Government response, dated May 2026.

Gene Technology Act, pursuant to subsection 136(2)—Operations of the Gene Technology Regulator—Annual Report—2024-2025, dated 30 September 2025.

Education and Care Services Ombudsman and National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information & Privacy Commissioners—Annual Report 2024-2025, dated 25 February 2026.

National Environment Protection Council Act, pursuant to section 23—National Environment Protection Council—

Annual Report—

2019-2020.

2020-2021.

2021-2022.

2022-2023.

2023-2024.

Annual Reports 2019-2020 to 2023-2024—Statement, dated May 2026.

Public housing—Minimum energy efficiency standard—Proposed upgrade—Assembly resolution of 29 November 2023—Government response, dated May 2026.

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Legal Profession Act—Legal Profession (Bar Council Fees) Determination 2026—Disallowable Instrument DI2026-64 (LR, 25 May 2026).

18 LIGHT RAIL STAGE 2B—TIMELINES AND COSTING

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

- (1) notes that:
 - (a) Mr Saul Eslake’s report for the Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT was published on 19 May 2026;
 - (b) Mr Eslake’s report described the ACT’s financial position as unsustainable, and called on the Government to adopt a “more disciplined fiscal strategy”;
 - (c) the report suggests that significant deterioration in the financial position of the ACT has been driven entirely by “conscious policy decisions taken by the ACT Government”;
 - (d) the ACT’s general government net debt increased tenfold, from \$910 million at the end of the 2014-2015 financial year to \$9.15 billion at the end of the 2024-2025 financial year;
 - (e) the report states that “a large number of capital initiatives, entirely funded by debt, have also detracted from the overall cash balance”; and
 - (f) the report states that “in a democracy, Governments should be transparent about financial decisions, and not seek to conceal the true cost behind commercial-in-confidence rationale”;
- (2) further notes that:
 - (a) Stage 1 of the tram between Gungahlin and Civic was delivered in 2019 at a total cost of \$1.65 billion once the monthly payments to Canberra Metro conclude in the late 2030s;

- (b) the Government has already spent and committed to spending over \$1.4 billion on Stage 2A of the tram including the raising of London Circuit, upgrades to the depot and the purchase of more rolling stock;
 - (c) the Government has committed to delivering Stage 2B of the tram to Woden by 2034, but refuses to release any cost estimates of the project;
 - (d) residents groups and engineers have estimated the cost of Stage 2B to be somewhere between three and six billion dollars; and
 - (e) the majority of this figure is not yet budgeted for and will likely be added to already ballooning debt; and
- (3) calls on the Government to table in the Assembly by the last sitting week in June the full early costings and timeline for Stage 2B of the tram. These costings should include early works, the extra Commonwealth Bridge span, all roadworks, tram stops, pedestrian infrastructure and additional rolling stock.

Debate ensued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 8		NOES, 12	
Chiaka Barry	Mark Parton	Yvette Berry	Michael Pettersson
Peter Cain		Andrew Braddock	Chris Steel
Fiona Carrick		Jo Clay	Rachel Stephen-Smith
Jeremy Hanson		Thomas Emerson	Caitlin Tough
Elizabeth Lee		Laura Nuttall	Taimus Werner-Gibblings
James Milligan		Suzanne Orr	
Deborah Morris		Marisa Paterson	

And so it was negatived.

19 PUBLIC SCHOOLS FUNDING COST RECOVERY

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

- (1) notes that:
 - (a) in the February 2025 school census, 50,159 students were enrolled in ACT public schools;
 - (b) the February 2026 Report on Government Services (RoGS) shows the Government in 2023-2024 spent \$1,119,399,000 on government schools, equating to an ACT Government spend of \$22,265 per student in that year;
 - (c) the same RoGS report shows the Government subsidised non-government schools with \$70,645,000 across 32,378 students, equating to an ACT Government spend of \$2,182 per student;
 - (d) the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) 2025 annual report shows 17,000 course enrolments;
 - (e) the ACT’s primary and secondary schools and the CIT serve a NSW population that use services in the ACT but pay rates, car registration, stamp duty and other taxes and levies in NSW;

- (f) many cross-border developments in NSW do not include schools because residents use ACT schools (though NSW Government has recently built public schools at Murrumbateman, Jerrabomberra and Bungendore), which encourages the climate and environmental impacts of cross-border sprawl and means ACT ratepayers subsidise NSW developments;
 - (g) the Eslake report notes that in contrast to health services, the NSW Government does not contribute to the costs of ACT public education and also notes that the Commonwealth Grants Commission takes this into account in assessing the ACT's expenditure needs but does not provide details on how much the ACT loses in funding from this arrangement; and
 - (h) when asked why the ACT does not get a contribution for NSW students in ACT primary and secondary schools and CIT, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood advised it was a historical arrangement and the Government had not raised it in cross-border collaborations;
- (2) further notes that the ACT is uniquely and disproportionately impacted by the obligation to provide education services to students whose households do not pay ACT rates because they live in NSW or do not pay payroll taxes because their household employment is with the Australian Public Service. There is no other Australian jurisdiction with such a disproportionate fiscal disadvantage, faced with the costs of educating such a high ratio of non-resident students; and
- (3) calls on the Government to:
- (a) fully cost the amount the ACT Government is spending on NSW students in primary and secondary ACT government and non-government schools and detail existing arrangements for CIT;
 - (b) fully cost the allowance the Commonwealth Grants Commission makes to the ACT for this expenditure;
 - (c) invoice NSW Government on a cost recovery basis, including capital and depreciation, for all NSW students attending educational institutions receiving ACT Government funding from Term 3 onwards;
 - (d) pursue an update to the Chief Minister and Premier signed *ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration* to create an ongoing mechanism for payment via the next Senior Officials Dialogue on Regional Collaboration; and
 - (e) report back and table all correspondence and replies and explain representations made by Ministers and officials to the Assembly by 15 September 2026.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

20 PAPERS PRESENTED ON 28 MAY 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.

21 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS MOVED—PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE—PAPERS—PROPOSED PUBLICATION

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Mr Emerson (*see* [entry 10](#))—

Debate resumed.

Suspension of standing orders—Extension of debate: Mr Emerson moved—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the debate to extend past 15 minutes.

Question—put and passed, with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

Debate continued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 5	NOES, 17	
Andrew Braddock	Andrew Barr	Suzanne Orr
Fiona Carrick	Chiaka Barry	Mark Parton
Jo Clay	Peter Cain	Marisa Paterson
Thomas Emerson	Tara Cheyne	Michael Pettersson
Laura Nuttall	Ed Cocks	Chris Steel
	Jeremy Hanson	Rachel Stephen-Smith
	Elizabeth Lee	Caitlin Tough
	James Milligan	Taimus Werner-Gibbings
	Deborah Morris	

And so it was negatived.

22 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Four Members' statements were made.

23 MERRY N GATES—RETIREMENT—STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

The Speaker made a statement acknowledging the retirement of the Legislative Assembly Art Committee Advisor, Ms Merry N Gates.

24 ADJOURNMENT

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 5.18 pm, adjourned until Wednesday, 10 June 2026 at 10 am.

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE: All Members were present at some time during the sitting.

Tom Duncan
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly