



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

2004–2005–2006

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No. 81

WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2006

1 The Assembly met at 10.30 a.m., pursuant to adjournment. A quorum of Members not being present, the Speaker (Mr Berry) ordered the bells to be rung. A quorum having been formed, the Speaker 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 HEARING PROBLEMS—SCREENING OF NEW BORN BABIES

Mr Gentleman, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly notes:

- (1) the importance of screening new born babies for early health intervention;
- (2) that early detection of a hearing problem ensures early treatment and better outcomes for the baby concerned; and
- (3) that the long term value of establishing hearing in otherwise deaf babies is immeasurable and allows individuals to integrate into normal school appropriately.

Debate ensued.

Dr Foskey moved the following amendment: Omit paragraph (3), substitute:

“(3) there are a variety of treatments available to new born babies diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing, and the parents of the child should be informed of all available options.”.

Debate continued.

Question—That Dr Foskey’s amendment be agreed to—put and passed.

Question—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to—put and passed.

3 COMMUNITY HOUSING

Dr Foskey, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

- (1) recognises the growing importance of community housing in the provision of both social housing and affordable housing across Australia;
- (2) notes:
 - (a) that the ACT Government’s Affordable Housing Steering Group is due to make a final report in March 2007; and
 - (b) community concern that the Government appears to be moving away from its general support for community housing; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:
 - (a) develop a policy for community housing in partnership with both the community housing sector and the Affordable Housing Steering Group;
 - (b) produce an action plan for that policy; and
 - (c) incorporate the plan within the ACT Government’s 2007-08 budget.

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

- “(1) recognises the importance of community housing in the provision of both social housing and affordable housing across Australia; and
- (2) notes:
 - (a) that the ACT Government’s Affordable Housing Taskforce is due to make a final report in March 2007; and
 - (b) that the ACT Government has provided substantial support to the community housing sector.”.

Debate continued.

Question—That Mr Hargreaves’ amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 9		NOES, 8	
Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mrs Burke	Mr Seselja
Mr Berry	Ms MacDonald	Mrs Dunne	Mr Smyth
Mr Corbell	Ms Porter	Dr Foskey	Mr Stefaniak
Ms Gallagher	Mr Stanhope	Mr Mulcahy	
Mr Gentleman		Mr Pratt	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) recognises the importance of community housing in the provision of both social housing and affordable housing across Australia; and
- (2) notes:
 - (a) that the ACT Government’s Affordable Housing Taskforce is due to make a final report in March 2007; and

- (b) that the ACT Government has provided substantial support to the community housing sector.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

4 EMERGENCIES AMENDMENT BILL 2006

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 Smyth addressing the Assembly—

Debate interrupted in accordance with standing order 74 and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

5 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

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

NoWaste Award Winners 2006.

Questions continued.

6 PAPER

Mr Stanhope (Minister for the Arts), having added to an answer, presented the following paper:

Arts funding—Budget 2006-2007—Copy of letter from the Minister for the Arts to Mr Mulcahy, undated—Answer to question taken on notice from Mr Mulcahy on 14 November 2006.

7 TEMPORARY DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker informed the Assembly that, pursuant to standing order 8, he had revoked the nomination of Mrs Burke and had nominated Mrs Dunne as temporary Deputy Speaker and presented the following warrant of revocation and nomination:

Pursuant to the provisions of standing order 8, I—

1. revoke the nomination of Mrs Burke as a temporary Deputy Speaker, and
2. nominate Mrs Dunne to act as a temporary Deputy Speaker.

Given under my hand on 15 November 2006.

Wayne Berry, MLA
Speaker
15 November 2006

8 EMERGENCIES AMENDMENT BILL 2006

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.

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

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 7		NOES, 9	
Mrs Burke	Mr Smyth	Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves
Mrs Dunne	Mr Stefaniak	Mr Berry	Ms MacDonald
Mr Mulcahy		Mr Corbell	Ms Porter
Mr Pratt		Ms Gallagher	Mr Stanhope
Mr Seselja		Mr Gentleman	

And so it was negatived.

9 BELCONNEN—40TH ANNIVERSARY

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Ms Porter—That this Assembly notes the recent 40th anniversary of the establishment of Belconnen—

Debate resumed.

Question—put and passed.

10 TOWARDS 2020 PROPOSAL

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

- (1) notes that the current proposal called *Towards 2020* proposes significant changes to the structure of ACT government schooling as well as the closure of 39 schools;
- (2) recognises that there is a steady decline in the number of students enrolling in ACT government schools and that this decline cannot be accounted for simply by demographic shifts;
- (3) further:
 - (a) recognises that the proportion of students enrolling in non-government schools is increasing; and
 - (b) notes that one of the stated reasons for the *Towards 2020* proposal is to address the drift of students from government to non-government schools;
- (4) notes that the Government admits that it does not know the real reasons for this drift;
- (5) calls on the ACT Government to undertake a comprehensive study of the reasons for the drift of students from government to non-government schools; and
- (6) requires that the Minister for Education and Training report the results of the study to the Legislative Assembly by the first sitting day of March 2007.

Mr Barr (Minister for Education and Training) moved the following amendment: Omit all words after “Assembly”, substitute:

- “(1) recognises that the Government’s *Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools* proposal includes the largest investment in the ACT’s public school system since self-government;
- (2) notes that the proposal includes \$67 million for the establishment of new schools in West Belconnen and Gungahlin, and \$1 million for a feasibility study for a joint secondary college and CIT campus in Gungahlin;
- (3) commends the Government on the \$90 million capital upgrade package that forms part of the wider *Towards 2020* investment;
- (4) notes that the Government is backing its \$90 million capital investment with an extra \$3 million per annum from 2008-09 to keep our schools properly maintained;
- (5) supports the use of part of the Government’s record investment on ensuring our school buildings are more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable;
- (6) notes that there has been a decline in the ACT school-age population that necessitates change to ACT government schooling;
- (7) expresses concern over the increasing Commonwealth funding gap between public and private schools; and
- (8) notes that without change and significant investment, the government school system faces the real danger of becoming the residual education option for ACT children and parents.”.

Debate continued.

Mrs Dunne moved the following amendment to Mr Barr’s proposed amendment: Omit paragraphs (7) and (8), substitute:

- “(7) notes the need to understand why there is a steady decline in the proportion of school-aged children attending government schools;
- (8) calls on the ACT Government to increase its understanding of the declining proportion of school-aged children attending government schools; and
- (9) calls on the ACT Government to ensure that the expenditure of the \$90 million capital upgrade is based on sound research and understanding of need.”.

Debate continued.

Question—That Mrs Dunne’s amendment to Mr Barr’s proposed amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 6		NOES, 8	
Mrs Burke	Mr Smyth	Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves
Mrs Dunne	Mr Stefaniak	Mr Berry	Ms MacDonald
Mr Mulcahy		Ms Gallagher	Ms Porter
Mr Seselja		Mr Gentleman	Mr Stanhope

And so it was negatived.

Question—That Mr Barr’s amendment be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 8		NOES, 6	
Mr Barr	Mr Hargreaves	Mrs Burke	Mr Smyth
Mr Berry	Ms MacDonald	Mrs Dunne	Mr Stefaniak
Ms Gallagher	Ms Porter	Mr Mulcahy	
Mr Gentleman	Mr Stanhope	Mr Seselja	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) recognises that the Government’s *Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools* proposal includes the largest investment in the ACT’s public school system since self-government;
- (2) notes that the proposal includes \$67 million for the establishment of new schools in West Belconnen and Gungahlin, and \$1 million for a feasibility study for a joint secondary college and CIT campus in Gungahlin;
- (3) commends the Government on the \$90 million capital upgrade package that forms part of the wider *Towards 2020* investment;
- (4) notes that the Government is backing its \$90 million capital investment with an extra \$3 million per annum from 2008-09 to keep our schools properly maintained;
- (5) supports the use of part of the Government’s record investment on ensuring our school buildings are more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable;
- (6) notes that there has been a decline in the ACT school-age population that necessitates change to ACT government schooling;
- (7) expresses concern over the increasing Commonwealth funding gap between public and private schools; and
- (8) notes that without change and significant investment, the government school system faces the real danger of becoming the residual education option for ACT children and parents.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

11 ADJOURNMENT

Mr Barr (Minister for Education and Training) moved—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6.09 p.m., adjourned until tomorrow at 10.30 a.m.

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

Tom Duncan
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly