



Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

Non-sitting and sitting weeks—2 December 2019 to 14 February 2020

Issue 1/2020

Government Business

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

Motion debated

On 11 February 2020 the Chief Minister moved a motion in relation to the unprecedented **bushfire season** across the Territory and the rest of Australia. The motion sought to thank all agencies and services that provided assistance during, not only the bushfires, but also the storms recently experienced in the Territory. The terms of the motion also included thanking other States and Territories and international partners for their support and noted that the Government will appropriately recognise, at the conclusion of this year's bushfire and storm season, the service of all those that helped protect the ACT.

The majority of members spoke and all were in support of the motion. The motion was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

Bills introduced

[Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 \(No 2\)](#) (presented 13 February)

Summary: This bill will appropriate additional money for the purposes of the Territory for the financial year 2019-2020.

[Coroners Amendment Bill 2020](#) (presented 13 February)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Coroners Act 1997* by including provisions to better meet the needs of families who find themselves within a coronial process. The bill also amends the Act by making it easier for the Coroners Court to implement restorative approaches in its daily practice.

[Firearms Legislation Amendment Bill 2020](#) (presented 13 February)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Firearms Act 1996*, the *Firearms Regulation 2008* and the *Prohibited Weapons Act 1996* to allow aviation security inspectors to carry fake weapons including imitation firearms and prohibited weapons in order to test airport security. The bill also exempts participants, coaches and officials of biathlon or modern pentathlon from the requirement to obtain a permit for their laser target shooting devices used for the participation in their sport.

[Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2020](#) (presented 13 February)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Motor Accident Injuries Act 2019* to include that if a legal cost or fee is not prescribed by a regulation, a lawyer is still able to charge a client legal costs and fees.

[Rates Amendment Bill 2020](#) (presented 13 February)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Rates Act 2004* by lengthening the period used to calculate the average unimproved value of parcels of land in the Territory from three to five years. The bill will also amend the Act to require the commissioner to redetermine the unimproved value of a parcel of land as soon as practicable after a lease is varied.

[Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2020](#) (presented 13 February)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005*, the *Uncollected Goods Act 1996* and the *Residential Tenancies Regulation 1998* to improve protections for occupants by introducing new occupancy principles and by making those principles a mandatory part of every occupancy agreement. The bill will also clarify the difference between an occupancy agreement and a residential tenancy agreement and clarify the application of the occupancy framework to people who reside in residential parks.

Bills debated

[Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Motor Accident Injuries Act 2019* to include that if a legal cost or fee is not prescribed by a regulation, a lawyer is still able to charge a client legal costs and fees.

Proceedings: Debate on this bill occurred on 13 February after its introduction earlier that day. The bill received the support of all parties.

The bill was passed without amendment.

[Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2019](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to give effect to legislative recommendations from the 2016 review of the Act. These amendments include reducing the maximum rent payable in advance to two weeks, adds cooling to the list of urgent repairs, and increases the notice period required for landlords to terminate a periodic lease where the landlord or a person close to them wishes to move into the premises from four weeks to eight weeks.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 13 February with the Opposition stating that although the majority of the bill was minor and uncontroversial they believed that this was not the time to be making the changes proposed by the bill and outlined its reasons why. The ACT Greens indicated its support for the proposed legislation.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

A full record of the debates can be accessed at [Hansard](#).

Ministerial statements

The Chief Minister outlined the **Government priorities for 2020** during a ministerial statement made on 11 February. The Chief Minister stated that the Government was committed to investing in and growing Territory services and infrastructure to ensure they continue to meet the community's expectations and needs. The Leader of the Opposition also made a statement in relation to the Chief Minister's comments.

On 13 February the Treasurer made a ministerial statement concerning the **2019-20 Budget Review** and stated that budget review is a significant statement to the Assembly and the people of Canberra. The Treasurer outlined the Government's plans for the future and presented a copy of the Budget Review 2019-20 at the conclusion of his statement.

The full text of the statements made by Ministers and Members can be accessed from the [Assembly Hansard](#) site.

Private Members' Business

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

Motions debated

On 12 February, Mrs Jones MLA moved a motion in relation to the **impact of recent bushfires** in the Territory. The motion included noting the contribution and dedication of volunteer and career fire-fighters, emergency services personnel and Australian Defence Force personnel and reservists. The motion also included calling on the Government to fully support the affected areas of the Territory to recover and rebuild. During debate on the motion the Government proposed an amendment which sought to include noting that the ACT Government is committed to learning any lessons from the current bushfire season. Both the ACT Greens and the Opposition indicated support for the amendment which was passed by the Assembly.

The amended motion was agreed to.

A motion relating to **parking infringements** was moved by Mr Pettersson MLA on 12 February. The motion sought to highlight the negative effects that parking infringements can have on Canberrans' personal circumstances and the impact on parking inspectors when becoming targets of angry members of the public. The motion included calling on the Government to explore the feasibility of implementing a ten-minute grace period for parking fines issued to vehicles that have been paid for an hour or more of parking with an amendment moved by the ACT Greens calling on the Government to report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day in June 2020 on the proposal. A further amendment moved by the Opposition called on the Government to immediately institute a trial of the ten-minute grace period for parking fines. The Opposition's amendment was negated with the ACT Greens amendment being agreed to.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

Other motions debated on 12 February related to:

Disaster recovery mechanisms for businesses following recent severe weather events—Mr Wall MLA

Parking issues in the suburb of Lawson—Mrs Kikkert MLA

Auslan support during emergency situations—Ms Lawder MLA

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

Crossbench Executive Member's Business

Motion debated

Smoke and air quality in the Territory was the subject of a motion moved by Mr Rattenbury MLA on 13 February. The motion included noting that climate change is leading to hotter, drier weather and extended fire seasons and also outlined the range of issues revealed during this summer's weather events. The motion also included calling on the Government to create a whole-of-government strategy on smoke and air quality in the ACT. An amendment was moved by the Government during debate which included acknowledging the Government's investment in government school infrastructure upgrades to respond to the impact of climate change. The motion and the amendment were supported by the Opposition and the Government's amendment was passed.

The amended motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

The full terms of the above motion can be found in the [Minutes of Proceedings](#).

Matters of public importance

The following matters of public importance were discussed in the Assembly this week—

The importance of peaceful protest—Ms Le Couteur MLA.

The importance of reducing cost of living pressures for all Canberrans—Mr Wall MLA.

Papers Presented

The following are papers of interest that were presented by the Manager of Government Business during the sitting week:

- Approvals of Variations to the Territory Plan (*presented 11 February*)—
 - No 355—Calwell Group Centre—Zone changes and amendments to the Calwell Precinct Map and Code
 - No 360—Molonglo River Reserve: changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment
 - No 367—Common Ground—Dickson section 72 block 25—Zone change and amendments to the Dickson precinct map and code
- Auditor-General's Reports (*presented 11 February*)—
 - 9/2019—2018-19 Financial Audits—Overview
 - 10/2019—Financial Audits—Financial Results and Audit Findings
 - 11/2019—Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure

- Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment—State of the Environment Report 2019 (*presented 13 February*)
- Coronial inquest into the death of Lauren Maree Johnstone (*presented 11 February*)—
 - Coroner’s Report
 - Government response to coronial recommendations
- Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme—Implementation—Report for the period 1 July to 31 December 2019 (*presented 11 February*)
- Our Booris, Our Way—Final Report (*presented 13 February*)
- Remuneration Tribunal Determinations (*presented 13 February*)—
 - ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Determination 9 of 2019)
 - ACT Magistrates Court Judicial Positions (Determination 8 of 2019)
 - ACT Supreme Court Judicial Positions (Determination 7 of 2019)
 - Director of Public Prosecutions (Determination 12 of 2019)
 - Full-time Statutory Office Holders (Determination 15 of 2019)
 - Full-time Statutory Office Holders: Auditor-General, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Electoral Commissioner (Determination 14 of 2019)
 - Part-time Public Office Holders (Determination 13 of 2019)
 - Part-time Statutory Office Holder: Integrity Commissioner (Determination 10 of 2019)
 - Principal Registrar and Chief Executive Officer, ACT Courts and Tribunal (Determination 11 of 2019)
- Transport Action Plan—Quarterly update (*presented 13 February*)
- Review of the Operation of Mental Health Orders under the *Mental Health Act 2015*—Sections 58, 66, 101, 102 and 108 (*presented 13 February*)
- Update to the Legislative Assembly on progress on the Courts Construction Project (*presented 13 February*)

Petitions

The following e-petition and paper petition were lodged on 11 February—

- Newborn Screening for Severe Combined Immune Deficiency—lodged by Ms Le Couteur MLA.

The following ministerial responses to petitions were lodged on 11 February—

- Wanniasa bus network changes
- Future multi-dwelling development in Coombs

A copy of the petitions and ministerial responses can be found on the Assembly [Hansard](#) site.

Committee Activities

Committee reports presented

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

[Report 10—Inquiry into nature in our city](#) (*presented 13 February*)

Scrutiny Committee

[Scrutiny Report 38](#) (presented 11 February)

This report contained the committee's comments on four bills, proposed amendments to the Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, 29 pieces of subordinate legislation, five government responses and one regulatory impact statement.

Committee statements

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

On 11 February, the chair informed the Assembly that the committee had resolved to conduct an inquiry into, and report on, the state of youth mental health for those under 25 years of age and mental health services. The chair advised that the committee will call for public submissions with a closing date of 20 March 2020.

A further statement was made by the chair on 11 February concerning the consideration of statutory appointments by the committee for the period 1 July to 31 December 2019.

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee on made statements on 11 February concerning a number of petitions referred to the committee for consideration. The chair informed the Assembly that the committee had resolved not to inquire further into the matters raised in the petitions which related to:

- New destination recreation park for the Inner North
- Roller derby facilities in the ACT
- Improvements to the Yarralumla shops
- Transport Canberra's advertising policy

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee informed the Assembly on 11 February that the committee had resolved to conduct an inquiry into, and report on, planning for the SPIRE project and longer-term planning for The Canberra Hospital campus and immediate surrounds.

Committee referrals

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

On 11 February, petitions relating to newborn screening for Severe Combined Immune Deficiency were referred to the committee.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

On 13 February, the Appropriation Bill 2019-20 (No 2) was referred to the committee for inquiry and report.

Responses to committee reports

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

Report 9—Inquiry into a Territory Coat of Arms—Government Response (presented on 11 February)

Fuel Pricing—Select Committee

Report—Report on Inquiry into ACT fuel pricing—Government Response *(presented on 11 February)*

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Report 6 —Report on Inquiry into domestic and family violence—policy approaches and responses—Government response *(presented 11 February)*

Committee Membership

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

On 2 December 2019 Mr Parton MLA was discharged from the committee and Ms Lee MLA was appointed in his place.

Education Activities

Information on our various program offerings are available on the Assembly's [website](#).

Members of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Electorate of Brindabella

Ms Joy Burch (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Mick Gentleman (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Nicole Lawder (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Mark Parton (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Andrew Wall (Canberra Liberals)

Electorate of Ginninderra

Ms Yvette Berry (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Tara Cheyne (Australian Labor Party)

Mrs Vicki Dunne (Canberra Liberals)

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Gordon Ramsay (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Kurrajong

Mr Andrew Barr (Australian Labor Party)

Miss Candice Burch (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Elizabeth Lee (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Shane Rattenbury (ACT Greens)

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Murrumbidgee

Ms Bec Cody (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Jeremy Hanson CSC (Canberra Liberals)

Mrs Giulia Jones (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Caroline Le Couteur (ACT Greens)

Mr Chris Steel (Australian Labor Party)

Electorate of Yerrabi

Mr Alistair Coe (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Deepak Gupta (Australian Labor Party)

Mr James Milligan (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Suzanne Orr (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Michael Pettersson (Australian Labor Party)

Next Sitting

Tuesday, 18 February 2020.

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