



Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

Sitting of 18 June 2020

Issue 7/2020

Government Business

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

Bills introduced

[COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 \(No 2\)](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Electoral Act 1992* to support the conduct of a safe, fair and inclusive 2020 ACT election. The bill will expand the eligibility criteria for pre-poll voters, support the Electoral Commission's deployment of an overseas electronic voting solution and support the Commission's deployment of a telephone voting system for eligible ACT electors who are blind and vision impaired or have a physical disability. The bill will also repeal a section of the *Supreme Court Act 1933* relating to the conduct of jury trials which was inserted into the Act during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Employment and Workplace Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Workers Compensation Act 1951* by modernising provisions of the Act that deal with insurer and self-insurer approval to ensure workers can expect a consistent standard of service, regardless of whether their employer has a workers' compensation insurance policy or is self-insured. The bill will also amend the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* by inserting a new power on exercising a right of entry at a workplace. The *Public Sector Management Act 1994* will also be amended by this bill to align it with ACT Public Sector Enterprise Agreements in relation to merit and selection principles. Structure and technical amendments will also be made to the *Dangerous Goods (Road Transport) Act 2009*.

[Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will make amendments to a number of Territory laws by introducing a fit and proper person test to licence a real estate agent or register a salesperson and by protecting consumers by enabling the Commissioner of Fair Trading to conduct binding conciliation for consumer disputes up to \$5000. The bill will also streamline and strengthen processes at the ACT Human Rights Commission, improve and clarify processes under the *Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005* and allow for particular youth sexual offence convictions to be spent subject to robust safeguards. The bill also makes a number of technical amendments to ACT legislation.

Bills debated

[Building and Construction Legislation Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Building Act 2004*, the *Building (General) Regulation 2008* and the *Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act 2001* by implementing provisions relating to the ACT Building Regulatory System reform program. The bill also introduces a new administrative power for the responsible Minister for the functions of the Construction Occupations Registrar to make a statement of expectations in relation to the Registrar's functions. A number of minor and technical amendments to building laws will also be made by this bill.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on 18 June with all parties indicating support for the proposed legislation. The bill was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

[Financial Management Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Financial Management Act 1996* to enable the increase of appropriation allowed under the Act during the 2020-2021 supply period from 50 to 100 percent of the 2019-2020 Territory budget. This is required due to the delay in presentation of the 2020-2021 Budget as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Proceedings: The proposed legislation received support of all parties in the Assembly when debate resumed on 18 June and was agreed to in principle.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

[Public Health Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will amend the *Public Health Act 1997* by proposing changes to the compensation arrangements under the Act. The amendments provide that compensation will not be payable to an otherwise eligible person if the loss or damage is suffered as a result of anything done in the exercise of a function under Part 7 of the Act in relation to a COVID-19 declaration, while the declaration was in force. Part 7 of the Act relates to public health emergencies.

Proceedings: When debate resumed on 19 June the Opposition stated it would be oppose the passage of this bill and outlined reasons for its position. The ACT Greens indicated support for the bill. The bill was agreed to in principle.

During the detail stage the Opposition outlined the purpose of an amendment it had moved. The amendment was negated after a vote of the Assembly.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

Motion debated

Postponement of the 2020-21 ACT Budget was the subject of a motion moved by the Treasurer on 18 June. The motion called on the Assembly to resolve to delay the introduction of the budget bills until after the October 2020 election. The motion also sought to acknowledge that, due to the present situation, a number of amendments would be required to reporting requirements under the *Financial Management Act 1996*.

During debate an amendment was moved by the Opposition that included a requirement for the Government to consult with leaders of all parties before alternative reporting measures were publicly announced and also called on the Government to present to the Assembly a number of financial reports by the end of the sitting day. The Opposition's amendment was negated following a vote of the Assembly. An amendment was then moved by the Government that included noting that the Government had announced a timeframe for the release of an Economic and Fiscal Update and that, as is usual practice, the Under Treasurer would release a pre-election budget update in September. An amendment to the Government's amendment was moved by the Opposition seeking to add to the amendment the requirement to consult with party leaders before additional financial measures are publicly announced and to publish a number of economic figures on the Government's website by 25 June 2020. The Opposition's amendments were negated following a further vote of the Assembly. The amendment moved by the Government was then passed.

The amended motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

Ministerial statements

The Treasurer made a ministerial statement on 18 June in relation to the ACT's **economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic**. During the statement the Treasurer informed the Assembly of the economic impacts of COVID-19 to date and outlined the ACT Government's plan to rebuild the economy.

On 18 June the Minister for Health updated the Assembly on the **ACT Government's response to the COVID-19 emergency**. During the statement the Minister presented the Chief Health Officer's latest report on the status of the public health emergency due to COVID-19.

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

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

Motion debated

A motion proposing a final reporting date of no later than 27 August 2020 for the Select Committee on the COVID-29 Pandemic Response was the subject of a motion moved during Assembly business on 18 June. The Opposition indicated support for the motion during debate, however, stated that should there be a second wave of the pandemic, it may seek to amend the reporting date. The ACT Greens indicated agreement with the Opposition's comments and indicated its support for the motion.

The motion was agreed to by the Assembly without amendment.

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

Private Members' Business

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

Motion debated

Supporting the **planting of one million trees** in the ACT over the next 10 years was the subject of a motion moved by Ms Lee MLA on 18 June. During debate an amendment was moved by the Government that sought to outline the Government's commitment to achieving a 30 percent canopy cover in urban areas by 2045. The amendment also included acknowledging work currently being undertaken by the Government in this area. The ACT Greens welcomed the interest in trees by all parties in the Assembly and supported the Government's amendment that was agreed to following a vote.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

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

Bill debated

[Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2020](#)

Summary: This bill will improve environmental outcomes of planning and residential tenancies legislation by amending the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, the *Planning and Development Regulation 2008* and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*. The amendments will improve the community's ability to engage with the planning system and improve the outcomes of the planning system for the wider community.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 18 June with the Government stating that improving the planning system in the Territory requires a comprehensive strategic response and they hoped to work with the ACT Greens over the coming months to further discuss ways that amendments can be implemented in a strategic way to improve the ACT's system. The Opposition indicated support for a number of the proposed amendments contained in the bill, however, stated some elements of the bill required additional scrutiny. The bill was agreed to in principle.

Debate on the proposed legislation was adjourned in the detail stage.

Papers Presented

The following papers of interest were presented on 18 June 2020:

- Approval of Variation No 373 to the Territory Plan—Removal of mandatory gas provision from the Estate Development Code
- A special report by the ACT Electoral Commission: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the 2020 ACT Legislative Assembly Election—Government response
- Auditor-General's Report No 1/2020: Shared Services delivery of HR and Finance Services—Government response
- Icon Water Limited—Business Strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24
- Independent review of planning, development built form (excellence in sustainable design) in the Molonglo Valley—Final Report

- Government responses to resolutions of the Assembly—
 - Auslan support during emergency situations (resolution of 12 February 2020)
 - Litter and illegal dumping (resolution of 19 February 2020)
 - Mobility parking arrangements (resolution of 19 February 2020)
 - Molonglo Valley—Planning and Development—Independent Review (resolution of 23 October 2019)
 - Recycling and waste reduction (resolution of 31 July 2019)
- Publicly Funded Homebirth trial in the ACT—
 - Evaluation Report
 - Government response to recommendations

Petitions

The following e-petition and petition were lodged—

- Preservation of parkland adjacent to Cooleman Court, Weston (*Ms Le Couteur*)
- Revision of proposed development in Durham Place, Chisholm (*Mr Wall*)

A copy of the terms of these petitions can be found on the Assembly [Hansard](#) site.

Committee Activities

Committee report presented

Scrutiny Committee

[Scrutiny Report 44](#)

This report contained the committee's comments on four bills, 16 pieces of subordinate legislation, proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2020 and five government responses.

Committee statement

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee made a statement in relation to a corrigenda to Report 10 of the committee entitled *Report on Inquiry into Maternity Services in the ACT*. The purpose of the corrigenda was to replace respective text in the published report. At the conclusion of the statement the chair presented the corrigenda.

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

Paper presented

Committee Reports—Schedule of Government Responses—Ninth Assembly, as at 15 June 2020.

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

Thursday, 2 July 2020.

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