



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2024–2025–2026

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No 60

**WEDNESDAY, 27 MAY 2026**

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- 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 Members had lodged petitions for presentation:

Ms Clay, from 2,545 and 558 residents, requesting that the Assembly call on the ACT Government to rule out declaring bare-nosed wombat a controlled native species, and ensure all wombat-related policies comply with ACT legislation (e-Pet 015-26 and Pet 049-26).

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

Ms Lee, from 170 and 1,657 residents, requesting that the Assembly call on the ACT Government to reconsider the location and services to be provided at the proposed Inner South Health Centre in Griffith (e-Pet 029-26 and Pet 050-26).

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

Ms Carrick, from 78 and 156 residents, requesting that the Assembly call on the ACT Government to install traffic lights at the intersection of Hindmarsh Drive and Tyagarah Street in O'Malley (e-Pet 023-26 and Pet 051-26).

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

*Paper:* Ms Clay, by leave, presented the following paper:

Petition which does not conform with the standing orders—Save our wombats—Ms Clay (17,308 signatures).

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

### **3 HOUSING SUPPLY—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED**

Mr Barr (Chief Minister) made a ministerial statement concerning housing supply initiatives by the ACT and the Commonwealth Governments and presented the following paper:

Housing supply—Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

### **4 A.C.T. PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM RESOURCING REVIEW—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND PAPERS—PAPER NOTED**

Ms Berry (Minister for Education and Early Childhood) made a ministerial statement concerning ACT public school system resourcing review and presented the following papers:

ACT Public School System Resourcing Review—

Final Report of the Expert Panel—Supporting the delivery of an effective and equitable public education system in the ACT, dated 2 April 2026.

Interim Government response—Future of Education: One public education system, undated.

Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

Ms Berry moved—That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

### **5 VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING—UPDATE—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED**

Ms Stephen-Smith (Minister for Health) made a ministerial statement concerning the operation of voluntary assisted dying scheme and presented the following paper:

Voluntary Assisted Dying—Update—Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

**6 NDIS FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORTS—IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING—ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION OF 24 SEPTEMBER 2025—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED**

Ms Orr (Minister for Disability, Carers and Community Services) made a ministerial statement concerning the Government response to the Assembly resolution of 24 September 2025 relating to the implementation and reporting of NDIS and Foundational Supports and presented the following paper:

NDIS Foundational Supports—Implementation and reporting—Assembly resolution of 24 September 2025—Government response—Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

**7 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS—CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

Ms Cheyne (Manager of Government Business) moved—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Committee business scheduled for today being called on at a later hour this day.

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

**8 DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE—2026—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND PAPERS—PAPER NOTED**

Dr Paterson (Minister for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence) made a ministerial statement concerning the 2026 Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Ministerial Statement and presented the following papers:

ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy 2026-2036—

Strategy, undated.

First Action Plan 2026-2028, undated.

2026 Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence—Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

Dr Paterson moved—That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

**9 NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL—2026—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED**

Mr Pettersson (Minister for Multicultural Affairs) made a ministerial statement concerning the 2026 National Multicultural Festival and presented the following paper:

2026 National Multicultural Festival—Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

**10 MULTICULTURALISM, ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION FRAMEWORKS—  
ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION OF 17 SEPTEMBER 2025—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—  
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND PAPER—PAPER NOTED**

Mr Pettersson (Minister for Multicultural Affairs) made a ministerial statement concerning the Government response to the Assembly resolution of 17 September 2025 relating to multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks and presented the following papers:

Multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks—Assembly resolution of 17 September 2025—Government response—

Report, dated April 2026.

Ministerial statement, 27 May 2026.

Mr Pettersson moved—That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question—put and passed.

**11 QUESTIONS**

Questions without notice being asked—

*Paper—Proposed order to table:* Mr Braddock moved—That, in accordance with standing order 213, Mr Pettersson (Minister for Multicultural Affairs) table the document he quoted from.

Debate adjourned (Ms Stephen-Smith—Minister for Health) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

Questions continued.

**12 WHISTLEBLOWER SUPPORT—IMPROVEMENT**

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

(1) notes that:

- (a) whistleblowers improve transparency and accountability in public institutions and are essential for a healthy and functional democracy;
- (b) whistleblowing frameworks must be designed to encourage and support whistleblowers to come forward;
- (c) the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994* (PID Act) made the ACT one of the first jurisdictions in the world to introduce dedicated whistleblower protection laws;
- (d) since this legislation was updated in 2012, Australian and international whistleblowing standards and best practice have evolved considerably and the ACT's whistleblowing framework is no longer considered world-leading;
- (e) the ACT Government reviewed the PID Act in 2023, and in June 2024, the ACT Government committed to providing a more substantive and considered response to the review's recommendations during the Eleventh Assembly, but is yet to do so; and

- (f) whistleblowers continue to play a critical role in exposing issues in public administration in the ACT, including recently in relation to the treatment of First Nations ACT public servants and the governance of the Canberra Institute of Technology;
- (2) further notes that:
- (a) the South Australian Court of Appeal applied a narrow interpretation of whistleblowing protections in *Boyle v DPP (Cwth)* [2024] SASCA 73, resulting in the prosecution of Richard Boyle for exposing unethical debt recovery practices at the Australian Taxation Office;
  - (b) following the Boyle case, the Federal and Queensland Governments both indicated they are considering expanding the scope of protections for whistleblowers;
    - (i) in February 2025, Federal independent crossbenchers Andrew Wilkie, Helen Haines, David Pocock and Jacqui Lambie introduced the Whistleblower Protection Authority Bill 2025 (No. 2), seeking to establish an independent Whistleblower Protection Authority; and
    - (ii) the Federal Government subsequently released a consultation draft of the Public Interest Disclosure and Other Legislation Amendment (Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2025, which proposes to:
      - (A) establish a new dedicated Whistleblower Ombudsman within the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman;
      - (B) clarify and strengthen protections and supports for whistleblowers; and
      - (C) ensure that whistleblowing rights, obligations and procedures are clear and accessible;
  - (c) in 2024, the NSW Government established a whistleblower support function within the NSW Ombudsman, piloting legal and wellbeing referral programs in addition to its casework function, to embed a positive “speak up” culture for public servants; and
  - (d) the Queensland Government has indicated it is considering piloting a whistleblower legal support funding scheme; and
- (3) calls on the Government to:
- (a) ensure clear guidance and educational materials on whistleblowing pathways and processes are made available and distributed across the ACT public sector;
  - (b) embed a whistleblower support function in the ACT Integrity Commission, Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission or the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, including a pilot for legal and wellbeing support for whistleblowers; and
  - (c) provide an update on its progress and expected timelines toward implementing the recommendations from the 2023 PID Act review and report back on options, expected funding requirements and timelines for implementation of the whistleblower support function by the last sitting week of 2026.

*Papers:* Mr Emerson, by leave, presented the following documents:

Public Interest Disclosure—

CIT Electric Vehicle Training Program—Safety, compliance and governance concerns—  
Statement from a whistleblower, undated.

Copy of email to CIT CEO from a whistleblower, dated 9 January 2026.

First Nations ACT Government public servants—Work health and safety concerns—

Letter to Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly from Mr Brendan Moyle, dated  
16 May 2026.

Copy of email to the ACT Head of Service from the Executive Branch Manager, Office  
of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Community Services Directorate,  
dated 4 August 2025.

Mr Emerson sought leave to move a motion to authorise the publication of the documents.

Objection being raised, leave not granted.

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

### **13 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS MOVED—PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE—PAPERS—PROPOSED PUBLICATION**

Mr Emerson moved—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.

Debate adjourned (Mr Parton—Leader of the Opposition) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for 28 May 2026.

### **14 OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE—A.C.T. PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM—LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND REPORTING**

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

(1) notes:

- (a) repeated and escalating incidents of occupational violence across the ACT public health system, including physical assaults, strangulation and staff trapped in unsafe clinical areas;
- (b) the failure of this Government to publicly report incidents of occupational violence;
- (c) ongoing concerns raised repeatedly by frontline health workers and unions about staff safety risks that have not been acted upon by this Government;
- (d) more than 100 incidents of physical harm to staff have been reported within the Critical Services Building since opening; and
- (e) that no healthcare worker should be expected to accept violence as “part of the job”;

- (2) further notes that:
- (a) public health staff have repeatedly raised concerns about inadequate security arrangements, unsafe designs and insufficient staffing levels;
  - (b) this Government's lack of transparency regarding violent incidents in ACT public hospitals remains inadequate and intentionally prevents public accountability;
  - (c) it condemns and rejects any suggestion that violence against healthcare workers is unavoidable or inevitable;
  - (d) the NSW Government has passed legislative reforms creating specific offences and increased penalties for assaults against frontline emergency and health workers; and
  - (e) the current legal framework within the ACT may not provide sufficient deterrent against violence directed towards healthcare workers; and
- (3) calls on the Government to:
- (a) publicly acknowledge that the current level of occupational violence in the ACT public health system represents a systemic workplace safety failure;
  - (b) release de-identified quarterly data on occupational violence incidents across the public health system;
  - (c) review if existing laws provide adequate protections and penalties for assaults against frontline health workers, including comparisons of protections in the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022 (NSW);
  - (d) finalise enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations and consider including and extending occupational violence leave for critical incidents and trauma pertaining to frontline workers; and
  - (e) report back to the Assembly within three months on actions taken to improve occupational safety with the public health system.

Debate ensued.

Ms Stephen-Smith (Minister for Health), by leave, moved the following amendments together:

1. Omit paragraph (1)(b), substitute:
  - “(b) occasions of staff absence caused by occupational violence are publicly reported in the Canberra Health Services Annual Report;”.
2. Omit paragraph (2)(b).
3. Omit paragraph (3)(a), substitute:
  - “(a) publicly acknowledge that the current level of occupational violence in the ACT public health system is not acceptable and that there is an ongoing need to strengthen prevention and responses to occupational violence;”.

Debate continued.

Amendments agreed to.

Ms Clay, who had already spoken, by leave, moved the following amendment to the motion, as amended: After paragraph (3)(c) insert new paragraphs:

- “(d) review interventions undertaken by other jurisdictions (in Australia and overseas) to reduce occupational violence in healthcare, to ascertain whether the Government has adopted the most effective means for achieving this, or if there are more effective means worth implementing here;
- (e) consider whether a formal MOU to better connect the ACT Ambulance Service and ACT Policing operations with Health will assist in reducing occupational violence in healthcare;”.

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
  - (a) repeated and escalating incidents of occupational violence across the ACT public health system, including physical assaults, strangulation and staff trapped in unsafe clinical areas;
  - (b) occasions of staff absence caused by occupational violence are publicly reported in the Canberra Health Services Annual Report;
  - (c) ongoing concerns raised repeatedly by frontline health workers and unions about staff safety risks that have not been acted upon by this Government;
  - (d) more than 100 incidents of physical harm to staff have been reported within the Critical Services Building since opening; and
  - (e) that no healthcare worker should be expected to accept violence as ‘part of the job’;
- (2) further notes that:
  - (a) public health staff have repeatedly raised concerns about inadequate security arrangements, unsafe designs and insufficient staffing levels;
  - (b) it condemns and rejects any suggestion that violence against healthcare workers is unavoidable or inevitable;
  - (c) the NSW Government has passed legislative reforms creating specific offences and increased penalties for assaults against frontline emergency and health workers; and
  - (d) the current legal framework within the ACT may not provide sufficient deterrent against violence directed towards healthcare workers; and
- (3) calls on the Government to:
  - (a) publicly acknowledge that the current level of occupational violence in the ACT public health system is not acceptable and that there is an ongoing need to strengthen prevention and responses to occupational violence;

- (b) release de-identified quarterly data on occupational violence incidents across the public health system;
- (c) review if existing laws provide adequate protections and penalties for assaults against frontline health workers, including comparisons of protections in the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022 (NSW);
- (d) review interventions undertaken by other jurisdictions (in Australia and overseas) to reduce occupational violence in healthcare, to ascertain whether the Government has adopted the most effective means for achieving this, or if there are more effective means worth implementing here;
- (e) consider whether a formal MOU to better connect the ACT Ambulance Service and ACT Policing operations with Health will assist in reducing occupational violence in healthcare;
- (f) finalise enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations and consider including and extending occupational violence leave for critical incidents and trauma pertaining to frontline workers; and
- (g) report back to the Assembly within three months on actions taken to improve occupational safety with the public health system.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

**15 DISCHARGE OF ORDER OF THE DAY—ASSEMBLY BUSINESS—PAPER—PROPOSED ORDER TO TABLE**

The order of the day having been called on (*see entry 11*)—

Mr Braddock moved—That, pursuant to standing order 152, order of the day Assembly business, relating to proposed order to table a paper quoted by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Question—put and passed.

**16 INTEGRITY COMMISSION AND STATUTORY OFFICE HOLDERS—STANDING COMMITTEE—REPORT 7—INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSPARENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – FINAL REPORT—REPORT NOTED**

Mr Cocks (Chair) presented the following report:

Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders—Standing Committee—Reports presented—2026—Report 7—*Inquiry into the effectiveness of transparency arrangements for Members of the Legislative Assembly – Final Report*, dated 19 May 2026, including a dissenting report (*Mr Werner-Gibbings*), together with extract of the relevant minutes of proceedings—

and moved—That the report be noted.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

**17 ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING—STANDING COMMITTEE—PETITIONS—DRAFT AMENDMENT 102—HUME CIRCLE PRECINCT—EXTENSION OF CONSULTATION PERIOD—STATEMENT BY CHAIR**

Ms Clay (Chair), pursuant to standing order 246A, informed the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning had resolved not to conduct an inquiry into e-petition 005-25 and petition 011-26 concerning Draft Amendment 102 to the National Capital Plan—Hume Circle Precinct (Staffordshire Terrace).

**18 SOCIAL POLICY—STANDING COMMITTEE—E-PETITION 065-25—HEALTH SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RESIDENTS IN NORTH CANBERRA—ACCESS IMPROVEMENT—STATEMENT BY CHAIR**

Mr Emerson (Chair), pursuant to standing order 246A, informed the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Policy had resolved not to conduct an inquiry into e-petition 065-25 concerning improvement of access to health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in North Canberra.

**19 CITY AND ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026**

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.

*Paper:* Ms Cheyne (Minister for City and Government Services) presented a revised explanatory statement to the Bill.

Mr Braddock, by leave, made a statement.

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

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Question—That this Bill be agreed to—put and passed.

**20 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

Five Members' statements were made.

**21 ADJOURNMENT**

Ms Cheyne (Attorney-General) moved—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 5.55 pm, adjourned until tomorrow at 10 am.

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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