LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

2024–2025–2026

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

No 75

WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 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 AUSTRALIAN EARLY DEVELOPMENT CENSUS RESULTS DRIVERS—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND PAPER—PAPER NOTED

Ms Stephen-Smith (Minister for Child Development and Wellbeing) made a ministerial statement concerning the results of the Australian Early Development Census and presented the following papers:

Emerging drivers of declining AEDC results in the ACT: Final Report—Commissioned by the ACT Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD), dated 26 August 2026.

Australian Early Development Census Results Drivers—Ministerial statement, 28 October 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

3 CANBERRA HOUSE PATTERN BOOK—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—PAPER NOTED

Mr Steel (Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development) made a ministerial statement concerning the development of the Canberra House Pattern Book of "missing middle" housing designs and presented the following paper:

Canberra House Pattern Book—Ministerial statement, 28 October 2026.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

4 SITTING PATTERN 2027

Ms Cheyne (Manager of Government Business), pursuant to notice, moved—That:

(1) the Assembly shall meet as follows for 2027 unless an absolute majority of Members request, in writing, that the Speaker or in the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, or in the absence of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the Clerk, fixes an alternative day or hour of meeting or the Assembly otherwise orders:

February	2	3	4
	23	24	25
March	2	3	4
April	6	7	8
May	4	5	6
	11	12	13
June		16	17
	22	23	
August	10		
September	7	8	9
	14	15	16
October	12	13	14
	19	20	21
November	23	24	25
	30		
December		1	2; and

(2) so much of standing orders be suspended to allow the Assembly to proceed with its business on Tuesday, 10 August 2027 in the following routine:

Acknowledgement and Prayer or reflection

Presentation of petitions

Take note of petitions

Assembly/Committee Business

Questions without notice

Private Members' business

Member 90 second statements

Adjournment:

provided that at 2 pm, the Speaker shall interrupt the business before the Assembly in order that questions without notice shall be called on.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

5 CURTIN PRESBYTERY REDEVELOPMENT—DOCUMENTS—ORDER TO TABLE

Mr Cocks, pursuant to notice, moved—That, in accordance with standing order 213A, the Assembly orders the Government to provide the Assembly with the following documents relating to Development Application 202645654, previously DA 202644959, and any subsequent development applications, at Strangways Street, Curtin, Section 61, Blocks 7-8:

(1) the final evaluation report and any corrigenda;

(2) complete score sheets, timing score and moderation notes;

(3) any clarifications sought from and provided by the applicant;

(4) assessment reasoning for every proposal, including unsuccessful ones;

(5) the business case, financial model and any sensitivity analysis;

(6) the letter of intent, schedule of grant assistance and any executed deed of grant and variations;

(7) the statement of amounts approved, committed and paid;

(8) the original and current milestone schedules; and

(9) all signed conflict of interest declarations, updates and management plans for each panel member and chair, including nil and perceived declarations and any related to subsequent board appointments.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

6 PAEDIATRIC ALLERGY CLINIC WAITLIST—DOCUMENTS—ORDER TO TABLE

Mr Emerson, Mr Parton (Leader of the Opposition) and Ms Vassarotti, pursuant to notice, moved—That, in accordance with standing order 213A, this Assembly orders the Government to table:

(1) the following documents from the 2026 calendar year:

(a) all decision briefs to ministers and Senior Executive Service staff regarding the Paediatric Allergy Clinic waitlist;

(b) any clinical reviews of the eligibility criteria for the Paediatric Allergy Clinic;

(c) any risk assessments undertaken prior to changing the eligibility criteria for the Paediatric Allergy Clinic; and

(d) any complaints from Canberra Health Services staff regarding proposed changes to the eligibility criteria for the Paediatric Allergy Clinic; and

(2) an aggregated summary of:

(a) data showing the number of patients on the Paediatric Allergy Clinic waitlist over the last five years, including how many patients have been treated and how many patients have been added to the waitlist every six months; and

(b) the number and proportion of patients that have been removed from the Paediatric Allergy Clinic's waitlist through the recent changes to eligibility criteria.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

7 BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION 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: Mr Steel (Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development) presented a revised explanatory statement to the Bill.

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.

8 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice were asked.

9 SUICIDE PREVENTION BILL 2026

Mr Parton (Leader of the Opposition), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to reduce and prevent the incidence of deaths by suicide in the Australian Capital Territory, to establish the Suicide Prevention Council, to provide for the preparation and implementation of suicide prevention plans, to require the training of persons and organisations in suicide prevention and postvention, and for other purposes.

Paper: Mr Parton presented an explanatory statement to the Bill.

Title read by Clerk.

Mr Parton moved—That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

Debate adjourned (Dr Paterson—Minister for Mental Health) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

10 SCHOOL BUDGET PROCESS—2027—ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT

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

(1) notes:

(a) that in August 2026, ACT school leaders were presented with indicative 2027 budgets, with many advised they faced significant cuts;

(b) that *Canberra Times* reporting, based on Education Directorate data, shows at least 58 ACT Government schools face budget cuts in 2027 compared with 2026, with 37 facing cuts of more than 5 percent;

(c) reports that some ACT schools have already laid off Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) as a result of budget cuts, while others are considering cutting programs for 2027;

(d) that the Education Directorate introduced measures to address a suspected increase in occupational violence, stating principals may suffer stress, anxiety and conflict when communicating the impact of budget cuts, including staffing changes, to their communities;

(e) that the risk assessment acknowledges reduced student supports could escalate student behaviour and increase incidents of occupational violence;

(f) that according to data obtained by the *Canberra Times*, some of the ACT's most disadvantaged schools are facing some of the largest cuts, despite the Government justifying these cuts by saying there needed to be more focus on equity and need;

(g) the distress and anxiety caused by the mismanagement of the 2027 school budgets for principals, staff, parents, students and broader school communities;

(h) the Minister for Education's continued denial of budget cuts in the Assembly, adding to the confusion, distress and uncertainty facing school communities;

(i) that the Australian Education Union ACT Branch has called on the Minister for Education to take responsibility and accountability for those decisions and be honest with the community rather than throwing principals under the bus;

(j) that this is occurring when our government school system is at breaking point, with increased reports of violence, chronic staff shortages, increased splitting, collapsing and flexing of classes and declining student outcomes; and

(k) the Government has indicated that it is revising the Student Resource Allocation (SRA) model; and

(2) calls on the Minister for Education to:

(a) take responsibility for the mismanagement of the 2027 school budget process, which has caused confusion, anxiety and stress for school leaders, staff, families and students;

(b) establish clear budget development protocols, in consultation with principals and key stakeholders, that include defined timelines and meaningful consultation to ensure principals have a genuine role in school budget decision-making; and

(c) report back to the Assembly by 3 December 2026 on the timeline and progress of the work the Government is undertaking on revising the SRA model.

Miss Nuttall moved the following amendment: After all text in paragraph (1)(k), insert:

"(l) the ACT Public School Resourcing Review Final Report said 'given the significant number of high schools and colleges over budget, there is not scope to rebalance within the existing funding envelope. Instead, this requires medium-term consideration within the national context;".

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

"That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

(a) that in August 2026, ACT school leaders were presented with indicative 2027 budgets, with many advised they faced significant cuts;

(b) that *Canberra Times* reporting, based on Education Directorate data, shows at least 58 ACT Government schools face budget cuts in 2027 compared with 2026, with 37 facing cuts of more than 5 percent;

(c) reports that some ACT schools have already laid off Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) as a result of budget cuts, while others are considering cutting programs for 2027;

(d) that the Education Directorate introduced measures to address a suspected increase in occupational violence, stating principals may suffer stress, anxiety and conflict when communicating the impact of budget cuts, including staffing changes, to their communities;

(e) that the risk assessment acknowledges reduced student supports could escalate student behaviour and increase incidents of occupational violence;

(f) that according to data obtained by the *Canberra Times*, some of the ACT's most disadvantaged schools are facing some of the largest cuts, despite the Government justifying these cuts by saying there needed to be more focus on equity and need;

(g) the distress and anxiety caused by the mismanagement of the 2027 school budgets for principals, staff, parents, students and broader school communities;

(h) the Minister for Education's continued denial of budget cuts in the Assembly, adding to the confusion, distress and uncertainty facing school communities;

(i) that the Australian Education Union ACT Branch has called on the Minister for Education to take responsibility and accountability for those decisions and be honest with the community rather than throwing principals under the bus;

(j) that this is occurring when our government school system is at breaking point, with increased reports of violence, chronic staff shortages, increased splitting, collapsing and flexing of classes and declining student outcomes;

(k) the Government has indicated that it is revising the Student Resource Allocation (SRA) model; and

(l) the ACT Public School Resourcing Review Final Report said 'given the significant number of high schools and colleges over budget, there is not scope to rebalance within the existing funding envelope. Instead, this requires medium-term consideration within the national context; and

(2) calls on the Minister for Education to:

(a) take responsibility for the mismanagement of the 2027 school budget process, which has caused confusion, anxiety and stress for school leaders, staff, families and students;

(b) establish clear budget development protocols, in consultation with principals and key stakeholders, that include defined timelines and meaningful consultation to ensure principals have a genuine role in school budget decision-making; and

(c) report back to the Assembly by 3 December 2026 on the timeline and progress of the work the Government is undertaking on revising the SRA model."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

11 COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SCHEME—REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

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

(1) notes that:

(a) the community gaming model that operates in the ACT is a key way that clubs generate their social licence to provide gambling products that are known to cause significant harm in the community and have design features that are addictive;

(b) the ACT's Community Contributions Scheme requires 8 percent of net gaming machine revenue to be provided back to the community and clubs report that these contributions fund sporting organisations, charities, community service providers and others;

(c) the scheme provides significant financial support, particularly to community sport, however the amount is difficult to quantify due to the lack of data; an estimate is between $12 million and $40 million per year;

(d) there is a lack of transparency and accountability around how individual clubs administer the scheme. While the scheme was reviewed in 2018, and revised, reviewing and auditing has been limited since then;

(e) the Gaming and Racing Commission's audit of 19 club licensees in 2024-2025 found that none were compliant with community contribution reporting obligations;

(f) the Government's gambling reform agenda will reduce gambling revenue and reduce the funds available through the Community Contributions Scheme; and

(g) it is important that sporting clubs, charities, community service providers and others benefitting from the Community Contributions Scheme have access to long-term, sustainable funding sources that do not depend on gambling losses and that these organisations do not bear the costs of the transition; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

(a) review the operation of the Community Contributions Scheme, including transparency, compliance, the appropriateness of including in-kind contributions in calculations, the value for money delivered by the current model and expected funding changes from the proposed gambling reforms;

(b) conduct a feasibility study into a centralised, independent fund for community contributions to ensure long-term, sustainable funding for community purposes, including appropriate governance models, streamlined distribution models and mechanisms to maintain and enhance the value to the community of community contribution funds;

(c) consider funding a peak community sports body to ensure the interests of community sport are represented through this transition; and

(d) report back to the Assembly on the outcomes of the review, feasibility study and peak community sports body by the Tuesday of the final sitting week of 2027.

Mr Parton (Leader of the Opposition) moved the following amendment: In paragraph (2)(d), after "sports body", insert: "and how the Government intends to replace any reduction in community contributions as a result of Government's gambling reforms".

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr Emerson, by leave, moved the following amendment to the motion, as amended: After paragraph (2)(c), insert:

"(d) ensure sufficient investment in community sport, and that community sports organisations are no worse off under any new community contributions model;".

Amendment agreed to.

Debate continued.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

"That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) the community gaming model that operates in the ACT is a key way that clubs generate their social licence to provide gambling products that are known to cause significant harm in the community and have design features that are addictive;

(b) the ACT's Community Contributions Scheme requires 8 percent of net gaming machine revenue to be provided back to the community and clubs report that these contributions fund sporting organisations, charities, community service providers and others;

(c) the scheme provides significant financial support, particularly to community sport, however the amount is difficult to quantify due to the lack of data; an estimate is between $12 million and $40 million per year;

(d) there is a lack of transparency and accountability around how individual clubs administer the scheme. While the scheme was reviewed in 2018, and revised, reviewing and auditing has been limited since then;

(e) the Gaming and Racing Commission's audit of 19 club licensees in 2024-2025 found that none were compliant with community contribution reporting obligations;

(f) the Government's gambling reform agenda will reduce gambling revenue and reduce the funds available through the Community Contributions Scheme; and

(g) it is important that sporting clubs, charities, community service providers and others benefitting from the Community Contributions Scheme have access to long-term, sustainable funding sources that do not depend on gambling losses and that these organisations do not bear the costs of the transition; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

(a) review the operation of the Community Contributions Scheme, including transparency, compliance, the appropriateness of including in-kind contributions in calculations, the value for money delivered by the current model and expected funding changes from the proposed gambling reforms;

(b) conduct a feasibility study into a centralised, independent fund for community contributions to ensure long-term, sustainable funding for community purposes, including appropriate governance models, streamlined distribution models and mechanisms to maintain and enhance the value to the community of community contribution funds;

(c) consider funding a peak community sports body to ensure the interests of community sport are represented through this transition;

(d) ensure sufficient investment in community sport, and that community sports organisations are no worse off under any new community contributions model; and

(e) report back to the Assembly on the outcomes of the review, feasibility study and peak community sports body, and how the Government intends to replace any reduction in community contributions as a result of Government's gambling reform, by the Tuesday of the final sitting week of 2027."—

be agreed to—put and passed.

12 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Two Members' statements were made.

13 PRESENTATION OF PAPER

The Clerk presented the following paper, pursuant to standing order 213A and the resolution of the Assembly of 24 September 2026:

Tuggeranong Ice Sports Facility—Documents—Order to table—Agreement to final lodge Cabinet Submission: Ice Sports Facility—Outcome of Expression of Interest (EOI) Process and Next Steps, dated 21 July 2020 (Revised copy of CMTEDD.A.059).

14 ADJOURNMENT

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

Debate ensued.

Mr Cain, by leave, was granted an extension of time.

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 5.44 pm adjourned until tomorrow at 10 am.

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

Hamish Finlay
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly