



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**2004–2005–2006–2007–2008**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**No. 134**

**WEDNESDAY, 2 APRIL 2008**

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**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 MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—SPEAKER’S RULING**

The Speaker ruled that the matter of public importance submitted by Mrs Burke was in order as it did not contravene standing order 130, following the withdrawal of notice No. 5, Private Members’ business.

**3 RATES (FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY REPEAL)  
AMENDMENT BILL 2008**

Mr Mulcahy, pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend the *Rates Act 2004*.

Title read by Clerk.

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

Debate adjourned (Mr Corbell—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

**4 TOWARDS 2020 SCHOOL RENEWAL PROGRAM**

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

(1) notes:

- (a) that the *Towards 2020* program has failed to have an impact on the drift of students away from the ACT Government system; and

- (b) the extensive disruption to local communities and the education system by the *Towards 2020* program;
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to join the Canberra Liberals and school communities in supporting:
  - (a) the cancellation of school closures and restructures planned for December 2008 other than those associated with the opening of a new school in West Belconnen in 2009;
  - (b) the establishment of a school reinstatement fund to help re-open schools closed by the Stanhope Government in 2006 and 2007;
  - (c) a firm commitment to no further school closures until 2013; and
  - (d) the establishment of a Community Committee on the Future Direction of ACT Schools; and
- (3) calls on the Minister for Education and Training to table all documents associated with the decisions to close schools made in 2006 including the relevant sections of the Functional Review of the ACT Budget.

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

“notes:

- (1) the support of the Assembly for the *Towards 2020* school renewal program.
- (2) that between 2001 and 2004 the Stanhope Government:
  - (a) exceeded the \$27 million commitment for ‘behind the gate’ expenditure in education with an additional \$37 million in new money provided;
  - (b) increased funding to non-government schools by more than 20 per cent;
  - (c) funded pay increases and improved conditions for teachers to ensure ACT public schools continue to attract and retain the best teachers;
  - (d) refurbished old schools, built a new school in Gungahlin and funded feasibility studies for new school infrastructure at Harrison;
  - (e) invested over \$1 million in interactive whiteboards leading to a 570 per cent increase in the number of these educational aids in ACT public schools;
  - (f) provided \$2 million for curriculum renewal to ensure all students and teachers could access up to date and relevant curriculum;
  - (g) increased funding for school building maintenance;
  - (h) invested \$11 million for improved information technology capacity for all schools through targeted programs;
  - (i) increased pre-school funding by \$900,000 over three years;
  - (j) invested \$48.7 million to reduce class sizes to an average of just 21 for all ACT public school students from kindergarten to year 3;
  - (k) committed \$1.7 million to Individual Student Pathway Plans to better assist students’ transition from secondary education to further study or work;

- (l) funded youth workers in every government high school;
  - (m) provided funding of \$1.8 million over 4 years for the Career Transition Support Service to support both government and non-government schools provide guidance to students in critical school to work transition decisions;
  - (n) developed healthy student programs and provided \$900,000 to improve the health and fitness of school students across government and non-government schools;
  - (o) provided more than \$500,000 in funding for health coordinators in government colleges to provide information and support on health issues, drug education, alcohol and tobacco use, domestic violence, sexuality and relationships with their peers;
  - (p) committed \$1.6 million to support learning and retention of Indigenous students in government schools;
  - (q) provided \$860,000 for Indigenous early childhood support to increase participation by Indigenous students;
  - (r) provided an additional \$300,000 into Jumby Mulla, an Indigenous managed family support service in northern Canberra;
  - (s) expanded the Koori Preschool Program;
  - (t) funded a new mentoring and leadership program for Indigenous students in years 11 and 12;
  - (u) provided targeted assistance for year 4 Indigenous students to meet national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy;
  - (v) increased funding for students with disabilities by \$4.4 million to ensure that the educational needs of students who have a disability are supported; and
  - (w) continued to open Learning Support Units and Autism Support Units to meet additional demand;
- (3) that since 2004 the Stanhope Government has built on these achievements and:
- (a) has increased funding to education by more than 30 per cent since being elected in 2001;
  - (b) is investing over \$350 million in building new public schools where they are most needed and in upgrading every other ACT public school;
  - (c) is investing \$20 million to ensure state of the art IT in classrooms;
  - (d) is investing \$14.6 million to provide pastoral care support in every high school;
  - (e) is investing \$3.3 million to improve Indigenous education outcomes;
  - (f) is investing more than \$1.2 million to revitalise physical education;
  - (g) is increasing investment in languages and the arts;
  - (h) has increased pre-school hours to 12 hours per week;

- (i) has amalgamated all ACT pre-schools and public schools to deliver on the Government's commitment to early childhood education and giving young Canberrans the best start in life;
  - (j) established in partnership with the Australian National University (ANU) the ANU Secondary College and expanded its course offering in 2008 to include biology and Japanese;
  - (k) has expanded Australian School-Based Apprentices to enable students to gain educational and work experience within the ACT Public Service;
  - (l) has invested more than \$16 million in 2005-2006 in Vocational Education and Training;
  - (m) has led the nation in establishing Accelerated Apprenticeship programs in chef training, hairdressing and panel beating through the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT);
  - (n) has funded the establishment of the CIT's Vocational College delivering education options and pathways to people of all ages, offering essential skills and job training for around 3,000 youth, mature-age and migrant students each year;
  - (o) has funded the CIT to allow it to achieve 2,698 program enrolments in apprenticeship or traineeship programs in 2007, an increase of 8 per cent compared to 2006;
  - (p) has funded CIT to allow it to partner with both large and small local and national employers to enable around 1,675 employers to employ CIT apprentices and trainees during 2007;
  - (q) has funded CIT to allow it to enrol 106 Australian School-Based Apprentices in 2007, a 23 per cent increase on the previous year; and
  - (r) has appointed Professor Stephen Parker as Vice Chancellor to the University of Canberra to reform and rebuild this institution in the wake of 11 years of under-investment in tertiary education by the previous Liberal Government;
- (4) that recently the Stanhope Government has developed new policy in the areas of:
- (a) national testing;
  - (b) early childhood education;
  - (c) ICT in schools;
  - (d) *DETSafe Schools P-12* program;
  - (e) countering bullying, harassment and violence in ACT public schools;
  - (f) restorative justice programs;
  - (g) countering racism in ACT public schools;
  - (h) acceptable use of information technology (IT);
  - (i) complaints resolution;
  - (j) visitors in schools framework;

- (k) unwelcome visitors to schools handbook;
  - (l) physical education in schools;
  - (m) keeping children safe in cyberspace; and
  - (n) a Schools Standards Authority;
- (5) that a recent report by the Australian Council for Educational Research found that regardless of their socio-economic background, ACT students are performing better academically than their peers around the rest of Australia;
- (6) that despite continued public criticism of ACT public schools by the Liberal Opposition, the ACT Government's *Public Schools—So much more to offer* campaign is successfully promoting the world-class education offered by ACT public schools; and
- (7) that the ACT Liberals have released no substantial education policy since the beginning of December 2007.”.

Debate continued.

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 were asked.

## 6 QUESTION ON NOTICE NO. 1825—ANSWER—EXPLANATION

Dr Foskey, pursuant to standing order 118A, asked Mr Corbell (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) for an explanation concerning the answer to question on notice No. 1825.

Mr Corbell gave an explanation.

## 7 MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—DISCUSSION—HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The Assembly was informed that Mrs Burke, Mrs Dunne, Mr Pratt, Mr Seselja (Leader of the Opposition), Mr Smyth and Mr Stefaniak had proposed that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly for discussion. In accordance with the provisions of standing order 79, the Speaker had determined that the matter proposed by Mrs Burke be submitted to the Assembly, namely, “The continuing decline in housing affordability in the ACT.”.

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*Suspension of standing orders moved—Private Members' Business—Precedence:*  
Dr Foskey moved—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Private Member's business being called on forthwith.

Debate ensued.

The time allotted for the debate having expired—

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

AYES, 2  
Dr Foskey  
Mr Mulcahy

NOES, 15  
Mr Barr  
Mr Berry  
Mrs Burke  
Mr Corbell  
Mrs Dunne  
Ms Gallagher  
Mr Gentleman  
Mr Hargreaves  
Ms MacDonald  
Ms Porter  
Mr Pratt  
Mr Seselja  
Mr Smyth  
Mr Stanhope  
Mr Stefaniak

And so it was negatived.

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Discussion ensued on the matter of public importance.

The time for discussion having expired—

Discussion concluded.

## 8 **TOWARDS 2020 SCHOOL RENEWAL PROGRAM**

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Mr Seselja (Leader of the Opposition) and on the amendment moved by Mr Barr (Minister for Education and Training) (*see* [entry 4](#))—

Debate resumed.

Question—That Mr Barr’s 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.

Dr Foskey, by leave, moved the following amendment: Add:

“(8) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) review the proposed school closures and restructures planned for December 2008, in consultation with school communities, teachers and other key stakeholders;
- (b) establish a school reinstatement fund to help government schools closed in 2006 and 2007 re-open where viable; and
- (c) firmly commit to no further school closures before 2013 other than those outlined in the *Towards 2020* reform process.”.

Debate continued.

Mr Seselja addressing the Assembly—

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*Adjournment negatived:* It being 6 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Corbell (Manager of Government Business) requiring the question to be forthwith without debate—

Question—put and negatived.

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Debate continued.

Question—That Dr Foskey's amendment be agreed to—put.

Ordered—That the question be divided.

Preamble agreed to.

Paragraph 8(a) negatived.

Paragraph 8(b) negatived.

Paragraph 8(c) agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the support of the Assembly for the *Towards 2020* school renewal program.
- (2) notes that between 2001 and 2004 the Stanhope Government:
  - (a) exceeded the \$27 million commitment for ‘behind the gate’ expenditure in education with an additional \$37 million in new money provided;
  - (b) increased funding to non-government schools by more than 20 per cent;
  - (c) funded pay increases and improved conditions for teachers to ensure ACT public schools continue to attract and retain the best teachers;
  - (d) refurbished old schools, built a new school in Gungahlin and funded feasibility studies for new school infrastructure at Harrison;
  - (e) invested over \$1 million in interactive whiteboards leading to a 570 per cent increase in the number of these educational aids in ACT public schools;
  - (f) provided \$2 million for curriculum renewal to ensure all students and teachers could access up to date and relevant curriculum;
  - (g) increased funding for school building maintenance;
  - (h) invested \$11 million for improved information technology capacity for all schools through targeted programs;
  - (i) increased pre-school funding by \$900,000 over three years;
  - (j) invested \$48.7 million to reduce class sizes to an average of just 21 for all ACT public school students from kindergarten to year 3;

- (k) committed \$1.7 million to Individual Student Pathway Plans to better assist students' transition from secondary education to further study or work;
  - (l) funded youth workers in every government high school;
  - (m) provided funding of \$1.8 million over 4 years for the Career Transition Support Service to support both government and non-government schools provide guidance to students in critical school to work transition decisions;
  - (n) developed healthy student programs and provided \$900,000 to improve the health and fitness of school students across government and non-government schools;
  - (o) provided more than \$500,000 in funding for health coordinators in government colleges to provide information and support on health issues, drug education, alcohol and tobacco use, domestic violence, sexuality and relationships with their peers;
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  - (q) provided \$860,000 for Indigenous early childhood support to increase participation by Indigenous students;
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- (h) has increased pre-school hours to 12 hours per week;
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  - (r) has appointed Professor Stephen Parker as Vice Chancellor to the University of Canberra to reform and rebuild this institution in the wake of 11 years of under-investment in tertiary education by the previous Liberal Government;
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- (5) notes that a recent report by the Australian Council for Educational Research found that regardless of their socio-economic background, ACT students are performing better academically than their peers around the rest of Australia;
- (6) notes that despite continued public criticism of ACT public schools by the Liberal Opposition, the ACT Government's *Public Schools—So much more to offer* campaign is successfully promoting the world-class education offered by ACT public schools;
- (7) notes that the ACT Liberals have released no substantial education policy since the beginning of December 2007; and
- (8) calls on the ACT Government to firmly commit to no further school closures before 2013 other than those outlined in the *Towards 2020* reform process.”—  
be agreed to—put and passed.

## 9 ADJOURNMENT

Mr Corbell (Manager of Government Business) moved—That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

*Papers:* Mrs Burke, by leave, presented the following papers:

Tobacco Amendment Bill 2008—Copies of correspondence from tobacco retailers to the Minister for Health (132).

Debate continued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6.31 p.m., adjourned until tomorrow at 10.30 a.m.

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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