

# Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

**Sitting week—22 to 26 November 2021**

**Issue 11/2021**

## Government Business

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

### Bills debated

###  [Appropriation Bill 2021-2022](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65111/) (presented 6 October)

### Summary: This bill will appropriate money for the purposes of the Territory for the financial year beginning on 1 July 2021.

### Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 23 November with the bill being agreed to in principle. Debate in the detail stage occurred during the sitting week and was adjourned on 25 November with debate to continue during the sitting week of 30 November to 2 December 2021.

###  [Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65112/) (presented 6 October)

### Summary: This bill will appropriate money for expenditure in relation to the Office of the Legislative Assembly and officers of the Assembly, including the Auditor-General, the Electoral Commissioner and the Integrity Commissioner for the financial year beginning on 1 July 2021.

### Proceedings: This bill was debated together with the Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and the proposed legislation will continue to be debated during the sitting week of 30 November to 2 December 2021.

## 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***

### Bill debated

###  [Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Bill 2021](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65249/) (presented 11 November)

### Summary: This bill will amend the Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995 by amending provisions to allow for the position of ‘Whip in the Legislative Assembly of a registered party (other than the party to which the Chief Minister or Leader of the Opposition belongs) if at least four members of the Assembly are members of the party’ to be declared an ‘office’ pursuant to section 73 of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988. The amendments would require the Remuneration Tribunal to inquire into, and determine, the remuneration and allowances to be paid, and other entitlements to be granted to, the ‘office’.

### Proceedings: The proposed legislation was agreed to in principle when debate resumed on 25 November.

### The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

### Motion debated

A motion proposing an amendment to the Assembly’s **sitting pattern for 2022** was moved by the Opposition on 25 November with the Opposition outlining its reasons for moving the motion. During debate the Government and ACT Greens indicated they would not be supporting the motion.

The motion was negatived following a vote of the Assembly.

The full terms of the above motion can be found in the [Minutes of Proceedings](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-the-chamber/chamber-documents).

## Private Members’ Business

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

### Bill introduced

###  Corrections Management Amendment Bill 2021 (presented 25 November)

### Summary: This bill will amend the Corrections Management Act 2007 to strengthen the legislation prohibiting items to be delivered into a correctional centre.

### Motions debated

**Proposed cuts to defence spending** was the subject of a motion moved by Mr Hanson MLA on 23 November. The motion included noting that the ACT is home to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) headquarters and associated Australian Public Service Defence personnel and is also home to approximately 26,000 ADF veterans. The motion also noted that the Greens had pledged to cut defence spending by $300 billion over a decade and cuts of this magnitude would place ADF personnel at significantly increased risk and also be devastating to the ACT economy and cause thousands of lost jobs. The motion called on the leaders of all three parties represented in the Assembly to write to all Federal Greens representatives and express their concern for the safety and lives of ADF personnel and oppose the economic and job losses the planned defence cuts would cause. During debate an amendment was moved by the Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services that included noting that the ACT Government had successfully implemented strategies to attract and retain veterans in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) and that the ACTPS had taken steps to support veterans in transitioning to civilian life and was awarded the 2020 Veterans Employer of the Year for Public Sector Organisations in the Prime Minister’s Veterans Employment Awards. It also noted that the leaders of the three parties in the Assembly may choose to write to the Australian Greens, outlining their feedback on Australian Greens Defence Policy and perceived implications for ADF personnel.

The amendment included calling on the Chief Minister and Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services to write to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Minister for Veteran Affairs to advocate for the ACT to be selected as a location for a Veterans Wellbeing Centre and also included calling on the ACT Government to continue to invest in programs and services aimed at supporting the ACT’s veteran community. The amendment moved by the Minister was passed following a vote of the Assembly.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

Mrs Kikkert MLA moved a motion on 24 November concerning the importance of early diagnosis and interventions for people with **autism spectrum disorder** (ASD). The motion included noting that delayed diagnosis had been linked to poor mental health in young people and could results in huge costs to children and young people, their families, and the systems that serve them. The motion noted that the ACT Government provided free access to ASD screening to children who have been referred before the age of 12, however, other states and Territories provided free or subsidised assessment for young people up to the age of 18, or even older. The terms of the motion included calling on the ACT Government to increase the likelihood of early diagnosis by taking steps to increase awareness amongst both professionals and parents and to extend access for public autism assessment to young people under the age of 18. During debate an amendment was moved by the Government that included noting that there is a nation-wide skills shortage of allied health professionals required to make an autism diagnosis and that diagnosis has an important impact on NDIS eligibility, however, NDIS support can be difficult for people to access regardless of diagnosis. The amendment also included calling on the Government to continue to make reasonable adjustments to support public school students with their learning, whether or not they have an autism diagnosis and continue working with the Commonwealth to ensure that NDIA work on thin markets addressed the increased need for allied health professionals for autism diagnosis in the ACT. A further amendment moved by Mrs Kikkert, to the Government’s amendment, sought to include calling on the ACT Government to extend access for public autism assessments to young people under the age of 18. This amendment was negatived following a vote of the Assembly with the Government amendment then being agreed to.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

**Use of public transport and active modes of travel** was the subject of a motion moved by Dr Paterson on 25 November. The motion noted that construction work for light rail stage 2 had commenced and that the 2021-22 ACT Budget provided significant investments in active travel infrastructure. The motion also noted the launch of a discussion paper entitled *‘Her Way’ Recommendation Report* which outlined a number of initiatives to help reduce reliance on private vehicle use and called on the ACT Government to note the discussion paper and seek to incorporate, where considered appropriate by the Government, recommendations in the report in existing and future programs of work. During debate an amendment was moved by the Opposition seeking to note that the *‘Her Way’ Recommendation Report* was damning of the bus network for southside users. The Opposition amendment was negatived following a vote of the Assembly.

The motion was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

Further items debated during the sitting week related to:

 **Mowing of public land in the Territory**—Mr Hanson MLA *(25 November)*

 **Pregnancy and infant loss—Paid leave scheme for public sector employees**—Mrs Jones MLA *(24 November)*

 **Use of animal-friendly netting**—Ms Clay *(23 November)*

The full debate on the above motions can be accessed from the Assembly [*Hansard*](http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2021/links/download.htm) site once finalised.

## Petition and petition response

The following petition was lodged—

* Complaints handling under the ACT Human Rights Act—lodged by Dr Paterson *(23 November)*

This petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

The following ministerial response to a petition was lodged—

* Proposed rejection of draft variation 375 (Manor house)—Minister for Planning and Land Management *(23 November)*

A copy of the petition and petition response can be found on the [Assembly website](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-the-chamber/petitions).

## Papers Presented

The following are papers of interest that were presented during the sitting week:

* Annual report 2020-21—Professional Standards Council
* Auditor-General’s Reports—
* Report 10/2021—2020-21 Financial Audits – Overview
* Report 11/2021—Digital Records Management

## Committee Activities

### Committee reports

#### Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee

[Report 3—Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021‑2022](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1898834/HCW-Report-3-Appropriation-Bill-2021-2022-and-Appropriation-Office-of-the-Legislative-Assembly-Bill-2021-2022.pdf)

#### Justice and Community Safety— Standing Committee

[Report 3—Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021‑2022](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1898928/JCS-Report-3-Appropriation-Bill-2021-2022-and-Appropriation-Office-of-the-Legislative-Assembly-Bill-2021-2022.pdf)

#### Planning, Transport and City Services— Standing Committee

[Report 6—Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021‑2022](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1898918/PTCS-Report-6-Appropriation-Bill-2021-2022-and-Appropriation-Office-of-the-Legislative-Assembly-Bill-2021-2022.pdf)

#### Scrutiny Committee

####  [Scrutiny Report 11](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1903438/Report_11.pdf)

This report contained the committee’s comments on seven bills, 30 pieces of subordinate legislation and three government responses.

### Committee statements

####  Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee

####  The chair of the committee informed the Assembly on 24 November that the committee had discussed the referral, by the Assembly, of an inquiry into racial vilification and stated that submissions for the inquiry had opened on 22 November and would close on 31 January 2022 with the committee to report to the Assembly by 30 September 2022.

####  Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee

####  The chair of the committee made a statement on 25 November in relation to the committee’s consideration of statutory appointments for the period 1 January to 30 June 2021. At the conclusion of the statement the chair presented a schedule of statutory appointments considered for the relevant period.

####  Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee made a statement on 23 November in relation to the consideration of a number of petitions referred to the committee. The petitions related to the **Gungahlin Town Centre** and **Nicholls Oval upgrades**.

The chair made a further statement on 23 November informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved to undertake an inquiry into the impact of proposed changes to **soft landscaping in all residential areas** as proposed by Draft Variation No 369—*Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones*.

####  Public Accounts—Standing Committee

 The chair of the committee made a statement on 23 November informing the Assembly that the committee had not considered any **statutory appointments** for the period 1 January to 30 June 2021.

### Responses to committee reports

#### Standing Committees

On 23 November, the Treasurer presented the **Government’s response** to reports of the Assembly’s standing committees on the Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022.

#### Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Report 2—Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021‑2022—**Speaker’s response** to Recommendations 20 and 21

## Members of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

### Electorate of Brindabella

Ms Joy Burch (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Johnathan Davis (ACT Greens)

Mr Mick Gentleman (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Nicole Lawder (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Mark Parton (Canberra Liberals)

### Electorate of Ginninderra

Ms Yvette Berry (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Peter Cain (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Tara Cheyne (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Jo Clay (ACT Greens)

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert (Canberra Liberals)

### Electorate of Kurrajong

Mr Andrew Barr (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Elizabeth Lee (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Shane Rattenbury (ACT Greens)

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Rebecca Vassarotti (ACT Greens)

### Electorate of Murrumbidgee

Emma Davidson (ACT Greens)

Mr Jeremy Hanson CSC (Canberra Liberals)

Mrs Giulia Jones (Canberra Liberals)

Dr Marisa Paterson (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Chris Steel (Australian Labor Party)

### Electorate of Yerrabi

Mr Andrew Braddock (ACT Greens)

Ms Leanne Castley (Canberra Liberals)

Mr James Milligan (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Suzanne Orr (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Michael Pettersson (Australian Labor Party)

## Next Sitting

**Tuesday, 30 November 2021.**

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