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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE**

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**2024–2025**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**No 31**

**Thursday, 18 September 2025**

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 **1** The Assembly met at 10 am, pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Mr Parton) 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 Member had lodged petitions for presentation:

Mr Braddock, from 350 and 247 residents, requesting that the Assembly call on the ACT Government to undertake certain tree planting and maintenance activities (e-Pet 028-25 and Pet 061-25).

Pursuant to standing order 99A, these petitions stand referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and City Services.

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

 **3 Public UNleased Land Act—Public Unleased Land (Fees) Determination 2025 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2025-222—MOTION TO DISALLOW**

Mr Emerson, pursuant to notice, moved—That Disallowable Instrument DI2025-222, being Public Unleased Land (Fees) Determination 2025 (No 2), made pursuant to the Public Unleased Land Act, be disallowed.

Debate ensued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

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|  AYES, 6 |  |  NOES, 17 |
| Andrew Braddock |  |  | Andrew Barr | Suzanne Orr |
| Fiona Carrick |  |  | Chiaka Barry | Mark Parton |
| Jo Clay |  |  | Yvette Berry | Marisa Paterson |
| Thomas Emerson |  |  | Peter Cain | Michael Pettersson |
| Laura Nuttall |  |  | Leanne Castley | Chris Steel |
| Shane Rattenbury |  |  | Tara Cheyne | Rachel Stephen-Smith |
|  |  |  | Ed Cocks | Caitlin Tough |
|  |  |  | Elizabeth Lee | Taimus Werner-Gibbings |
|  |  |  | James Milligan |  |

And so it was negatived.

 **4 Appropriation Bill 2025-2026**

The Assembly, according to order, resumed further consideration at the detail stage.

*Detail Stage*

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure—

Consideration resumed on Part 1.3—City and Environment Directorate—

Debate continued.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

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 PRESENTATION OF PAPERS**

Ms Cheyne (Manager of Government Business), pursuant to standing order 211, presented the following papers:

ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan—2025-2030—

2025-2030, dated September 2025.

Implementation Plan, dated September 2025.

Bus frequency improvement—Assembly resolution of 5 December 2024—Government response—September 2025 Update, dated September 2025.

Legal Affairs—Standing Committee—Report 1—Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023-24—Government response, dated September 2025.

Light Rail Stage 2A—Business Engagement Report—April to June 2025.

Remuneration Tribunal Act, pursuant to section 10—Determinations, together with statements for:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal—Determination 8 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

ACT Magistrates Court Judicial Positions—Determination 7 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

ACT Supreme Court Judicial Positions—Determination 6 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Chief Executive Officer of ACT Courts and Tribunal—Determination 11 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Director of Public Prosecutions—Determination 12 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Full-time Statutory Office Holder—Chair, Therapeutic Support Panel—Determination 14 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Full-time Statutory Office Holder—Chief Executive Officer, ACT Integrity Commission—Determination 10 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Part-time Public Office Holders—Determination 13 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Part-time Statutory Office Holder—Integrity Commissioner—Determination 9 of 2025, dated 1 September 2025.

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act—Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Fees) Determination 2025 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2025-93 (LR, 26 June 2025)—Revised explanatory statement, undated.

 **7 Early Childhood Education and Care incident records—Order to table—variation request**

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of the Speaker—That the request, as reported by the Clerk, to vary the terms of the order be agreed to(*17 September 2025)*—

Mr Emerson moved the following amendment: Omit everything after “That the”, substitute:

“terms of the early childhood education and care order of 24 June 2025 be amended as follows:

1. only documents from the past three years must be produced through this order;
2. the following documents are excluded from being produced through this order:
	1. child enrolment records;
	2. attendance records;
	3. family violence and family court orders;
	4. provider policy/procedures;
	5. supervision plans, medical management plans, and behaviour support plans;
	6. documents related to child protection reports;
	7. documents relating to open investigations (either by CECA or ACT Policing); and
	8. witness statements; and
3. the documents must be produced by 25 November 2025.”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Mr Emerson and Ms Cheyne (Attorney-General), who had already spoken, by leave, again addressed the Assembly.

Question—put and passed.

 **8 Event organisers—support**

Mr Werner-Gibbings, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

1. notes that:

(a) community and private events, weddings, festivals, markets, and activations play a vital role in fostering social connection, cultural expression, and economic activity across the ACT;

(b) event organisers face significant challenges navigating complex processes, identifying suitable sites, and understanding available services such as access to electricity and water;

(c) these challenges can lead to uncertainty, increased costs, delays and cancellations, particularly for small community groups and volunteer-led organisations; and

(d) the ACT Government’s Tourism Strategy aims to grow the visitor economy to $5 billion by 2030, with events playing a central role in achieving this target;

1. acknowledges that comprehensive, publicly accessible guidance that identifies suitable sites for events, outlines available services, and explains approval requirements would reduce administrative burden and planning uncertainty, support equitable access to public spaces, and encourage more vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community events; and
2. calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) cooperate with event organisers, community groups and volunteer-led organisations to develop guidance that:

(i) clearly identifies sites which are suitable for community and private events, weddings, hawkers, busking, rallies and activations; and

(ii) provides information on any complexities with using sites, how to access them, their available services, and the approvals required; and

(b) report back to the Assembly on the progress of this guidance by the end of 2026.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

 **9** **credit rating stabilisation plan—Production**

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

1. notes that:

(a) the *Financial Management Act 1996* requires that the proposed budget must be prepared taking into account:

(i) the principles of responsible fiscal management;

(ii) the object of providing a basis for sustainable social and economic services and infrastructure fairly to all ACT residents; and

(iii) the object of ecologically sustainable development;

(b) the *Financial Management Act 1996* does not set out that the Government must have a specific credit rating as a goal in preparing the Budget;

(c) the ACT Treasurer advised the Assembly that avoiding a credit rating downgrade was a specific objective in putting together the Budget;

(d) following the Budget, the ACT credit rating has again been downgraded and is now rated equal worst in Australia;

(e) ratings agency S&P Global cited the Government’s large after-capital deficits and structurally higher debt as key reasons for the downgrade;

(f) the 2024-2025 financial year saw the headline operating balance deficit blow out to $1.38 billion with the 2025–2026 ACT Budget forecasting a Headline Net Operating Balance deficit of $424.9 million;

(g) lower credit ratings generally correspond with higher borrowing costs;

(h) before the credit downgrade to AA, the ACT’s interest expenses were already on track to be greater than a quarter of ACT own source taxation within four years; and

(i) S&P Global has noted that an upgrade to the ACT’s credit rating is unlikely; and

1. calls on the Government to table a credit rating recovery plan with the Budget Review in February 2026 that details a strategy and timeline to return the credit rating to its previous AA+ and AAA levels.

Debate ensued.

Ms Clay moved the following amendment: Omit paragraph (2), substitute:

“(2) calls on the Government to table a credit rating stabilisation plan by February 2026 that details a strategy and timeline to ensure current Budget spending is met by revenue.”.

Debate continued.

Question—put.

The Assembly voted—

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|  AYES, 11 |  |  NOES, 6 |
| Andrew Braddock | Marisa Paterson |  | Chiaka Barry |  |
| Tara Cheyne | Shane Rattenbury |  | Peter Cain |  |
| Jo Clay | Chris Steel |  | Fiona Carrick |  |
| Thomas Emerson | Caitlin Tough |  | Ed Cocks |  |
| Laura Nuttall | Taimus Werner-Gibbings |  | James Milligan |  |
| Suzanne Orr |  |  | Mark Parton |  |

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Debate continued.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

1. notes that:

(a) the *Financial Management Act 1996* requires that the proposed budget must be prepared taking into account:

(i) the principles of responsible fiscal management;

(ii) the object of providing a basis for sustainable social and economic services and infrastructure fairly to all ACT residents; and

(iii) the object of ecologically sustainable development;

(b) the *Financial Management Act 1996* does not set out that the Government must have a specific credit rating as a goal in preparing the Budget;

(c) the ACT Treasurer advised the Assembly that avoiding a credit rating downgrade was a specific objective in putting together the Budget;

(d) following the Budget, the ACT credit rating has again been downgraded and is now rated equal worst in Australia;

(e) ratings agency S&P Global cited the Government’s large after-capital deficits and structurally higher debt as key reasons for the downgrade;

(f) the 2024-2025 financial year saw the headline operating balance deficit blow out to $1.38 billion with the 2025–2026 ACT Budget forecasting a Headline Net Operating Balance deficit of $424.9 million;

(g) lower credit ratings generally correspond with higher borrowing costs;

(h) before the credit downgrade to AA, the ACT’s interest expenses were already on track to be greater than a quarter of ACT own source taxation within four years; and

(i) S&P Global has noted that an upgrade to the ACT’s credit rating is unlikely; and

1. calls on the Government to table a credit rating stabilisation plan by February 2026 that details a strategy and timeline to ensure current Budget spending is met by revenue.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

 **10 PAPERS PRESENTED ON 18 September 2025—PAPERS NOTED**

The Speaker, pursuant to standing order 211A, proposed—That the papers presented under standing order 211 during the presentation of papers in the routine of business today be noted.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

 **11 Appropriation Bill 2025-2026**

The Assembly, according to order, resumed further consideration at the detail stage.

*Detail Stage*

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure—

Consideration resumed at Part 1.4—Infrastructure Canberra—

Debate continued.

Debate adjourned (Ms Cheyne—Manager of Government Business) and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

 **12 MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS**

One Member’s statement was made.

 **13 ADJOURNMENT**

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 6.10 pm, adjourned until Tuesday, 23 September 2025 at 10 am.

**MEMBERS’ ATTENDANCE:** All Members were present at some time during the sitting, except Mr Hanson\* and Ms Morris\*.

\*on leave.

**Hamish Finlay**

 Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly