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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE**

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**2016–2017–2018–2019–2020**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**No 124**

[**WEDNESDAY, 12 February 2020**](http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2020/links/download.htm)

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 **1** The Assembly met at 10 am, pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Ms J. Burch) took the Chair and made a formal recognition that the Assembly was meeting on the lands of the traditional custodians. The Speaker asked Members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

 **2 Bushfire SEASON—Impact and support**

Mrs Jones, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

1. notes:
	1. the devastation across Australia caused by the bushfires, including the loss of 33 lives, the destruction of over 3000 homes, the incredible loss of wildlife and the devastating impact on local communities and economies across Australia;
	2. the impact of the recent fires in the ACT, including the Beard and Orroral Valley fires which have collectively burnt tens of thousands of hectares;
	3. the contribution and dedication of volunteer and career fire-fighters, emergency services personnel, and Australian Defence Force personnel and reservists; and
	4. the generosity of individuals, families, neighbours and organisations such as schools, religious groups, local clubs and businesses who have donated their time, energy and resources to assist those in need;
2. express gratitude to the ACT Emergency Services Agency, ACT Rural Fire Service, ACT State Emergency Service, ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Policing, ACT Parks and Conservation and all other workers and volunteers who have assisted in protecting and supporting the ACT during the ongoing bushfire season; and
3. calls on the ACT Government to:
	1. commit itself to learn any lessons from this fire season; and
	2. fully support the affected areas of the ACT to recover and rebuild.

Mr Gentleman (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) moved the following amendment: Omit paragraph (3), substitute:

“(3) further notes that the ACT Government is:

(a) committed to learning any lessons from the current bushfire season; and

(b) supporting affected areas of the ACT to recover and rebuild.”.

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

1. notes:
	1. the devastation across Australia caused by the bushfires, including the loss of 33 lives, the destruction of over 3000 homes, the incredible loss of wildlife and the devastating impact on local communities and economies across Australia;
	2. the impact of the recent fires in the ACT, including the Beard and Orroral Valley fires which have collectively burnt tens of thousands of hectares;
	3. the contribution and dedication of volunteer and career fire-fighters, emergency services personnel, and Australian Defence Force personnel and reservists; and
	4. the generosity of individuals, families, neighbours and organisations such as schools, religious groups, local clubs and businesses who have donated their time, energy and resources to assist those in need;
2. express gratitude to the ACT Emergency Services Agency, ACT Rural Fire Service, ACT State Emergency Service, ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Policing, ACT Parks and Conservation and all other workers and volunteers who have assisted in protecting and supporting the ACT during the ongoing bushfire season; and
3. further notes that the ACT Government is:
	1. committed to learning any lessons from the current bushfire season; and
	2. supporting affected areas of the ACT to recover and rebuild.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

 **3 Parking infringement fines**

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

1. notes:
	1. that unexpected parking infringements may have negative effects on Canberrans’ personal circumstances, including:
		1. receiving an infringement can have a significant impact on a person’s budget and ability to cover their everyday expenses; and
		2. due to this cost, unexpected parking fines can cause some stress and anxiety for members of our community;
	2. that these fines should not target people who are trying to do the right thing, but simply did not get back to their car in time;
	3. the impact on parking inspectors, including that:
		1. parking inspectors can often become the targets of abuse from angry members of the public;
		2. this anger can be a result of members of the public returning as, or immediately after, their parking expired and find an inspector issuing an infringement; and
		3. parking inspectors should not be put at risk of abuse as a result of doing their job; and
	4. that equitable access to parking options remains an important part of living in our city and that parking infringement notices are a deterrent to people who want to abuse the system; and
2. calls on the Government to explore the feasibility of implementing a 10 minute grace period for parking fines issued to vehicles that have been paid for an hour or more of parking.

Ms Le Couteur moved the following amendment: In paragraph (2), add “, and report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day in June 2020.”.

Debate continued.

Ms Lawder, who had already spoken, by leave, moved the following amendment to Ms Le Couteur’s proposed amendment: In paragraph (2), before “, and report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day in June 2020”, insert “by instituting a trial immediately”.

Debate continued.

Amendment to amendment negatived.

Debate continued.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

1. notes:
	1. that unexpected parking infringements may have negative effects on Canberrans’ personal circumstances, including:
		1. receiving an infringement can have a significant impact on a person’s budget and ability to cover their everyday expenses; and
		2. due to this cost, unexpected parking fines can cause some stress and anxiety for members of our community;
	2. that these fines should not target people who are trying to do the right thing, but simply did not get back to their car in time;
	3. the impact on parking inspectors, including that:
		1. parking inspectors can often become the targets of abuse from angry members of the public;
		2. this anger can be a result of members of the public returning as, or immediately after, their parking expired and find an inspector issuing an infringement; and
		3. parking inspectors should not be put at risk of abuse as a result of doing their job; and
	4. that equitable access to parking options remains an important part of living in our city and that parking infringement notices are a deterrent to people who want to abuse the system; and
2. calls on the Government to explore the feasibility of implementing a 10 minute grace period for parking fines issued to vehicles that have been paid for an hour or more of parking, and report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day in June 2020.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

 **4 LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBER**

Mr Gentleman (Manager of Government Business) moved—That leave of absence be granted to Ms Cody for today due to illness.

Question—put and passed.

 **5** **Severe weather events—Impact on businesses**

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

1. notes:
	1. the impact on businesses in the ACT in the wake of severe weather events including bushfires in and around the ACT;
	2. businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector have been particularly impacted;
	3. some tourism and hospitality businesses are reporting between a 50 percent and 70 percent loss in revenue compared to the same period over previous years;
	4. hotel providers in Canberra have reported cancellation rates in excess of 35 percent of bookings over the January 2020 period as a direct result of air quality;
	5. several businesses have been forced to cut jobs in the wake of these losses;
	6. that the Commonwealth Government have announced a comprehensive suite of assistance measures, including:
		1. deferral of all BAS payments until May 2020;
		2. grant funding of up to $50 000 tax free to businesses and organisations that have sustained damage; and
		3. low interest loans of up to $500 000 interest free for two years;
	7. a $76 million tourism recovery package to protect jobs, small businesses and local economies by helping get tourists travelling across Australia again; and
	8. until the ACT Government enacts the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement with the Commonwealth, the ACT is behind other States and Territories in accessing recovery initiatives; and
2. calls on the ACT Government to:
	1. immediately activate its Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement with the Commonwealth Government so ACT businesses can access the same initiatives that are available over the border;
	2. immediately establish a deferral scheme for commercial rates and payroll tax to ease cash flow pressures after recent significant weather events; and
	3. increase funding at a minimum of $200 000 to Visit Canberra to leverage off the Commonwealth investment in tourism advertising and promote Canberra as a destination.

Mr Barr (Chief Minister) moved the following amendment: Omit all text after “(1) notes”, substitute:

“(a) the significant impacts on businesses in the ACT in the wake of severe weather events, including bushfires, smoke and hail in and around the ACT;

(b) businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector have been particularly impacted;

(c) some businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector have reported significant losses in revenue compared to the same period in previous years;

(d) hotel providers in Canberra have reported significant cancellation rates as a direct result of air quality; and

(e) the Commonwealth Government have announced a range of disaster assistance measures to assist eligible businesses that have been directly impacted;

(2) also notes:

(a) the ACT Government held an initial roundtable with the tourism and hospitality industry on 17 January to hear directly from the sector about the impacts, and help inform the government response;

(b) to quickly and directly assist the hospitality sector, the ACT Government announced an immediate 50 percent reduction in the cost of outdoor dining permits for existing permit holders, and a waiver of all fees for the first 12 months for new permit holders;

(c) the ACT Government has been working directly with impacted businesses to individually case manage their circumstances and assist them in gaining access to both ACT and Commonwealth support;

(d) on 29 January, the ACT Government wrote to the Prime Minister seeking confirmation of access to Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements;

(e) on 12 February, the Commonwealth Government confirmed Disaster Recovery Assistance has been activated, including concessional interest rate loans for farmers and small businesses;

(f) the ACT Government has longstanding arrangements in place for tax deferrals and payment plans in special cases. If a small business has suffered significant economic loss as a result of the recent disasters, access to these arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis; and

(g) as well as not paying tax on their insurance, all small and most medium sized businesses in the ACT are also exempt from payroll tax, with the $2 million annual payroll tax threshold in the ACT being the most generous in the nation; and

(3) further notes the ACT Government:

(a) currently has $3.4 million in active tourism campaigns focussed on bringing more visitors to Canberra;

(b) is working collaboratively with Tourism Australia to maximise available financial assistance on destination marketing campaigns;

(c) through Visit Canberra, launched the new “Holiday Here Canberra” campaign in January 2020, encouraging Canberrans, their families and their friends to support local businesses;

(d) through Visit Canberra is working with the Canberra Convention Bureau to attract new business events to the Territory for this calendar year;

(e) will allocate an additional $16.4 million over the next four years to support the tourism, events and hospitality sectors through Canberra’s major venues and events; and

(f) will continue work with industry and partners, including local businesses, national institutions, airlines and accommodation providers, to identify new opportunities to boost both domestic and international tourism to Canberra.”.

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.

 **6 QUESTIONS**

Questions without notice being asked—

*Paper:* Mrs Dunne, by leave presented the following paper:

SPIRE—Footprint options and site options paper—Copy of email correspondence.

Questions continued.

 7 SPIRE PROJECT—OPTIONS PAPER—Order to table

Mrs Dunne, by leave, moved—That, in accordance with standing order 213A, the Assembly orders the tabling of the options paper for the SPIRE Project discussed by officers of Major Projects Canberra and Canberra Health Services in November 2019 and referred to in the public release of documents under the Freedom of Information Act (reference request 1977).

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

 **8 Severe weather events—Impact on businesses**

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Mr Wall, and on the amendment moved by Mr Barr (Chief Minister) (*see* [entry 5](#Entry5))—

Debate resumed.

Amendment agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

(a) the significant impacts on businesses in the ACT in the wake of severe weather events, including bushfires, smoke and hail in and around the ACT;

(b) businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector have been particularly impacted;

(c) some businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector have reported significant losses in revenue compared to the same period in previous years;

(d) hotel providers in Canberra have reported significant cancellation rates as a direct result of air quality; and

(e) the Commonwealth Government have announced a range of disaster assistance measures to assist eligible businesses that have been directly impacted;

(2) also notes:

(a) the ACT Government held an initial roundtable with the tourism and hospitality industry on 17 January to hear directly from the sector about the impacts, and help inform the government response;

(b) to quickly and directly assist the hospitality sector, the ACT Government announced an immediate 50 percent reduction in the cost of outdoor dining permits for existing permit holders, and a waiver of all fees for the first 12 months for new permit holders;

(c) the ACT Government has been working directly with impacted businesses to individually case manage their circumstances and assist them in gaining access to both ACT and Commonwealth support;

(d) on 29 January, the ACT Government wrote to the Prime Minister seeking confirmation of access to Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements;

(e) on 12 February, the Commonwealth Government confirmed Disaster Recovery Assistance has been activated, including concessional interest rate loans for farmers and small businesses;

(f) the ACT Government has longstanding arrangements in place for tax deferrals and payment plans in special cases. If a small business has suffered significant economic loss as a result of the recent disasters, access to these arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis; and

(g) as well as not paying tax on their insurance, all small and most medium sized businesses in the ACT are also exempt from payroll tax, with the $2 million annual payroll tax threshold in the ACT being the most generous in the nation; and

(3) further notes the ACT Government:

(a) currently has $3.4 million in active tourism campaigns focussed on bringing more visitors to Canberra;

(b) is working collaboratively with Tourism Australia to maximise available financial assistance on destination marketing campaigns;

(c) through Visit Canberra, launched the new *Holiday Here Canberra* campaign in January 2020, encouraging Canberrans, their families and their friends to support local businesses;

(d) through Visit Canberra is working with the Canberra Convention Bureau to attract new business events to the Territory for this calendar year;

(e) will allocate an additional $16.4 million over the next four years to support the tourism, events and hospitality sectors through Canberra’s major venues and events; and

(f) will continue work with industry and partners, including local businesses, national institutions, airlines and accommodation providers, to identify new opportunities to boost both domestic and international tourism to Canberra.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

 **9 Lawson—Designated parking**

Mrs Kikkert, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

1. notes that:
	1. stage one of the new suburb of Lawson includes 19 blocks of medium-density multi-unit developments, primarily located in the vicinity of Wanderlight and Stockman Avenues;
	2. according to the Lawson Estate Plan, stage two of the suburb has been zoned for more medium-density multi-unit developments as well as high‑density multi-unit developments; and
	3. dozens of current Lawson residents have contacted the Canberra Liberals to complain that the suburb lacks adequate designated parking for both residents and their visitors, resulting in cars being parked where they should not be; and
2. calls on the ACT Government to
	1. increase the amount of designated parking in Lawson stage one for residents and their visitors; and
	2. provide adequate designated parking for both residents and visitors in Lawson stage two in order to avoid replicating this problem from stage one.

Mrs Kikkert, by leave, moved the following amendment: Omit all words after paragraph (1)(c), substitute:

“(d) residents of Lawson Stage One are able to utilise bus stops on Baldwin Drive to catch the Route 30 bus service to Belconnen or Dickson before connecting to the City and other town centres via the Rapid bus network, or the Route 31 bus service to Belconnen, Dickson, Braddon and the City; and

(e) the Government is committed to providing bus services through Lawson once Lawson Stage Two is complete; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) review parking in Lawson Stage One with a view to increasing and improving parking options for residents and their visitors;

(b) review current parking issues in Lawson with a view to avoiding similar problems in Lawson Stage Two; and

(c) review options for providing walking and cycling paths from what is currently western Lawson to suitable points along Ginninderra Drive.”.

Amendment agreed to.

Debate ensued.

Ms Le Couteur moved the following amendment to the motion, as amended: Add new paragraph (2)(d):

“(d) review options for providing better public transport until a standard bus service can be provided, such as using a minibus-sized vehicle to introduce a temporary shuttle bus from Lawson to the University of Canberra and Belconnen Town Centre.”.

Debate continued.

Question—That Ms Le Couteur’s amendment to the motion, as amended, be agreed to—put.

The Assembly voted—

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  AYES, 2 |  |  NOES, 19 |
| Ms Le Couteur |  |  | Ms Berry | Ms Lee |
| Mr Rattenbury |  |  | Ms J. Burch | Mr Milligan |
|  |  |  | Ms Cheyne | Ms Orr |
|  |  |  | Mr Coe | Mr Parton |
|  |  |  | Mrs Dunne | Mr Pettersson |
|  |  |  | Mr Gentleman | Mr Ramsay |
|  |  |  | Mr Gupta | Mr Steel |
|  |  |  | Mr Hanson | Ms Stephen-Smith |
|  |  |  | Mrs Kikkert | Mr Wall |
|  |  |  | Ms Lawder |  |

And so it was negatived.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

1. notes that:
	1. stage one of the new suburb of Lawson includes 19 blocks of medium-density multi-unit developments, primarily located in the vicinity of Wanderlight and Stockman Avenues;
	2. according to the Lawson Estate Plan, stage two of the suburb has been zoned for more medium-density multi-unit developments as well as high‑density multi-unit developments;
	3. dozens of current Lawson residents have contacted the Canberra Liberals to complain that the suburb lacks adequate designated parking for both residents and their visitors, resulting in cars being parked where they should not be;
	4. residents of Lawson Stage One are able to utilise bus stops on Baldwin Drive to catch the Route 30 bus service to Belconnen or Dickson before connecting to the City and other town centres via the Rapid bus network, or the Route 31 bus service to Belconnen, Dickson, Braddon and the City; and
	5. the Government is committed to providing bus services through Lawson once Lawson Stage Two is complete; and
2. calls on the ACT Government to review:
	1. parking in Lawson Stage One with a view to increasing and improving parking options for residents and their visitors;
	2. current parking issues in Lawson with a view to avoiding similar problems in Lawson Stage Two; and
	3. options for providing walking and cycling paths from what is currently western Lawson to suitable points along Ginninderra Drive.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

 10 Hairdressing industry—Long service leave entitlements

Notice No 5, Private Members’ business, having been called on—

Ms Cheyne, pursuant to standing order 127, and at the request of the proposer, Ms Cody, fixed the next day of sitting for the moving of the motion.

 **11 Deaf community—Auslan support during emergency situations**

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

1. notes that:
	1. Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is the language of the Deaf community in Australia;
	2. over the summer period smoke, bushfires, hail, dust and coronavirus impacted the lives of many Australians;
	3. the ACT Government instigated a State of Alert and a State of Emergency;
	4. ACT Emergency Services provided an outstanding response, along with volunteer organisations, government agencies and directorates in protecting life and property, in providing recovery centres, evacuation centres, assistance of all sorts to residents and evacuees, and communication and information resources;
	5. initially, up to around 2 January 2020, no Auslan interpreter was provided in briefings, media conferences and the like;
	6. this meant that the Canberra Deaf community was left at times without important and potentially life-saving information and communication access; and
	7. the Deaf community mobilised and complained, and called on the Government to provide an interpreter, which they then did whenever possible;
2. further notes that:
	1. in some cases an Auslan interpreter may be present, but is not visible to the viewer because of decisions made by media personnel;
	2. obviously, members of the Deaf community cannot use the radio for information updates; and
	3. live news sometimes does not have captions because of the fast moving and immediate nature of situational updates; and
3. calls on the ACT Government to:
	1. develop, or if already available, table communication policies and procedures for emergency situations, such as a State of Alert or Emergency, and explain why this communication access was not provided from the outset;
	2. if not already included, ensure these policies and procedures include briefing media representatives (such as cameramen) or including the Auslan interpreter in picture;
	3. report back to the Assembly by end of June 2020 as to what policies, procedures, or other changes have or will be made to ensure communication access is not withheld in future emergencies; and
	4. investigate other ways to provide our Deaf community in the ACT with better communication access.

Mr Gentleman (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) moved the following amendment: Omit all text after paragraph (1)(d), substitute:

“(e) Auslan interpreters with level 3 accreditation are in short supply in the ACT and Australia, resulting in an interpreter not being available during a video produced by the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) in relation to smoke hazards prior to the announcement of the State of Alert on 2 January 2020;

(f) all efforts were made to ensure that appropriate interpretation or captioning was provided during press conferences, announcements and briefings following the announcement of the State of Alert on 2 January 2020; and

(g) the ACT ESA has a memorandum of understanding and a partnership agreement with the Deaf Society of NSW for the provision of Auslan interpreters to attend media conferences during major emergencies and disasters in the ACT. The Deaf Society of NSW is the peak body for the Deaf and people with a hearing impairment in NSW and the ACT;

(2) further notes that:

(a) in some cases an Auslan interpreter may be present, but is not visible to the viewer because of decisions made by media personnel;

(b) obviously, members of the Deaf community cannot use the radio for information updates; and

(c) live news sometimes does not have captions because of the fast moving and immediate nature of situational updates; and

(3) calls on the Federal Government to:

(a) address the lack of Auslan interpreters with level 3 accreditation in the ACT and across Australia;

(b) provide any additional funding and support required to increase numbers of interpreters with level 3 accreditation; and

(c) report back on progress against (a) and (b) by June 2020.”.

Ms Le Couteur moved the following amendment to Mr Gentleman’s proposed amendment: Add:

“(4) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) ensure that all communications policies and procedures for emergency situations include provision of Auslan interpreters on screen and live captioning as well as briefing of media representatives, including camera operators on the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired people;

(b) continue strategies, incentives and potentially scholarships to assist people to become NAATI accredited in Auslan to build local capability; and

(c) report back on progress against 4(a) and (b) by June 2020.”.

Debate continued.

Ms Lawder, by leave, moved the following amendments to Ms Le Couteur’s proposed amendment to Mr Gentleman’s proposed amendment together:

1. In paragraph (4)(c), after “report”, insert “back to the Assembly”.

2. In paragraph (4)(c), after “by June 2020”, add “and present the Government’s communication protocols or policies/procedures”.

Amendments to amendment to amendment agreed to.

Amendment to amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Question—That the motion, as amended, viz:

“That this Assembly:

1. notes that:
	1. Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is the language of the Deaf community in Australia;
	2. over the summer period smoke, bushfires, hail, dust and coronavirus impacted the lives of many Australians;
	3. the ACT Government instigated a State of Alert and a State of Emergency;
	4. ACT Emergency Services provided an outstanding response, along with volunteer organisations, government agencies and directorates in protecting life and property, in providing recovery centres, evacuation centres, assistance of all sorts to residents and evacuees, and communication and information resources;
	5. Auslan interpreters with level 3 accreditation are in short supply in the ACT and Australia, resulting in an interpreter not being available during a video produced by the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) in relation to smoke hazards prior to the announcement of the State of Alert on 2 January 2020;
	6. all efforts were made to ensure that appropriate interpretation or captioning was provided during press conferences, announcements and briefings following the announcement of the State of Alert on 2 January 2020; and
	7. the ACT ESA has a memorandum of understanding and a partnership agreement with the Deaf Society of NSW for the provision of Auslan interpreters to attend media conferences during major emergencies and disasters in the ACT. The Deaf Society of NSW is the peak body for the Deaf and people with a hearing impairment in NSW and the ACT;
2. further notes that:
	1. in some cases an Auslan interpreter may be present, but is not visible to the viewer because of decisions made by media personnel;
	2. obviously, members of the Deaf community cannot use the radio for information updates; and
	3. live news sometimes does not have captions because of the fast moving and immediate nature of situational updates;
3. calls on the Federal Government to:
	1. address the lack of Auslan interpreters with level 3 accreditation in the ACT and across Australia;
	2. provide any additional funding and support required to increase numbers of interpreters with level 3 accreditation; and
	3. report back on progress against (a) and (b) by June 2020; and
4. calls on the ACT Government to:
	1. ensure that all communications policies and procedures for emergency situations include provision of Auslan interpreters on screen and live captioning as well as briefing of media representatives, including camera operators on the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired people;
	2. continue strategies, incentives and potentially scholarships to assist people to become NAATI accredited in Auslan to build local capability; and
	3. report back to the Assembly on progress against 4(a) and (b) by June 2020 and present the Government’s communication protocols or policies/procedures.”—

be agreed to—put and passed.

 **12 ADJOURNMENT**

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

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

And then the Assembly, at 5.07 pm, adjourned until tomorrow at 10 am.

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

\*on leave

**Tom Duncan**

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly