

# Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

**Sitting week—7 to 11 February 2022**

**Issue 1/2022**

## Hunga-Tonga Eruption and Tsunami—Statement by Speaker

### The Speaker made a statement on 8 February concerning the eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha-apai volcano and subsequent tsunami, which had affected water supplies and caused widespread damage and loss of life in Tonga. Mrs Kikkert MLA also made a statement on the matter.

## Government Business

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

### Bills introduced

###  [Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2022](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65585/) (presented 10 February)

###  Summary: This bill will amend domestic animal legislation to introduce a requirement for newly acquired cats to be contained to a premises for their lifetimes and to require that all cats be registered in the ACT on an annual basis.

###  [Family Violence Legislation Amendment Bill 2022](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65584/) (presented 10 February)

###  Summary: This bill will amend a number of statues to ensure that domestic and family violence offenders are held to account, and to assist to improve access to justice and remove trauma for victims involved in court proceedings.

### Bills debated

###  [Government Procurement Amendment Bill 2021](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65225/) (presented 10 November 2021)

###  Summary: This bill will amend the Government Procurement Act 2001 and the Government Procurement Regulation 2007 to increase the effectiveness of the Secure Local Jobs Code and allow for the obtaining of information or documentation to improve compliance with the obligations of the Code and to make determinations. The bill will also increase the monetary threshold for requiring a Labour Relations, Training and Workplace Equity Plan in services or works procurements that are primarily for construction work from a total estimated value of $25,000 to $200,000.

###  Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 9 February with all parties indicating support for the proposed legislation. The bill was agreed to in principle.

###  An amendment was moved by the Government, and agreed to, during the detail stage changing the commencement date from 1 January 2022 to 1 March 2022. Also during debate in the detail stage, the Opposition indicated it would not be supporting clause 11 of the bill which sought to insert a new section concerning the suspension of an entity’s certificate or the imposition or amendment of conditions on the entity’s certificate. The clause was agreed to following a vote of the Assembly.

###  The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

### Ministerial statements

The Chief Minister made a ministerial statement on 8 February providing an **economic update and an outline of the Government’s priorities for the year ahead**. During the statement, the Chief Minister indicated that the Government’s economic recovery plan from the COVID pandemic will be a priority for the Government during 2022. A motion to note the paper was moved and debate was adjourned to the next sitting day at which time debate resumed and a number of Members spoke to the motion.

On 8 February, the Minister for Health provided an update on the ACT Government’s response to the COVID‑19 emergency. During the statement the Minister presented the following papers:

* Chief Health Officer’s Reports on the Status of the Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19—
* No 21—December 2021
* No 22—January 2022
* No 23—February 2022

The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs made a ministerial statement on 8 February concerning a **COVID-safe return to school**. During the statement the Minister highlighted the work of principals, teachers, and school staff, in all schools, early childhood workers, and those providing out of school hours care. The Minister also expressed her thanks to Canberra’s parents, carers, children and young people, who have shown incredible resilience, flexibility, and kindness, as schools grapple with the challenge of delivering high quality education in the midst of a pandemic.

The **ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) support to assist the ACT Government COVID-19 response** was the subject of a ministerial statement made by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on 9 February. During the statement the Minister outlined the support members from the ESA have provided to ACT Health since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 9 February, the Minister for Disability provided an update on the **implementation of the *Senior Practitioner Act 2018***. The Minister outlined achievements made by the Office of the Senior Practitioner since commencement of the Act.

**Canberra recipients of Australia Day Awards** was the subject of a ministerial statement made by the Minister for the Arts on 10 February. During the statement the Minister provided details on this year’s recipients and thanked them for their tireless work to make the community a better place. Ms Davidson MLA also made comments in relation to the statement.

Further ministerial statements made during the sitting week related to:

 **Update on the ACT Government’s response to the release of de-identified workers compensation claims data**—Special Minister of State *(10 February)*

 **National Disability Insurance Scheme—Response to resolution of the Assembly of 5 August 2021**—Minister for Disability *(10 February)*

 **Community Safe Haven Pilot**—Minister for Mental Health *(10 February)*

The full text of the statements can be found on the Assembly [*Hansard*](http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2021/links/download.htm) site once finalised.

## Private Members’ Business

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

### Bill introduced

###  [Crimes (Consent) Amendment Bill 2022](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65603/) (presented 8 February)

 *Summary:* This bill will amend the *Crimes Act 1900* by outlining the principles of sexual consent, providing a meaning of consent, articulating a set of circumstances under which consent is not deemed given and also introduces the concept of reasonable belief in relation to a person’s consent.

### Motions debated

**Economic recovery** during the COVID-19 pandemic was the subject of a motion moved by Ms Castley MLA on 8 February. The motion noted, among other things, that the outbreak of the Omicron-variant has resulted in significant staff shortages across sectors, leaving many businesses unable to open and many Canberrans choosing to stay home. The motion also noted statistics from CommSec, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and SEEK that outlined the ACT’s economy status and unemployment figures. The motion included calling on the ACT Government to release an updated economic recovery plan to support small business through Omicron and future variants of COVID-19, by the March 2022 sitting week.

During debate an amendment was moved by the Government which included noting the global emergence of the Omicron-variant of COVID-19 has resulted in significant staff shortages across sectors and some Canberrans choosing to stay home more than usual. The amendment also noted that despite the pandemic, retail figures have grown in 2019, 2020 and 2021 and that throughout the pandemic, the ACT Government has provided almost half a billion dollars in support to local businesses, including direct financial support to almost 12,000 local businesses. The motion called on the Government to continue to assess and monitor the level of support being provided to businesses impacted by ongoing restrictions and continue to encourage Canberrans to support local small businesses. The ACT Greens indicated support for the Government’s amendment during debate. The amendment was agreed to following a vote of the Assembly.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

**Community facilities renewal** was the subject of a motion moved by Ms Orr MLA on 9 February. The motion included noting that community facilities and the services that are delivered through these facilities are a fundamental pillar in supporting and strengthening our community and that the ACT Government is undertaking an assessment of ACT Property Group’s current community facilities and that the findings of this work could be used to inform future planning and identify opportunities for renewal and growth of community facilities. The motion called on the Government to support emerging and existing community facility needs through the ACT Property Group Portfolio by ensuring that future review work addresses a number of priorities and also called on the Government to engage with the community services sector to develop community facility demonstration projects. During debate both the Opposition and the ACT Greens indicated they would support the motion and outlined reasons for doing so.

The motion was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

Mr Hanson MLA moved a motion on 9 February concerning the **resourcing of ACT Policing**. The motion noted that the latest Report on Government Services from the Productivity Commission shows that the ACT has the: lowest number of police per capita in Australia; the lowest funding per person for police in Australia; the lowest clearance rates for property crime in Australia; and the lowest satisfaction of people who had contact with police in Australia. The motion also included noting that, in 2021, ACT police stopped taking calls from the public in person for certain crimes and moved to online reporting and called on the Government to increase the number of police to at least match per-capita levels with NSW by 2024 and to adequately resource ACT Policing to re-establish face-to-face crime reporting and investigation.

During debate an amendment was moved by the Government which, among other things, included recognising the ACT Government’s strong record of investment in ACT Policing and acknowledging that police numbers in the ACT continue to grow, with 98 officers graduating in the past financial year. The amendment called on the Government to continue resourcing ACT policing as Canberra grows, in line with an evidence-based approach. The ACT Greens indicated support for the Government’s amendment during debate. The amendment was agreed to following a vote of the Assembly.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

On 10 February, Ms Clay MLA moved a motion concerning the **right to a healthy environment**. The motion included recognising that a climate emergency has been declared and that COVID lockdowns and the COVID crisis have shown how important access to nature and the local environment is to mental and physical health. The motion noted that the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Assembly commits the ACT Government to consider introducing the right to a healthy environment into the *ACT’s Human Rights Act 2004*. The motion called on the ACT Government to investigate and consult on the inclusion of a right to a healthy environment into the Human Rights Act and to report back to the Assembly by the first sitting day of the last sitting week in 2022 with the outcomes of the consultations and a timeframe to introduce a right to a healthy environment. During debate, all parties in the Assembly indicated support for the motion.

The motion was passed without amendment.

Further motions debated during the sitting week related to:

 **Affordable Housing—Mr Parton MLA** *(8 February)*

 **Public election funding—Mr Hanson MLA** *(10 February)*

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

## 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 introduced

###  [Legislation (Legislative Assembly Committees) Amendment Bill 2022](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_65619/) (presented 10 February)

### Summary: This bill will amend provisions in a number of ACT statutes to ensure that the Speaker of the Assembly would have the function of nominating, in writing, which Assembly standing committees are to perform particular statutory responsibilities and functions.

### Motions debated

A motion proposing that the Assembly establish a **Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023** was moved by Ms Lawder on 10 February. Following adjournment of the matter, a motion was moved referring the motion to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure. This motion was passed by the Assembly.

On 10 February, a motion referring the matter of the aftermath of the **3 January thunderstorm event** in the Territory, to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, for inquiry, was moved by Mr Milligan MLA. During debate an amendment moved by the Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services requesting that the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing consider an inquiry into the matter was agreed to. The amendment outlined issues that the committee may wish to have regard to if they resolve to inquire into the matter.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

A number of further motions, relating to the procedures and practices of the Assembly, were moved and agreed to on 10 February. These motions related to:

* the timeframe for consideration of bills referred to Assembly committees; and
* an amendment to the continuing resolution of the Assembly concerning the Commissioner for Standards.

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

## Petitions and petition responses

The following petitions were lodged—

* Installation of speed limit signs on Bateman Street, Kambah—lodged by Mr Davis *(8 February)*
* Provision of Auslan information and services—lodged by Ms Lawder *(8 February)*

This petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion.

* Removal of Moncrieff drying pit—lodged by Mr Braddock *(10 February)*

This petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services

* Refurbishment of the Gungahlin skate park and installation of lights—lodged by Mr Braddock *(10 February 2022)*

This petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services

The following ministerial responses to petitions were lodged—

* Provision of services by the Domestic Animal Service—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Bicycle lanes on Drake-Brockman Drive and Southern Cross Drive—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Parking and traffic management in Campbell—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Upgrades at Lyons shops—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Civic 40 km/hr speed limit zones—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Income support for recipients of Commonwealth social welfare—Acting Treasurer *(8 February)*
* Fadden Hills Pond playground—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Recreational space next to Melba Copland Secondary School—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Public toilet facilities at Hackett shops—Minister for Transport and City Services *(8 February)*
* Lighting at Waramanga Playing Fields—Deputy Chief Minister *(8 February)*
* Enforcement of people’s rights under the ACT Human Rights Act—Minister for Human Rights *(9 February)*
* Antisocial behaviour in Gordon—Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services *(9 February)*

During debate on a motion relating to the presented petitions, on 8 February, an Auslan interpreter was present on the floor of the Chamber.

A copy of the petitions 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:

* Approval of Variation No 372 to the Territory Plan—Watson Section 76
* Auditor-General’s Reports—
* No 12/2021—Financial Audits—Financial Results and Audit Findings
* No 13/2021—Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project Procurement
* ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2020-21
* Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds Land Management Plan
* COVID-19 Measures—Report 13 for the period 1 October to 31 December 2021, pursuant to the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*
* Emergencies, Road Transport (General), Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Embassy and Diplomatic Residence Fees) Determination 2021
* Half-yearly directorate performance reports, made pursuant to the Financial Management Act, for:
* ACT Health
* ACT Local Hospital Network
* Canberra Health Services
* Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
* Community Services Directorate
* Education Directorate
* Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
* Housing ACT
* Justice and Community Safety Directorate
* Major Projects Canberra
* Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate
* Transport Canberra Operations
* Implementation Report on Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme for the period 1 July to 31 December 2021
* Integrity Commission—Special Report—Acquisition of Block 24, Section 65, Canberra City
* Looking Forward: An ACT Government Position Statement on Child and Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Context of COVID-19—pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 8 October 2021 concerning youth mental health
* Remuneration Tribunal Determinations:
* ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
* ACT Magistrates Court Judicial Positions
* ACT Supreme Court Judicial Positions
* Director of Public Prosecutions
* Full-Time Statutory Office Holder: Chief Executive Officer, ACT Integrity Commission
* Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly
* Part-time Public Office Holders
* Part-time Statutory Office Holder: Integrity Commissioner
* Principal Registrar and Chief Executive Officer, ACT Courts and Tribunal
* Report of a Review of a Critical Incident by the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services—Escape of a detainee from a secure escort on 9 July 2021
* Statement of leases granted for the period 1 October to 31 December 2021

## Committee Activities

### Committee reports

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

[Report 8—Inquiry into Giralang Shops—Interim Report](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1916692/PTCS-Report-8-Inquiry-into-Giralang-Shops-Interim-Report.pdf)

[Report 9—Inquiry into the impact of revised speed limits in Civic—Petitions 31-21 and 38-21](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1934639/Report-9-Inquiry-into-the-impact-of-revised-speed-limits-in-Civic.pdf)

####  Public Accounts— Standing Committee

[Report 3—Inquiry into the Auditor-General’s Report No 1 of 2020: Shared Services Delivery of HR and Finance Services](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1917287/41a62b4380b58fd44c542557f5e33e6b3cd8515b.pdf)

[Report 4—Inquiry into the Auditor-General’s Report No 6 of 2020: Transfer of Worker’s Compensation Arrangements from Comcare](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1944952/5a27287318ef035a1d1e7dd5947d0c2fc57cdbda.pdf)

[Report 5—Inquiry into the Auditor-General’s Report No 5 of 2021: Management of Closed-Circuit Television Systems](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1944946/ff161cd6f2eab3f19a8901946b9d82d0f5e057c8.pdf)

#### Scrutiny Committee

####  [Scrutiny Report 12](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1942425/Report-12-1Feb22.pdf)

This report contained the committee’s comments on seven bills, 24 pieces of subordinate legislation, two regulatory impact statements and seven government responses.

### Committee statements

####  Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee

####  The Speaker, as chair of the committee, made a statement on 8 February in relation to arrangements for upcoming sittings as a consequence of the current Omicron outbreak.

####  The chair made a further statement on 8 February concerning proposed changes to the resolution of the Assembly, in relation to the establishment of committees for the 10th Assembly, to allow committees three weeks from the date of presentation of a bill to decide whether to undertake an inquiry into the bill. The chair indicated that a motion would be moved in the Assembly on 10 February to enable this change.

####  Proposed changes to the Assembly’s continuing resolution in relation to the Commissioner for Standards was the subject of the final statement made by the chair on 8 February. The proposed change would allow the Commissioner to inform a member that a complaint had been made against them (without revealing the complainant’s identity or the nature of the complaint), even if the Commissioner believes on reasonable grounds that there is insufficient evidence to justify an investigation or that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or only for political advantage. The chair indicated that a motion would be moved in the Assembly on 10 February to enable this change.

####  Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee

####  The chair of the committee made a statement on 8 February informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved to extend the deadline for submissions to its inquiry into the future of the working week to 13 May 2022.

####  A further statement made by the chair on 8 February concerned the committee’s resolution to extend the deadline for submissions to its inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration to 8 April 2022.

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

####  The chair of the committee made a statement on 8 February informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved to conduct and inquiry, and report on, environmental volunteerism in the ACT. The chair indicated that the committee had called for submissions with a closing date of 10 March 2022 and would hold public hearings from March 2022.

####  Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee

####  The chair of the committee made a statement on 8 February informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved to change the reporting date for its inquiry into ACT health programs for children and young people to 31 March 2022.

####  Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

####  On 8 February, the chair made a statement informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved to conduct and inquiry into Petition No 32-21 concerning complaints about breaches of the Human Rights Act. The chair indicated that the committee anticipated holding hearings in April 2022.

####  A further statement made by the chair on 8 February concerned the committee’s consideration of statutory appointments for the period 1 July to 31 December 2021.

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

####  The chair of the committee, on 8 February, informed the Assembly that the committee had resolved not to conduct inquiries into the Public Place Names Amendment Bill 2021 and the Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2).

####  A further statement made by the chair on 8 February concerned the committee’s consideration of a number of petitions relating to:

* Traffic management plan for Gordon (No 13-21)
* Housing development on the Federal Golf Course (No 24-21)
* Review of parking and traffic in Campbell (Nos 21-21 and 40-21)

####  The chair informed the Assembly that the committee had resolved not to inquiry further into the petitions.

####  Public Accounts—Standing Committee

####  The chair of the committee informed the Assembly on 8 February that the committee had resolved to undertake an inquiry into Auditor-General’s Report No 4 of 2020—Residential Land Supply and Release.

####  The chair made a further statement on 8 February informing the Assembly that the committee had resolved not to inquiry into a number of Auditor-General’s reports, namely:

* No 5 of 2020—Management of household waste services
* No 10 of 2021—2020-21 Financial Audits Overview
* No 11 of 2021—Digital Records Management
* No 12 of 2021—2020-21 Financial Audits Financial Results and Audit Findings

####  The final statement made by the chair on 8 February concerned the committee’s consideration of statutory appointments for the period 1 July to 31 December 2021.

### Government responses to committee reports

#### Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Report 2—Inquiry into the 2020 ACT Election and the Electoral Act

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

Report 4—DV 365—Housing Choices—Co-Housing and Boarding Houses

Report 5—Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 364—Gungahlin Town Centre: Amendments to the Gungahlin precinct map and code

### Membership of committees

#### The Speaker informed the Assembly on 8 February of the following of changes to the membership of several standing committees that took effect from 9 December 2021:

* Ms Clay discharged from the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety and the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (including the Legislative Scrutiny role) and Mr Braddock appointed to this committee
* Mr Braddock discharged from the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity and Ms Clay appointed to this committee

#### On 10 December, further changes to committee membership were made by the Assembly:

* Mr Cain discharged from the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion and Ms Lawder appointed to this committee
* Mr Hanson discharged from the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety and Mr Cain appointed to this committee

## 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, 22 March 2022.**

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