

# Matters of public importance—your Assembly @ work

**Non-sitting and sitting weeks—26 February to 23 March 2018**

**Issue 3/2018**

## Government Business

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

### Bills introduced

[Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2018](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_57817/default.asp)

*Summary:* This bill will amend a number of the Territory’s laws to provide consistency in the management, care and control of all dogs in the ACT, including greyhounds kept in the ACT for racing in other jurisdictions.

[Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2018](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_57818/default.asp)

*Summary:* This bill will amend a number of Territory laws within the Justice and Community Safety portfolio to improve the operation of each amended law.

[Road Transport Reform (Light Rail) Legislation Amendment Bill 2018](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_57819/default.asp)

*Summary:* This bill will make a number of amendments to Territory laws relating to road transport legislation to establish the regulatory framework for the operation of light rail within the ACT.

### Bills debated

[Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_57667/default.asp)

*Summary:* This bill will amend a number of ACT statutes by facilitating access to justice by introducing efficiency measures to reduce time required and red tape for people involved in litigation. The bill will introduce measures to assist courts to better administer their procedures and cases to ensure fair outcomes and will also introduce changes to how oaths and affirmations are administered.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on this bill on 20 March with all parties supporting the passage of the proposed legislation.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

[Workplace Legislation Amendment Bill 2018](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_57606/default.asp)—

*Summary:* This bill will amend the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* to outline actions that can be taken to recover overpayments from the salary of a Territory employee. The bill also amends the Workplace Privacy Amendment Act 2016 to provide a framework for surveillance in the workplace to ensure compatibility with information privacy laws in the ACT.

*Proceedings:* Debate resumed on this bill on 20 March with the Opposition indicating, while supporting the bill in principle, they had concerns with some areas of the bill. The ACT Greens signified their support for the bill. The bill was agreed to in principle. During the detail stage the Opposition moved an amendment to the bill which, after a vote in the Assembly, was not agreed to.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

A full record of the debates can be accessed at [Hansard](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/hansard).

### Ministerial statements

On 20 March the Chief Minister made a statement concerning comments he made at a recent event relating to **government communication and the media**. During the statement the Chief Minister expressed his regret at making some of the comments and apologised for them.

On 20 March the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development made a statement concerning **cultural identity in ACT schools**. During the statement the minister outlined how schools are building cultural identity though engaging with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, learning through the curriculum about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, celebrating the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and having high expectations for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Minister for Housing and Suburban Development made a statement on 22 March highlighting the **homelessness data** from the 2016 Census which showed that there was a decline in the number of homeless people which occurred in a period when the ACT had an 11% growth in population. The minister also outlined how the Government is helping to reduce homelessness through the single human services gateway which assists with early intervention, sustained support and ensuring that sustainable housing outcomes are working.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs made a ministerial statement on 22 March in relation to the **Our Booris, Our Way** review into the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system in the ACT. The steering committee undertaking the review will deliver a preliminary report later this year with the final report due in September 2019.

The following ministerial statements were also made on 20 and 22 March—

The Minister for Women made a statement concerning International Women’s Day 2018.

The Minister for Disability, Children and Youth made a statement updating the Assembly on the progress of the implementation of the *ACT Children and Young People’s Commitment 2015-2025*.

The Chief Minister made a statement relating to the 2018 Washington delegation.

The full text of the statements made by Ministers and Members can be accessed from the [Assembly Hansard](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/hansard) site

## Private Members’ Business

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

### Bill introduced

[Health (Improving Abortion Access) Amendment Bill 2018](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_57801/default.asp)

*Summary:* This bill will amend the *Health Act 1993* to improve access to safe and legal abortions for people in the ACT.

### Motions debated

**Prevention of child sexual abuse** was the subject of a motion moved by Mrs Kikkert MLA on 21 March. The motion noted the impact of child sexual abuse on victims and families and called on the Government to provide information to parents and care givers on recognising and responding to suspected abuse. During debate the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth moved an amendment calling on the Government to continue work on making resources available for parents and carers and ensure improved availability, distribution and promotion of these resources. The Opposition moved an amendment to the Minister’s amendment which called on the Government to work with recognised and accredited organisations to ensure information reflects best practice in this area. The Opposition’s amendment to the Minister’s amendment was passed by the Assembly. The Minister’s amendment, as amended, was then agreed to by the Assembly.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

**Building regulatory system** **reform** was the subject of a motion moved by Mr Parton MLA on 21 March. The motion noted the issues that arise from poor quality construction and called on the Government to implement the remaining reforms from the *Improving the ACT Building Regulatory System—Summary of Proposed Reforms* by the end of 2018. During debate the Minister for Planning and Land Management moved an amendment noting the Government’s obligation to ensuring a proper an effective regulatory framework and committed to providing updates to the Assembly on progress in implementing the 43 reforms outlined in the *Improving the ACT Building Regulatory System Review*. The Government’s amendment was agreed to.

The amended motion was passed by the Assembly.

Other motions debated on 21 March related to:

* Gender equity—Ms Cheyne MLA
* Waramanga—Provision of playground—Mr Hanson MLA
* Housing Affordability and homelessness—Mr Pettersson MLA

The full debate on the above motions can be accessed from the [Assembly Hansard](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/hansard) site.

## Censure motion

On 20 March Mr Coe MLA moved a censure motion against the Chief Minister for his comments in relation to the media. During debate the ACT Greens moved an amendment to the motion noting with concern the comments made by the Chief Minister, acknowledging that the Chief Minister had apologised to the media and the Assembly and affirming the importance of freedom of the press and the role that media and journalists play in our democracy. The amendment also affirmed the commitment to an inclusive Canberra across all ages, racial and religious groups. The amendment was passed after a vote in the Assembly.

The amended motion was agreed to by the Assembly.

The full debate on the above motions can be accessed from the [Assembly Hansard](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/hansard) site.

## 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***

### Motions debated

A motion establishing a **Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019** to examine the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2018-2019, the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019 and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2018-2019 Budget was agreed to by the Assembly on 22 March. The committee is to report by 31 July 2018.

 The motion was passed by the Assembly.

The full terms of the above motion can be found in the [Minutes of Proceedings](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1168583/MoP049F.pdf).

 On 22 March, the Opposition moved a motion **proposing the establishment of a Select Committee on Privileges** to consider actions taken during a hearing of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism on 6 November 2017. During debate an amendment was moved by the Opposition to the motion which included seeking to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure for consideration in lieu of establishing a committee of privileges. A number of amendments were moved by the Government to the Opposition’s amendment, one of which was agreed to by the Assembly. Mr Wall’s amended amendment was then passed.

 The motion, as amended, was then agreed to by the Assembly.

The full terms of the above motion can be found in the [Minutes of Proceedings](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1180911/MoP052.pdf).

## Executive Members’ business

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

***Motion debated***

A motion concerning the **Federal Government’s Community Support Program** (CSP) for refugees was moved by Mr Rattenbury MLA on 22 March. The motion sought to highlight the barriers faced by refugees when settling in a new country. It included calling on the Assembly to write to the Federal Government asking that it adopt a more affordable visa fee structure for the CSP, make the cap on the program additional to the existing humanitarian intake and explain the changes to make the criteria more accessible for refugees.

 The motion was passed by the Assembly.

## Matter of public importance

The following matters of public importance were discussed in the Assembly this week—

The importance of sports grants for supporting women’s and girls’ sport in Canberra—Ms Cheyne MLA

The importance of libraries in the ACT—Ms Lawder MLA

## Papers Presented

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

* Auditor-General’s Reports—4/2018—2016-17—Financial Audits Computer Information Systems (*presented by the Speaker on 20 March*)
* Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22—Progress report for the period 2012-17 (*presented by the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth on 22 March*)
* Review of the Opioid Replacement Treatment Program at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (*presented by the Minister for Mental Health on 22 March*)
* What We Heard—Developing a New Housing Strategy for the ACT—Summary report of the ACT Housing and Homelessness Summit (*presented by the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development on 20 March*)

## Petition and Petition Responses

The following petition was lodged on 20 March—

Mitchell—Light rail stop—lodged by Ms Fitzharris MLA and referred to the Minister for Transport and City Services.

The petition was also referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services.

A copy of the terms of this petition can be accessed from the [Assembly Hansard](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/hansard) site.

The following ministerial responses to an e-petition and petitions were lodged on 20 March—

Rerouting buses away from Anketell Street, Tuggeranong.

Heritage protection for Lake Burley Griffin and surrounds.

Proposed upgrades to Torrens playground.

A copy of the response can be found on the [closed e-Petitions](https://epetitions.act.gov.au/ClosedEPetitions.aspx) and [Paper Petitions](https://epetitions.act.gov.au/PaperPetitions.aspx) pages.

## Committee Activities

### Committee reports presented

#### Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee

Report 2—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017 (presented on 20 March)

Report 3—Inquiry into a new Convention Centre for Canberra (presented on 20 March)

#### Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

Report 2—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017 and University of Canberra 2016 Annual Report (presented on 20 March)

#### Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Report 2—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017 (presented on 22 March)

#### Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee

Report 5—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017 (presented on 20 March)

#### Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Report 2—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017 (presented on 20 March)

#### Scrutiny Committee

[Scrutiny Report 15](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1176202/Report-15.pdf) (presented 20 March)

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

### Committee statements

#### Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee

The chair of the committee made a statement on 20 March on the committee’s consideration of **statutory appointments** and presented the following schedule of statutory appointments:

*9th Assembly – Period 1 July to 31 December 2017*

#### Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

[**Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence—Policy approaches and responses**](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-justice-and-community-safety/inquiry-into-domestic-and-family-violencepolicy-approaches-and-responses)

On 8 March 2018, the Committee held its third public hearing inquiring into domestic and family violence—policy approaches and responses.   The Committee heard from: the Women’s Legal Centre (ACT & Region); ACT Human Rights Commission; ACT Director of Public Prosecutions; and Menslink.  The transcript for the hearing can be accessed on the [Assembly’s website](http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2017/comms/justice07.pdf).

On 15 March 2018, the Committee held its fourth public hearing inquiring into domestic and family violence—policy approaches and responses.   The Committee heard from: Toora Women Incorporated; Beryl Women Incorporated; Women With Disabilities ACT; and Advocacy for Inclusion.

Further information on forthcoming public hearings (to be held on 27 March and 3 April 2018) for the inquiry can be accessed on the [Assembly’s website](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/public-hearings-schedule).

[**Inquiry into 2016–17 Annual reports**](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-justice-and-community-safety/inquiry-into-annual-and-financial-report-2016-2017)

On 22 March 2018, the Committee tabled its report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016–17.  The Committee made 30 recommendations.  The Committee’s report can be accessed on the [Assembly’s website](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-justice-and-community-safety/inquiry-into-annual-and-financial-report-2016-2017#tab-1123464-4).

The Committee held public hearings on 6 and 8 November 2017.  At these public hearings the Committee heard from Ministers, accompanying directorate and agency officers, and members of governing boards.

The Committee’s report examined and reflected on several key themes that became apparent during its inquiry.  Some of the themes included: a Victims of Crime Charter of Rights; the Law Courts Public Private Partnership, ACT Drug and Alcohol Court; detainee education and training; the restorative justice scheme; motorcycle lane filtering trial evaluation; introduction of light rail and effect on traffic laws; compliance inspections—racing and wagering licences/providers, ACTAS crewing and staffing; ACT Fire and Rescue—lateral entry recruitment process; prescribed burns program; Policing for tomorrow’s ACT; family violence law reform; anti-consorting laws; the Safer Families initiative; and funding and resourcing of the DPP.

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On 22 March 2018, the Deputy Chair of the Committee made a second statement relating to petition No. 5–17 (Revenge porn—Criminalisation) as referred to the Committee (pursuant to Standing Order 99A) on 10 May 2017.  The Deputy Chair advised that with the passing of the Crimes (Intimate Image Abuse) Amendment Bill 2017 on 16 August 2017—a new offence for people who distribute an intimate image of another person without consent was created.  The Deputy Chair further advised that it was the Committee’s view that this legislative change addresses the particulars of the referred petition and its requested action.

#### Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee

On 20 March the chair of the committee made the following statements—

* Government response to the report for the inquiry into billboards
* Consideration of petitions No 10-17 and 11-17 relating to the proposed public housing developments in Holder and Chapman, along with the Minister’s response. The committee had determined not to conduct an inquiry into the matter at this time.
* Consideration of petition No 29-17 relating to retaining existing green space and integrated planning for the natural environment, along with the Minister’s response. The committee had determined not to conduct an inquiry into the matter at this time.

On 22 March the chair of the committee made a statement that the committee had resolved to conduct an [Inquiry into Engagement with Development Application Processes in the ACT](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-planning-and-urban-renewal).

#### Public Accounts—Standing Committee

The chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts informed the Assembly that the committee had considered a number of Auditor-General’s reports and resolved to conduct an [Inquiry into Auditor-General’s Report 3/2018](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-public-accounts) concerning the tender for sale of block 30 (formerly block 20) Section 34 in Dickson.

### Government responses

#### Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

Report 4—Management of ACT Cemeteries (presented 22 March)

#### Independent Integrity Commission—Select Committee

Inquiry into an Independent Integrity Commission (presented 20 March)

## Education Activities

A number of schools have visited or are planning to visit the Assembly during Term One including Wanniassa Hills Primary, Red Hill Primary, Arawang Primary and St John Paul II College. Visiting students participate in programs that cover the passing of mock bills, participating in a mock MPI discussion, voting in mock elections and meeting the Members.

Education staff are busy preparing for the first Interschool Parliamentary Debate day for Year 11 and 12 students to be held on 6 April 2018. Program topics include voluntary voting for people aged 16-18 years, introducing a sugar tax to reduce obesity and robotics and artificial intelligence will improve job satisfaction among workers. The program for the debate is available on the [website](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/Explore-your-Assembly/education-programs/Interschool-parliamentary-debates/program-year-11-and-12).

Members are currently hosting a number of interns who undertake an agreed research topic during the internship that results in the production of a report on behalf of a Member. Expressions of interest for interns in Semester 2 which runs from July to October 2018 will open soon.

The Public Sector Seminar has recently been reviewed and changes implemented. The first seminar will be conducted on 4 April for graduates as part of the ACT Public Service Graduate Program. The program for the seminar is available on the [website](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/Explore-your-Assembly/education-programs/public-sector-seminar).

Information on our various program offerings are available on the Assembly’s [website](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/Explore-your-Assembly/education-programs/public-sector-seminar).

## Members of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

### Electorate of Brindabella

Ms Joy Burch (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Mick Gentleman (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Nicole Lawder (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Mark Parton (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Andrew Wall (Canberra Liberals)

### Electorate of Ginninderra

Ms Yvette Berry (Australian Labor Party)

Ms Tara Cheyne (Australian Labor Party)

Mrs Vicki Dunne (Canberra Liberals)

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Gordon Ramsay (Australian Labor Party)

### Electorate of Kurrajong

Mr Andrew Barr (Australian Labor Party)

Miss Candice Burch (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Elizabeth Lee (Canberra Liberals)

Mr Shane Rattenbury (ACT Greens)

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith (Australian Labor Party)

### Electorate of Murrumbidgee

Ms Bec Cody (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Jeremy Hanson CSC (Canberra Liberals)

Mrs Giulia Jones (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Caroline Le Couteur (ACT Greens)

Mr Chris Steel (Australian Labor Party)

### Electorate of Yerrabi

Mr Alistair Coe (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Meegan Fitzharris (Australian Labor Party)

Mr James Milligan (Canberra Liberals)

Ms Suzanne Orr (Australian Labor Party)

Mr Michael Pettersson (Australian Labor Party)

## Next Sitting

**Tuesday, 10 April 2018.**

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