



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS, INDUSTRY
AND RECREATION**

(Reference: [Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023-24](#))

Members:

MR T WERNER-GIBBINGS (Chair)
MS F CARRICK (Deputy Chair)
MR J HANSON
MS D MORRIS
MR S RATTENBURY
MR T EMERSON

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2025

Secretary to the committee:
Ms S Milne (Ph: 620 50435)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

APPEARANCES

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	96, 105
Infrastructure Canberra	105

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.06 am.

Appearances:

Cheyne, Ms Tara, Attorney-General, Minister for Human Rights, Minister for City and Government Services and Minister for the Night-Time Economy

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Chesworth, Ms Fiona, Executive Branch Manager, Better Regulation Taskforce, Policy and Cabinet Division

Barbaro, Ms Fiona, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division

THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone and welcome to the public hearings of the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation inquiry into annual reports. Welcome to a new member, Mr Hanson. The committee will today examine the Minister for the Night-Time Economy and the Minister for Sport and Recreation.

The committee does wish to acknowledge traditional custodians of the lands we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's events.

The proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. When taking a question on notice, it will be useful if witnesses use these words, "I will take that question on notice." This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

We also welcome the Minister for the Night-Time Economy, Ms Tara Cheyne MLA, and officials from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the privilege statement. Witnesses must tell the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter and may be considered contempt of the Assembly. When you first speak, please confirm you understand the implications of the statement and that you agree to comply with it.

As we are not inviting opening statements, we will now proceed to questions. Do we have one regarding the Night-time Economy Business and Stakeholder Panel? As I understand, it was convened of representatives from across stakeholder groups, businesses, arts organisations and community groups to provide feedback on the governance, safety and entertainment precincts and urban management. Has that completed its work, and if so, what recommendations has it made?

Ms Chesworth: I have read and understood the privilege statement. Yes, the business and industry stakeholder panel was convened to help provide input into recommendations on the night-time economy. As you say, there were some matters discussed at the various workshops that were held. The outcomes of that panel are included in our Night-time Economy Review, which is available on the website, so you

can have a look at the results of that engagement with business. In terms of discussion around safety, there were discussions in relation to applying the Purple Flag accreditation program to Canberra City. There were, as a result of that panel, different views about the Purple Flag accreditation, which is a program that is implemented in New South Wales and has been quite effective there, given the size of Sydney. There were varying views across stakeholders as to whether that would offer a good solution, taking into account the size of Canberra. So that has helped inform our discussions around safety, I guess, in terms of whether we should go ahead with the Purple Flag accreditation, and at that point, the view of the panel was, no, that probably would not offer the benefits that it does in a bigger city such as Sydney.

THE CHAIR: What is Purple Flag accreditation; what does that cover? How do you get accredited?

Ms Chesworth: Yes. It is probably best if I took that question on notice, because it is quite a complex accreditation process, and that was actually one of the reasons I think, why—it does put a lot of onus on the businesses to work together as a community to come up with changes and innovations in their area, in their geographic area. So it is quite intensive for businesses to form those sort of coalitions to get that accreditation. I think it actually started off in the UK, but I think it would be best if I took that question on notice and provided you with the parameters of Purple Flag accreditation from New South Wales.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Can you give me the top line on what sort of safety it is specifically aimed at?

Ms Chesworth: It will depend, I believe, on the particular geographic area. For some areas of Sydney—I think a Purple Flag accredited area might be in the city centre, so the CBD, and it covers a number of streets. There could be things like discussions around lighting or there could be discussions around making each individual premises look more attractive and inviting at night, for example. Other themes would probably go to, maybe transport, like a taxi, where if there was a better position for a taxi rank in that area, then helping to get that change effected. I am probably now speaking a little bit out of my in-depth knowledge around all the aspects, so if it is okay, I will take that on notice to get more detail on Purple Flag accreditation.

Ms Cheyne: I have read and understood the privilege statement. There are five core principles, and then subsections underneath that, that exist for the Purple Flag accreditation. I will read them quickly and then move on. They are wellbeing; welcoming, clean, safe, and then it goes through what those terms mean; movement, a secure pattern of arrival, circulation and departure, again, many things under that including public transport; appeal, a vibrant choice and rich mix of entertainment and activity; place, a stimulating destination and vibrant place and; strategic alignment, a clear aim and a common purpose.

THE CHAIR: Okay, that is part of the Purple Flag accreditation. I look forward to the information.

MR EMERSON: I was going to ask about the panel, if there is a list of who is on it, or who was on it, and can it carry forward or was that a one-off?

Ms Chesworth: The panel was a moment in time panel, to influence and provide input to our Night-time Economy Review and then the subsequent reforms that followed from that. The report is online and we can provide you with the access and how you might find that on the website.

MR EMERSON: Yes. I have that from you. I am wondering whether there is an ongoing—there has been a commitment to codesigning measures moving forward and support for a night-time economy—whether there is an ongoing consultation group, or whether that might be stood up?

Ms Cheyne: Yes. No. Not at this stage, Mr Emerson. Quite honestly, what we are hearing from the community is that they are really focussed on their business and day-to-day activity at the moment, rather than stepping up and thinking about necessarily the broader picture. Given we have gone through an extensive amount of reform in the last little while, we are really giving this year as a bit of time for consolidation, given the extensive input and consultation that we did last term.

MS CASTLEY: I am just looking at the review. I cannot see the list. I noted it was by invitation only. I am wondering how you chose the businesses that were involved in the invitation-only review.

Ms Chesworth: An expression of interest process was run with invitations sent out to a broad range of stakeholders to express interest in attending the panel. From my recollection, the consultants we engaged had certain aims and objectives to achieve different representatives from different sectors and different cohorts of the business community to be a part of that panel. That is all expressed in the consultation report.

MS CASTLEY: I must have the wrong one in front of me. Was it all over Canberra or just mainly the city?

Ms Chesworth: The invitation was broad. Apart from the city centre entertainment precinct noise settings, the reforms that we were looking at, that then followed, are ACT-wide.

MS CARRICK: With the review, were there many people participating from the south side of Canberra?

Ms Chesworth: I will need to check that, Ms Carrick. I can certainly recall representatives from the Tuggeranong community attending the community workshop component of that. There was the business and industry stakeholder panel and then there were also two community workshops, but I can clarify for you.

MS CARRICK: Yes. For those things that you just mentioned, workshops and all, can you provide a breakdown of where the participants were coming from; where they were representing; where their interests lay?

Ms Cheyne: To the extent that we know them, yes.

MS CARRICK: On that theme, given that Woden town centre is the major hub of

Canberra's south due to its geographic location—

Ms Cheyne: I am not sure that Tuggeranong would agree, but—

MS CARRICK: Well, they are all important, all town centres are important.

Ms Cheyne: Absolutely, but I would not say it is the major hub of the Southside.

THE CHAIR: Anyway.

MS CARRICK: Anyway, the public transport alignment goes straight through the—

THE CHAIR: There are a few schools of thought.

MR EMERSON: I am with you, Fiona.

THE CHAIR: You just made yourself an enemy, Tara!

Ms Cheyne: I am just trying to back Brindabella.

MS CARRICK: Nobody is saying that all town centres are not important and I will always advocate for all town centres, and group centres, and local shops, but geographically, Woden is right there in the south, on the east-west alignment and the north-south alignment. So what work is being done around an entertainment precinct in Woden town centre?

Ms Cheyne: Last year, we went through an extensive process about an entertainment precinct for the City, which is the hub of night life, but we also recognise that there are some major hubs across the town centres, including in Gungahlin, Belconnen, Woden, Tuggeranong, Kingston.

MS CARRICK: And the new Molonglo one?

Ms Cheyne: Not at this stage. I would not say it is a night life hub.

MS CARRICK: No, but it is to be planned.

Ms Cheyne: Sure. Where we do have those existing entertainment precincts, we went through a period of consultation for the City—what it could look like, especially because the City does have those challenges where we are trying to address two objectives, which is people who live close and are enjoying living close to that night life, but also want to have a level of comfort when it comes to noise.

The entertainment precinct is a core and frame model. So the core is smaller, obviously, and effectively is what I would describe as the nucleus of all the activity that is being undertaken and has higher noise limits attached to it. Then there is the frame, which is where it starts to bump up against residential living. It has slightly lower noise limits but at the same time still, we have reviewed them and they are much more aligned with what was already occurring. That was effectively put into place in about August last year.

At the time, I made a public commitment, and that is in our election commitments as well, that again, we wanted to go through a period of consolidation and see how this works; see what complaints we get, if any; and see how businesses and the community respond. Then hopefully it will be able to be used, not as a copy/paste template, because every town centre, as you know, is different, but certainly as a model from which we can draw from to apply elsewhere. We are still within that year period, and quite honestly, I would expect that the next town centre we would look at is Belconnen.

MR RATTENBURY: On the entertainment precincts, it took about probably seven years under the previous planning minister to get that one rolled out. Do you think it is possible to do them in a faster time? I am certainly concerned that we get behind, and I think the value of having an entertainment precinct is getting on the front foot so that areas can build around having that zoning. What timeframe do you think it should be possible to get them done in?

Ms Cheyne: It is difficult for me to quantify that, Mr Rattenbury, but having done it now—and I am proud to have done so and I also do respect that it has taken a long time—now that we do have effectively a template, and if it goes well and by all accounts it is, then my expectation is that we could do it more quickly. But of course, we still do not want to do it in a way that compromises any consultation or the unique characteristics of the town centre. There are elements that are not just about an entertainment precinct, but also about how we are responding to noise complaints.

At the time, I effectively gave a directive to EPA that I was keen for them to be engaging with the new noise limits in a way that supported them, notwithstanding that we can receive vexatious complaints. You might also be aware that in New South Wales they do have a process where there needs to be multiple people complain before they will go and investigate, and/or there is an order of occupancy, regarding noise as well. So if the Old Canberra Inn was there first, which is a good example because it has been there for 100 years, then it was the first there and that needs to be taken into consideration. That is kind of the next stage of work, to support the principles, I suppose, that underlie the entertainment precincts. The point is, it is not just about the entertainment precinct.

MR EMERSON: On the multiple complainant policy; do we have a timeline on whether—

Ms Cheyne: On the what?

MR EMERSON: The multiple complainant policy. Do we have a timeline on when we might roll that out in the ACT?

Ms Cheyne: No, not at the moment, but it is an election commitment, so this term.

MS CARRICK: My substantive is along the same lines as Mr Rattenbury's timing one. I would like to know where the beating heart of the Woden town centre is—where an entertainment precinct might be viable. How do you talk to the planning directorate? Presumably it would be the town square, but it is zoned for 28 storey towers around its perimeter, and one has already been built. Should DAs go in, we are losing our ability to have an entertainment precinct in our town square. So it is really important that we

get on and identify it and say, “You were there first, town square.” What work are you doing to ensure that we protect the town square or the ability for the community to make some noise?

Ms Cheyne: That is, I guess, difficult for me to answer, Ms Carrick, because, as I said, at the moment we are in a period of consolidation, focusing on the city, and then seeing how that can apply elsewhere. I do not believe we have done any work on Woden at this stage.

MS CARRICK: Can you appreciate the issues around timing with the zoning allowing 28 storeys around the town square and the impact that that can have on a future—

Ms Cheyne: Living in Belconnen and living in an area of extremely high density and multiple uses, yes, I can appreciate where there are some tensions, but I would not say an entertainment precinct is a panacea.

MS CARRICK: Well, it can identify that this area is where the future noise will be allowed. It sends a message to the community that, should you buy an apartment here—

Ms Cheyne: As I flagged, Ms Carrick, that would be a process of consultation with the community. While it may be your view that the square is the hub, a broader consultation may reveal something different. So we would want to take into account all views.

MS CARRICK: I just raise the timing issues. It is getting built out—nearly 40 towers.

Ms Cheyne: Come to Belconnen!

MS CASTLEY: Minister, I was happy to hear of the creation of the ministerial role for the night-time economy. It is something that the Liberals have been concerned about for a while. In your ministerial statement last week you identified a number of initiatives. I am wondering if there is anywhere we can see the timeline of what you are intending to achieve. Is that anywhere, or could you just run us through a really brief timeline of what you expect to achieve?

Ms Cheyne: Some of these things, Ms Castley, are subject to the budget process and that is not something that I can pre-empt, specifically, the extension of the liquor licence fee reductions. However, I did make clear at the time of that election commitment that we were keen to pursue that as soon as possible. I acknowledge it was a widely appreciated proposal in its first iteration and that expanding it for some of the businesses that we see, including those that have reported difficult times and are suffering really that long tail of COVID and people’s different behaviours—to do it as soon as possible. But I cannot pre-empt a budget process. In terms of some others, the work on noise is my adjunct priority I suppose. So again, as soon as possible.

MS CASTLEY: Can you tell us what the level of resourcing is that will be dedicated to the night-time economy, both in your office but also within the public service?

Ms Cheyne: Sure. It is me, obviously, and my chief of staff, acknowledging just what an important portfolio this is, and also due to his extensive background in the night-time economy. So that is his only specific area of responsibility on top of his broader

approach and responsibilities as chief of staff. Then it is a little difficult for me to quantify it because, of course, there is the business area in CMTEDD, then there is Access Canberra, the EPA and the event and business coordination assist team, as well as the team who has been progressing a lot of the policy and reform work, who will be able to tell you what that FTE is.

Ms Barbaro: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. Again, in Policy and Cabinet, it is hard to quantify the FTE, because we have teams working on multiple things, but we do have a better regulation team that looks more broadly at regulation across government but also facilitates the night-time economy policy, and that is an FTE of approximately seven people. Some of that comes from our core funding that is in Policy and Cabinet, and some of that comes from budget initiatives.

MS CASTLEY: My last question is that a lot of the initiatives that have been taken seem as though they could have been handled under the regulation reform last term. I am just wondering why they were not. I am a bit concerned that we have given this a name and it could have been handled through the Better Regulation Taskforce.

Ms Cheyne: No. I would not say it was not. I would say that actually that work that the taskforce undertook identified effectively a program of reform, and we did extensive reform really in that last year, especially as it related to legislation and regulations and really changing the posture of government overall to the night-time economy. Then that work also identified what was next, and that is why I am hopeful that in the next year we will see some pretty significant progress.

MR EMERSON: I must have the opposite concern. The question is: is there anyone who is dedicated within the public service who is focused solely on the night-time economy? You said Michael has expertise, which is fantastic, but is there someone like that, or a couple of people like that, who maybe have music industry experience and are really focussed on this issue, given we have you as the minister working on it?

Ms Cheyne: I cannot speak for every person in the public service, Mr Emerson, but one of the key internal government stakeholders is, of course, artsACT, and many, if not all, of the artsACT staff are drawn from the arts sector, which obviously has a significant interaction with the night-time economy. As well, in terms of who is a particular expert, I would say I am an expert, but I am also 38, so I am like ageing out really quickly, if not already. Equally, there are people who have extensive experience running businesses previously, for example, that are in the government or are not in government but we are consulting with regularly.

MR RATTENBURY: Minister, one of the bits of feedback we hear is that our music festivals are struggling to operate, and particularly here in Canberra this year we see Groovin the Moo will not be happening. What information do you have on why these events are struggling to take place?

Ms Cheyne: The information I have is that the behaviours that have come out of COVID, and that we are seeing in some of our bricks and mortar venues, are being realised at an even more significant scale for festivals. What I mean specifically is ticket buying. Festivals to be viable need to have a significant number of tickets sold early and that then gives them an indication of whether they can go ahead. I think it was last

year we saw Groovin the Moo, or the year before, did announce it was going ahead, and then a week later canned it. That is because they did not have enough ticket sales and enough clear demand in that time. You will see it with people who are touring as well, that if they do not get enough tickets sold early, it is not worth their while effectively to do the travel, or the coordination, or the logistics, or whatever else it may be. It is a vicious circle really, because we have people who were reluctant to buy tickets because they were nervous in COVID that it would get cancelled. Now, by being reluctant to get tickets, events are being cancelled.

MR RATTENBURY: What opportunity do you see to perhaps try and break that cycle? Is there a role for government, do you think, to assist in that?

Ms Cheyne: I think there is a role for federal government, particularly because things like Groovin the Moo, of course, are about supporting regional cities everywhere and Canberra is one of those. I have stressed to Minister Burke previously that I think that the federal government could underwrite festivals, similarly to what we did with Amp It Up!, and that is a matter for them.

MR RATTENBURY: Lastly, our public transport does not run very late in the ACT compared to most cities, what impact do you think that has on the night-time economy?

Ms Cheyne: Certainly on Sundays, I know that it has a big impact. Other days, certainly Friday and Saturday, it does run later. However, even I have been caught at midnight waiting at the bus stop and then I realise there is no bus coming because of the day of the week or whatever it may be. It is something that I am keen to have more conversations with Minister Steel about. But also, it is a bit of a chicken and egg situation. We need to see that there is demand to get to that, but also demand does not necessarily exist until we offer it. So that is the two sides of the coin there, but it is something I do want to see improved.

MR RATTENBURY: Are you concerned that absence of late night public transport actually either discourages people coming, or it encourages drink and drug driving?

Ms Cheyne: No. I am not sure there is evidence for, certainly, the latter. In terms of people coming in, I think it is—I would not say it is an issue most days of the week, but I think it is particularly pronounced on Sundays.

MR EMERSON: You know this policy of tying liquor licence fee reductions to bringing more music into venues? Given younger people are drinking less alcohol than their parents, as well as they are the loneliest cohort in Canberra, has consideration been given within this area to just fund live music directly in our venues?

Ms Cheyne: Yes. Mr Emerson, we did that last term, we have ended up twice—and that did have a positive impact. It is tricky because it is not just about live music, I suppose. The night-time economy and how we have set up our liquor fee reductions are about really any artistic or cultural activity that is undertaken, and so injecting just one area would probably not meet the intent overall.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. If you have taken any questions on notice, please provide your

answers to the committee secretary within five business days of receiving the uncorrected proof *Hansard*.

The committee suspended from 9.35 am to 2.05 pm.

Appearances:

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood, Minister for Homes and New Suburbs, and Minister for Sport and Recreation

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Arthy, Ms Kareena, Deputy Director-General, Economic Development

Kelley, Ms Rebecca, Executive Branch Manager, Sport and Recreation, Economic Development

Infrastructure Canberra

Cahif, Mr Ashley, Deputy Director-General

Rynehart, Mr Josh, Executive Group Manager, Delivery, Places and Spaces

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to this hearing of the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation on annual reports. We welcome the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Ms Yvette Berry MLA, and officials from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, and Infrastructure Canberra. I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the privilege statement. Witnesses must tell the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter and may be considered contempt of the Assembly.

As we are not inviting opening statements, we will now proceed to questions. I have a question about the south-side hydrotherapy pool, which I drove past two days ago when I was dropping off my son. A number of constituents have contacted me. I hope they are looking forward to the completion of the south-side hydrotherapy pool, but I am interested in progress on the development. Where is it up to? When is it going to be opened?

Mr Rynehart: I have read, understand and agree with the privilege statement. The works are underway on the hydrotherapy pool. We are anticipating opening mid this year. Works are in accordance with the program at the moment. We have completed a leak test and the construction continues.

THE CHAIR: Will the new car park at and around Lakeside complement increased patronage? What is the capacity of the pool?

Mr Rynehart: The capacity of pools is set according to the Surf Life Saving standards. On pool capacity, a certain amount of the controls go by the size of the pool, the number of people and the utilisation. I would have to take on notice the specific limit for the hydrotherapy pool itself. When it opens, we are looking forward to monitoring really closely the usage and patronage rates at the pool. We will monitor those and we will look at the time of day and week of highest utilisation and how we can continue to improve services once it is open.

THE CHAIR: This is a follow-up about pools more generally. Are you aware that there was or may still be variation in pool temperature across the ACT? A couple of people said the temperature at Tuggeranong was lower compared to Civic. Is there a consistency measure that we could aim for?

Mr Rynehart: We certainly aim to have consistency in pool temperature across all sites. There can sometimes be fluctuations, depending on the pool and the time of year, but we generally aim to keep them at a consistent temperature. We occasionally hear from customers that it may feel cold or warm. Some active monitoring goes on by the provider. They regularly monitor, across each of the pools, the temperature of the water within them. The boilers heating the pools maintain them at a standard temperature. We did get some feedback about Lakeside last year and we looked into that. What we found was that it did appear consistent throughout, although there may have been fluctuations sometimes if the filtration unit or the boiler went offline for a period of time. That may slightly change the temperature.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned the provider. Is pool temperature a question for management or a question for the government?

Mr Rynehart: We have a contract through Belgravia, who manage on our behalf. Part of their management is to monitor the temperature of the water in the pools. That is part of the contractual arrangement we have about the management—

THE CHAIR: And the expectation would be that they communicate across all sites and say, “This is—

Mr Rynehart: Yes. They also advise us about the temperature and maintaining them to the expected standard.

THE CHAIR: I will come back to that a little bit later. I will pass to the deputy chair.

MS CARRICK: Thank you, Chair. My question is about the Phillip pool, of course.

Ms Berry: Nothing but predictable!

MS CARRICK: Yes. According to the Surf Life Saving Association, the ACT has the lowest number of 50-metre pools per capita. Why did you approve the reduction of the Phillip pool from 50 metres to 25 metres?

Ms Berry: There is a bit to that question which might be useful to explain. Approval has been given and there is a requirement that a 25-metre pool is built as part of the Geocon development. Everybody knows about that. Some people are not happy with that. I understand it. In any case, at this stage, that is what is going ahead with that Geocon development—a program pool and a splash park area, as well as some other facilities for public use. The Phillip pool there at the moment is a 50-metre outdoor pool. It is currently operating, as I understand it. Geocon told me, when I asked them, that they will have that pool and the ice rink operating until we have built a new ice rink in Tuggeranong. That is the case at the moment. The reason it is a 25-metre indoor pool is that advice was provided that a program pool and splash park are much more viable for the community. It can be used for 12 months of the year and it can provide lots of different opportunities for young children and families to play, swim and do other activities inside.

As I say that, I recognise that it is not what everybody wants. Some people still want to

have a 50-metre seasonal pool that is outside. You may have heard the Chief Minister say during the election that a 50-metre outdoor pool at Phillip is not off the agenda, but at the moment there is an operating 50-metre pool and there will be a 25-metre indoor program pool and splash park as part of the Geocon development.

MS CARRICK: Will you encourage planning for a new 50-metre pool in Woden, and what would the time frames be?

Ms Berry: You are asking me to announce a decision of government that is not made yet. All I can tell you now is that the Chief Minister has said publicly that a 50-metre outdoor pool for the Woden area is not off the agenda; it is still something that could be discussed into the future. More immediately, there is an existing pool and there will be a 25-metre indoor pool.

MS CARRICK: Did you approve the reduction?

Ms Berry: I do not think I approved it; I think it was just advice given as factual advice. Twenty-five-metre indoor program pools with splash parks are much more viable and can be operated all year round. That is the advice.

MS CARRICK: Given that it is a Sport and Recreation matter, who approved the reduction from 50 metres to 25 metres?

Ms Berry: It was probably Planning, but it was based on advice that we provided on the best outcome for an indoor pool; how that could service the community for a longer period of time, over 12 months; that it would be sustainable and would work for more people than a seasonal outdoor 50-metre pool—for a future development. As I said, that is a decision that was made, but there is still an opportunity to discuss into the future where a 50-metre outdoor pool is in the Woden area. That is not off the agenda, but, at the moment, a decision has been made that, for this development at the current pool site, which is a privately owned facility, a 25-metre pool will be built.

MS CARRICK: Given that it seems a different site is off to the never-never, how will you guarantee that the entry price for the Geocon pool is sustainable for the community, and that they provide community programs, whether Geocon or a committee run the pool? And what happens if it makes a loss? Who will pay for it?

Ms Berry: I expect that Geocon would be able to provide the answer because they will own the pool. Regarding the fees, I expect that they will be similar to the fees for other pools across the ACT. If they cost more, that is not a great decision for a business owner to make. People will speak with their feet and go somewhere else.

MS CARRICK: That is right, and—

THE CHAIR: We are going to Mr Rattenbury's question.

MR RATTENBURY: I want to follow this line of questioning. I am really interested in this management model. You have clarified part of it by saying it will be privately owned. Will Sport and Recreation, on behalf of the government, have any oversight or influence on how the pool is operated?

Ms Berry: Sorry—I forgot to say I have read and understand the privilege statement.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Ms Kelley: These questions are probably best directed to EPSDD as they will be responsible for the leasing arrangements. They could talk to the requirements under the policy at the moment and what needs to be reflected in the crown lease for them to adhere to. Then it is a regulatory matter for Access Canberra in terms of their adherence to that into the future.

MR RATTENBURY: There are a couple of different types of pools in Canberra. Regarding the ones that you have oversight of, such as the ones in Tuggeranong and Dickson, the government brings in a manager and has some policy say over them, and then there are the private pools—and this one will sit in that category, that—

Ms Berry: Like the Kingswim pools and other pools that are part of private developments and are not managed by the government.

MR RATTENBURY: Yes. Any requirements will have to be contained in the leasing agreement that will be organised by EPSDD. Will you work with EPSDD around what those requirements might be?

Ms Kelley: Like most planning matters, they routinely consult with us as the subject area. CISAC is another example where we certainly work to ensure community interests are part of those arrangements. If we were consulted on this one, we would provide the same advice in terms of what viable community access needs to look like and what this pool needs to provide for the Woden community.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: In relation to the Civic pool, can you give us a bit of an update on where that is up to—what upgrades may be due or have been done and whether it is still leaking like a sieve?

Ms Berry: It is an old pool and it does provide some challenges. There is an ongoing maintenance program for that pool. Mr Rynehart might be able to give you an update on where we are up to.

Mr Rynehart: Thanks. In this financial year we have undertaken some work at the Civic pool, including repainting the indoor pool and the pool shell repairs. We effectively redid the shell of the large pool. We have upgraded the balance tank to enhance water efficiency, which will lower the operating costs and increase the sustainability of the site. We have renovated the bathrooms, removed some Hazmat, repainted the gym area, installed electric barbeques at the outdoor recreation area, and installed a new coffee machine.

MR HANSON: Once Geocon sells their development to people who buy apartments, who is going to actually own the pool? Is it Geocon or is it the owners corporation? What is your position on them, because, if the ownership is transferred, how do you

maintain the conditions on Geocon?

Ms Berry: That is a question for EPSDD. I understand what you are asking but it is not in my area.

MR HANSON: In relation to this, you said, when you were answering Ms Carrick's question, that, at this stage, that is what is going ahead with this development. That indicates that—

Ms Berry: That is the plan.

MR HANSON: But that suggests that there is some potential for movement or—

Ms Berry: No. That is not the suggestion. You are probably verballing me a little bit, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: No; I am not verballing you at all.

Ms Berry: That is the plan.

MR HANSON: I am quoting. Quoting is not verballing.

Ms Berry: Well, that is the public plan. That is what has been announced by Geocon. That is what some people are upset about, and that is what we are responding to today. There is no change to that.

MR HANSON: At this stage?

Ms Berry: No.

MR EMERSON: Regarding aquatic facility funding, according to a Royal Life Saving report, the ACT was the only jurisdiction that received zero dollars of the combined \$316½ million in federal government funding delivered to or committed for aquatic facilities across Australia from 2017 to 2022. Why is that?

Ms Berry: That is probably a question for the federal government.

MR EMERSON: Did we seek funding during that period?

Ms Berry: No.

MR EMERSON: Have we received or been promised any funding since 2022?

Ms Berry: No.

MR EMERSON: Is there any plan to seek federal funding for more aquatic facilities for the ACT during this term of government?

Ms Berry: I understand there is, but it is probably a question more for the Chief Minister, on the Civil pool. That could be where there will be funding.

MR EMERSON: For Commonwealth Park?

Ms Berry: Yes. It is there.

MR EMERSON: My understanding is that the government sought input from community sports organisations on necessary facilities and upgrades across the ACT in early 2023. My understanding is that respondents reported that 267 facilities were in need of maintenance or upgrades, but they are yet to receive any indication of a plan for actioning those works. Is a plan in place to action those works or is it on the way?

Ms Berry: It was not so much about facilities but more about the goals of each sport in the ACT—what they are shooting for; what their priority is for their sport. The responses are online now. Everybody has seen what they are. Some of them are very aspirational, some of them are moderately achievable, and for others we can work with the sports through our Asset Renewal Program, through election commitments and through the Sport and Rec grants for infrastructure upgrades. There is a range of funding rounds to which sports can apply to address some of the concerns that they have. It gave the government a really good understanding of where heads were at, regarding their sports and what they want to see going forward. Some of those are aspirational and have longer timeframes. We can work with a number of sports to encourage them and support them to apply for the infrastructure grants rounds, as well as our Asset Renewal Program. Ms Kelley, would you like to add to that?

Ms Kelley: Chair, I apologise that I did not acknowledge the privilege statement. A number of those projects have progressed since then. We will probably be in a position soon to provide an update on that register in terms of where things have progressed. We have seen a number of them emerge as election commitments. That will be further considered by government during this term. We have seen a number of them come in as grant applications through the current application process under the Sport and Recreation Investment Scheme and the Community Sport Facilities Program. Also, a number of them have given us data and information to work more closely with the sports.

As the minister said, lots of them are aspirational. We can take the opportunity to talk to the sports and say, “In order to progress this thinking, this is what we need to do to work through it. What is your demand and supply? How are you optimising your current facilities? What does your participation data look like? Is there any national or co-contribution that might support a greater consideration of this by the ACT government?” We work on a number of factors with the sports to get them to a greater position for actual consideration by government.

MISS NUTTALL: Back in 2021, in response to a Greens’ motion, 19 of the current 25 members of this place voted in support of establishing a comprehensive facilities management plan. Is that work still continuing? What are we doing to give sports that long-term peace of mind?

Ms Kelley: This question overlaps with my colleagues at TCCS as well. As the first step in that process off the back of the project register, TCCS are undertaking a sports grants audit. I will let them talk about that in the next session. That will look at the

current ACT government assets to allow for a programmable forecast and what that looks like when you talk about current facilities management. We can then, similar to the past, look at a road map for the next four years which takes into account election commitments but also some of the other issues that we know may be emerging and need further planning and feasibility support off the back of the project register over the next term. That does not discount us still looking at what a longer term plan looks like, but we need further puzzle pieces, if you like, up-front before we can determine whether a long-term plan is helpful or misleading, given the reality of sports changes. That is the feedback that we are getting.

MISS NUTTALL: On the balance between election commitments and sports' long-term needs, I have seen government surveys where sports and recreation groups have reflected that they would like to see sports funding move more towards needs and be less based on election commitments. Is there work being done to make sure they really do meet needs and that the needs are primary?

Ms Berry: First of all, I would say the election commitments are based on conversations with sports, understanding facilities and what the needs are. That is one thing. We are always in conversation with various sports, particularly about the sports grounds that they might use and need in different areas. We are working through—and, again, this is probably for the next session—female-friendly sports ground upgrades and sports pavilion upgrades. I think most of the sports that have used those facilities would know that it is an area that we have been prioritising as a government. We work very closely with sports to understand needs.

MS CARRICK: Who is responsible for the equitable distribution of facilities across Canberra and the type of facility in each location?

Ms Berry: The government.

MS CARRICK: Which minister?

Ms Berry: If it is in a new suburb, a new suburb will be planned to have a range of different facilities—schools, roads, parks and sports facilities. That will go through the planning process; then the Suburban Land Agency will release the suburb for sale and development, and the government will budget fund those different projects along the way.

MS CARRICK: Why don't we stick with big ones like 50-metre pools and indoor sports stadiums? Who is responsible for—

Ms Berry: You want an indoor sports stadium at Woden?

MS CARRICK: The indoor sports stadium is the same thing. Who is responsible for the equitable distribution of the big facilities—50-metre pools and indoor sports stadiums? When it is decided that there needs to be one in a location, with the type of facility that goes in, who is responsible?

Ms Berry: It is based on a range of different factors. At the end of the day, the government will make a decision about how to budget for a project, but that will come

about through a range of different conversations with the community and having regard to the needs within each individual suburb. For example, Miss Nuttall asked a question about making sure that different sports are having their facilities upgraded based on need. We are working through a program right now; we know that every sports facility in the ACT that was built 40 years ago was for men, not for women, playing sport. We have had to upgrade them to make them more inclusive. We are working through that, but that is a significant amount of work.

MR EMERSON: My question is about this process. We have done an audit. There is another one happening within TCCS. In every budget, we expect all of the organisations to bid for investment in their facilities, which seems to create a bit of angst between the sports. Would this kind of forward planning remove that? Is that feedback that you have had? Is this part of the considerations? It seems very inefficient not only for the sporting organisations but also for you to have to assess the same kind of bids in every budget.

Ms Berry: Before I ask Ms Kelley to respond to that, I do not necessarily think that sports get too upset with other sports. Sport, by its nature, is competitive; of course, every sport will want the best possible facilities and outcomes for their game. I think that, in a jurisdiction like the ACT, where we are still relatively small, we have a pretty active sportsground maintenance team, and the sport and rec team are pretty knowledgeable around what is happening in the ACT. The sports leadership tends to stick around for a while.

We all know a lot of what is going on and what the needs are for each sport. I think sports recognise this: you cannot have a sport that does not have the numbers in their membership or in their game getting a facility when there is another sport that is really growing and is facing pressure.

With basketball, for example, we know we need to build more indoor facilities for basketball, so we are working with them about what that looks like. We have already done that by making sure that our schools have facilities for sports and basketball clubs to use across the city. That is a huge improvement because we have been working so closely with the sports.

I do not want to identify a sport because I do not want to hurt anyone's feelings, but if it is a small sport that does not have the participation to show that the investment is going to be meaningful at this point in time, we have to work with them on what that looks like before they get a brand, spanking new, giant facility.

Ms Kelley: Where we see this contested space, with a number of sports wanting new facilities, there tends to be a trend within that. Indoor sport has definitely been a trend for the last three to five years. But even prior to that, there was an emerging need. We commissioned some studies back in 2015 and again in 2019. The first study identified that basketball, futsal and gymnastics were probably the sports in highest need of further indoor space.

The subsequent study drilled down into those sports a little bit more and gave us some very specific recommendations, which is how we are on the path to working with Basketball ACT to expand that facility. Similarly, we are working with Capital Football—even though that, of course, has changed a little bit—in terms of

indoor futsal courts. So there is a process that is followed.

Generally, we do not have great conflicts with sports at times because each sport is in a different phase of the planning processes. It is fairly rare that we have four or five sports all with a DA-ready, nationally supported facility that has some co-contribution that will pop them to the top of the pile for ACT government's consideration.

That is not to say there are lots of those in train; it is just that, as the minister said, we work closely with the sports and we know where they are up to with the state of their facility plans, what their top priority is, and we guide them as to how best to work with what they might be eligible for under an investment scheme, with the grants, or it might be something on which they need to work with us a little more closely, so that it can be considered as part of the budget process.

MR EMERSON: What I hear from the sports is that there is an absence regarding knowing what is next. We know that basketball is happening now, and all the other sports are going, "We might be next."

THE CHAIR: It is Mr Rattenbury's turn.

MR RATTENBURY: I want to ask about funding for Pedal Power. I understand they are part of a funding allocation for sports groups, and I have been told they had their funding reduced in 2023. Is that correct?

Ms Kelley: Yes.

MR RATTENBURY: They deliver a significant amount of input for the ACT government, and they are a key group that are consulted on, on an enormous range of projects across government. They also run a series of quite important programs, such as teaching children foundational cycling skills; programs for older Canberrans; and disability-inclusive cycling for people who are blind, vision impaired or who have other disabilities. Given that broad set of things that they do, what was the basis for their funding being reduced?

Ms Kelley: In 2021, we undertook a review of the Sport and Recreation Grants Program, as you will probably recall, because it had been fairly unchanged for 13 years. As part of that, a review of the categories was undertaken, and there was a review of the category of organisations that were eligible. In some cases, that did narrow the scope, knowing that we had to review the peak body status of a number of organisations.

With Pedal Power, unfortunately, they share their environment with AusCycling as a peak body for cycling nationally. Certainly, in other areas where we have had multiple bodies for one sport, there has been encouragement to recognise only one peak body, otherwise it undermines the term "peak".

Noting that the objectives of the Sport and Recreation Investment Scheme, as it was reviewed, were for increased participation outcomes, in an organised sense, and the guidelines reference the sports organisations that are referenced by the Australian Sports Commission, unfortunately Pedal Power at that time was deemed an important body, and an advocacy body, but not the peak body for cycling in the ACT under our

guidelines. They became ineligible for the Industry Partnership Program and the State Organisation Support Program.

It is important to note that, through the changes, there is no operational funding, moving forward, other than a small part for those that are eligible under the operational support. The new grants and investments are very much project and program impact related. Pedal Power remains eligible for projects and programs under the Club Enhancement Program, and there might have been a facility aspect that they were involved in, but not for the programs that are for organisational improvements or direct participation outcomes, in accordance with national sporting plans.

We did recognise that they had been a beneficiary of funding for a long time through sport and recreation, so \$35,000 was provided to them in transition funding. We worked with them quite closely through that time, so they were well aware that they needed to adjust their business model through that transition period. They are still eligible for two of our categories. They did not apply in the last round.

MR RATTENBURY: Was there any discussion across government, given those other roles that they play? I accept that they are not part of the guidelines for sport and rec, but they are important to the government as a whole. Was there any other consideration as to how that might be supported?

Ms Berry: It was about making sure that we phased it out—

MR RATTENBURY: Yes, I can appreciate that.

Ms Berry: understanding the work that they do, and that they can still apply for two of the other grants programs. There are a range of other grants that they can apply for across government as well. But this program of funding is for a specific purpose, and there was another organisation that did not quite fit, either. What was that one?

Ms Kelley: Royal Life Saving.

Ms Berry: Royal Life as well.

MS CARRICK: I have a question about Pedal Power. I met with them and they said that they received funding from the City Renewal Authority; therefore they will have some events in Haig Park, using that funding. What equivalent funding bucket could they use to run programs in the south? They said they do not run programs in the south.

Ms Berry: They could access this kind of sport and rec funding to run a program of some sort. They could apply for a grant.

MS CARRICK: Okay.

MR RATTENBURY: As part of that reform program through 2023 that you were describing, did the amount of sports funding in the overall bucket change?

Ms Kelley: We had an injection of an additional \$1 million into the grants program last year, specifically targeted at enhancing the capability of the facilities program. That has

added extra capacity to look at a broader range of projects. Assessment for the 2025 program is nearing completion, and recommendations and announcements will be out later this month.

MR RATTENBURY: How much is in the total pool of funding that is available for this 2025 round? Are you able to tell me that? That is not a budget thing; that is already locked in, isn't it?

Ms Kelley: It is already locked in. It is in the order of \$3.6 million.

MR HANSON: You might have mentioned this before, but the ice rink development is linked to what happens at Phillip pool. Do you have a date for when you expect the ice rink to be completed?

Ms Berry: Unfortunately, we do not, but we are meeting regularly with the joint venture partners who will build the ice rink for us, and we have expressed our frustration at the length of time it is taking for them to start building. We have the land there; it is identified for them. We have been working with them for a very long time.

MR HANSON: With the original announcement, I think it was meant to be completed by now, wasn't it?

Ms Berry: It was our hope that it would be, but it will be privately built. We have provided the land availability for them, but we cannot seem to get any traction with timeframes at this point. As I said, we are regularly in contact with the proponents and we are trying to hurry them up.

MR HANSON: Have they started? What stage are we at? Is it just an empty block of land?

Ms Berry: No, there is a bit of work that has been happening. I might hand over to Ms Arthy.

Ms Arthy: I have read and understood the privileges statement. As with any development, most of the work is being done around the technical work on the site, looking at the environmental concerns and addressing the relevant regulatory issues. Construction has not happened; as I said, that pre-planning is being done. That is where we are up to.

MR HANSON: Has the provider given you an indication of when they expect that it will be open for business?

Ms Berry: No, not really.

Ms Arthy: No, not really.

Ms Berry: They have their own legal requirements around their own partnership that they have been working through as well. I understand that was close to completion late last year, from the meeting that we had with them. It is frustrating. I wish it had not taken this long. It is a very specialised area. That is the other challenge with this. There

are not many ice rink builders in Australia, so we are trying to work with what we have and start the build.

MR HANSON: Didn't you know all this when you made the grand announcement?

Ms Berry: Yes, absolutely, we did. We knew that it is specialised. Of course, it is. That would have been common sense to everybody, including the—

MR HANSON: If it was common sense, why did you announce that it would be open by now?

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, I will come back to you. Ms Carrick?

MS CARRICK: Given the risks associated with the ice rink in Tuggeranong, will you make sure that Geocon does not build out the Phillip pool site, so that, should the Tuggeranong ice rink fall over, there is still room at Phillip to upgrade and enhance that facility, should that be required?

Ms Berry: It is a bit of a hypothetical at the moment, Ms Carrick. What I can say is what the government has committed to. We have committed to building this ice rink in Tuggeranong. With Geocon, it is a private site. I do not know that the government has too many controls over what a private developer does, other than what we have required them to do under the lease.

MS CARRICK: It is a risky business, so it is a fallback position that should be considered.

MISS NUTTALL: I understand that Cruachan Investments are associated with the Canberra arena and has been given tenders to build three ice facilities in Adelaide. I understand that none of those have been delivered yet. Was that risk taken into account when entering into a partnership with Cruachan?

Ms Berry: Yes, there are two partners in the ACT development, Cruachan and Pelligra. I think the South Australian developments are just—

Ms Arthy: I do not know the detail of the ownership model for the Adelaide ones, but, as the minister said earlier, there are only a certain number of providers of ice rinks. While, of course, we were looking at what was happening in Adelaide, we were putting in place whatever arrangements that we could to manage the risk here. As I said, we are still working very well with the proponents. It is just that it is a complicated build on a complicated site.

MISS NUTTALL: It sounds like there might be a budget shortfall.

Ms Berry: No.

MISS NUTTALL: No? It is all accounted for at this point in time?

Ms Arthy: At this stage the government has committed \$16.25 million, and any of the other finance is up to the developer. The government essentially has a fixed grant.

MISS NUTTALL: There is no chance that they would require further funding from the ACT government?

Ms Arthy: I can never say that any private company will not come to government and ask for money, but the government decision is a \$16.25 million contribution.

MR MILLIGAN: What is the total estimated cost for the build of the ice rink? What is the government chipping in? What will be chipped in by the private developer? There are reports that there may be drainage issues on that location, the same as we have seen at the Amaroo tennis centre and—

Ms Berry: What issues?

MR MILLIGAN: Drainage issues, just as we have seen with the tennis centre in Amaroo, and Amaroo football. We know that that adds extra costs for development and everything else. Has that been taken into consideration?

Ms Arthy: Mr Milligan, as I said, the government is essentially providing a fixed grant of \$16.25 million. The proponent is currently undergoing design, and until that design is done, and the final due diligence around the environmental and technical side of that site, the private developer will then be looking at what the costs are. It is not something that the government can ask of a private developer, to reveal their costings. I come back to saying that the government's contribution is \$16.25 million.

MR RATTENBURY: When was the \$16.25 million allocated by the government?

MR HANSON: You probably did it, mate.

MR RATTENBURY: No; I remember the decision.

Ms Arthy: We will have to take that on notice. I cannot remember the precise year.

MR RATTENBURY: I noted the comments you made that the government has committed an amount, but we all well know how much building costs have escalated. My recollection would be circa 2017 or 2018—something like that.

Ms Berry: We will have to take it on notice. We cannot confirm.

MR RATTENBURY: Obviously, since then, we have seen a significant escalation in building costs. We have seen it across all sorts of different projects. What will the government do? We can imagine a scenario where the proponent comes back and says, "The cost has gone up 40 per cent since then." What is going to happen then? We can't afford it anymore?

Ms Berry: That is a future thing—right?

MS CARRICK: Do we have a fallback?

MR MILLIGAN: No contingency.

MR HANSON: It is a hypothetical, Mr Rattenbury.

THE CHAIR: Order!

MR RATTENBURY: Yes, it is.

MR HANSON: It is, isn't it.

MR RATTENBURY: I thought I would try and ask.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, would you like one more?

MR HANSON: Thanks, Chair. I presume that when this grant was given there was a scope in terms of the size of the rink, the number of seats and the number of car parks. Can you confirm that there has been no change to that scope? Can you provide—I am sure it has been provided before, but just so I am up to date with it—how big it is going to be, in terms of an ice rink? How many seats and how many car parks will there be? And there might be some other relevant things that I have not really—

Ms Berry: I am sure we have provided this.

Ms Kelley: I am sure we have provided that on notice many times, but we will certainly provide it again.

MR HANSON: I am sure, yes. There has not been a change?

Ms Kelley: There has not been a change of scope.

MR HANSON: Okay, thanks.

THE CHAIR: Miss Nuttall?

MISS NUTTALL: Thank you. Is this the time to ask about the Stromlo Masterplan and the trails associated with that?

Ms Berry: That is not me; that is the Chief Minister.

MISS NUTTALL: Got you—even though this is about consultation on the master plan for mountain biking?

Ms Arthy: It falls under the Minister for Economic Development as operator of the Stromlo Forest Park.

MISS NUTTALL: Got you. In that case, I wouldn't mind going back to the Canberra arena, but, specifically, I would love to understand any environmental challenges that the directorate has identified with the Greenway site. Have there been any, or is this good?

Ms Arthy: Do you mean the ice sports facility?

MISS NUTTALL: Yes.

Ms Kelley: There is probably detail that we can provide you on notice, but we have been working with the trees on site, under the legislation around canopy and tree removal. We have been working with the Conservator, and there is a path forward for the site. That is part of the site complexity that has taken time for us to be able to provide that assurance to the proponents in terms of finalising or putting them in a position where they can then progress their planning. It is those things that we have had to finalise in order to get to a point of being able to issue them a binding agreement with government, and that is where we are up to now.

MISS NUTTALL: Beautiful; thank you.

MR RATTENBURY: When you say there is a path forward, Ms Kelley, what does that path forward look like?

Ms Kelley: That there are not going to be any, I guess, significant challenges on the site that would prohibit development and that there would not be the need for a further environmental impact study on the site.

MISS NUTTALL: Does that mean, then, skipping the environmental impact assessment?

Ms Kelley: No, because there was not one. All of that pre due diligence has already been done on the site.

MISS NUTTALL: Okay, got you.

Ms Berry: It has been done. As far as we are aware, through that work—

Ms Kelley: There are no further issues.

Ms Berry: and there are no environmental issues, besides the trees.

MISS NUTTALL: Fantastic. That is good to know; thank you. Were these challenges first known when the land was offered to Cruachan and Pelligra?

Ms Berry: Yes, definitely. I mean, with the site, you can look at it and see that there are trees on it, but the legislation around tree removal changed as well, so we had to change a bit to take into account the new legislation around tree removal.

MISS NUTTALL: Got you. Were other sites explored during that process?

Ms Berry: When we were talking with the ice sports community, their preference was that it be on the south side and that Tuggeranong, as an area, could do with some big infrastructure—something like a sports facility like this one. That was the commitment that we made based on the community feedback and the feedback from the sports community.

MISS NUTTALL: I am encouraged to hear that. Thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, I am wondering if you could run us through, in chronological order or as best you can, the Home of Football matter: from when it started and what you have gone through, to where we are today and the cost associated with it, and how much government has spent on that project already.

Ms Kelley: It was in 2019 that the ACT government announced the development of the Home of Football. That was the point that we started to work with Capital Football, and the necessary planning and preliminary design was undertaken in the ensuing time. Again, you are aware of the complexities of that site, Mr Milligan, and the civil engineering advice that we had to obtain, as well as ruling out all the other ecological concerns that sat around it. That did take time. It was during that process, also, that the budget process considered additional funding for that, given that there was an additional \$9 million committed to the project to address the complexities of the site, in order to be able to mitigate those engineering issues.

Going back to 2021 is when I would describe Capital Football starting to ebb and flow in terms of their commitment to the project. They had a lot of change in their governance and leadership over that time. So, whilst we were committed to progressing the planning and getting it to a point of getting their feedback on it, we were in a scenario where we were on hold for a significant amount of time in 2023, while Capital Football were trying to determine whether they were financially capable of continuing with the project. They then had a new CEO commence in mid-2023, I think it was, and they said that we had full commitment back, so it was full steam ahead towards the design.

Then, in mid-2024, following another CEO's commencement, the minister was advised that Capital Football were formally withdrawing from the project. At that point in time, and over the last six months, government has undertaken reconsideration of that, noting that the commitment to deliver increased sporting facilities in Gungahlin has not changed, and community sporting facilities of the nature of a district playing field were always intended as part of that site, albeit stage 2.

As you will recall, the Home of Football looked to deliver an enclosed oval, as well as an indoor, dual court futsal facility, and then, working towards outdoor, a mix of thin synthetic-turf grounds for, in the main, football pitches. It is the delivery that has switched, so it is now those outdoor grounds that are the priority—to deliver those district playing fields for the community.

We are working with Infrastructure Canberra at the moment, because that is one of the projects that will be transitioning, under the new administrative arrangements, to iCBR, and then working towards a statement of requirements to get that out to design to enable that process to progress as soon as possible.

MR MILLIGAN: How much has been spent so far on the former Home of Football to where it is today?

Ms Kelley: I would have to take that on notice to give you the exact details.

MR EMERSON: There was \$29 million of government funding committed to that

project. How much would be left over once these district playing fields, the small-scale projects, without the elite facilities, are completed?

Ms Kelley: That remains to be seen because it is expected that, whilst it is a smaller project—part of the issue that we were looking at with Capital Football to deliver the whole picture of the master plan for that site was that it was likely that the costs were going to escalate above that anyhow. That is part of the reason Capital Football grew concerned: that their investment was not going to be enough to realise what they wanted to see as part of the project. Any questions like that will be dependent on the cost planning that is undertaken as part of the detailed design. I am sorry I cannot answer that directly, but that will be certainly something we will be discovering in due course.

MR MILLIGAN: In terms of the design that you have had previously, are there going to be any amendments or alterations to that? Is there going to be any consultation again with the community and/or potential users? Obviously, the \$9 million still applies to the earthworks that are required for that spot, because we all know it is a swamp-lying area. Has the government also reconsidered using that land or leaving it as it is and relocating something somewhere else, because it would be more cost effective at the end of the day, because you would not need to spend that \$9 million. I know there is a bit in that!

THE CHAIR: You have some time.

Ms Kelley: Essentially, the commitment remains for that site in Throsby because there are limited sites in Gungahlin that are appropriately zoned and, also, that are big enough for us to look at district playing fields and that would still have potential for a stage 2 development in the future, because the door is still open for Capital Football, should they want to revisit the initial plan into the future.

Ms Berry: Or any other investor.

Ms Kelley: Yes. And that is a significant site, as we know. Whilst there are other potential sites for playing fields in Gungahlin, none of them are big enough to encompass the master plan as it was envisaged.

THE CHAIR: My next question is also pool related, but it is a different pool. I note we have got Erindale Active Leisure Centre facilities management, which comes under Infrastructure Canberra. Is that new, within the past three weeks? Because it previously was under Education management.

Ms Berry: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I have been asked in emails, and I have been speculating, but I did say I would ask during the committee. What is the rationale behind moving management responsibility of the active leisure centre pool to Infrastructure Canberra?

Mr Rynehart: The active leisure centre transferred to Infrastructure Canberra as part of the administrative arrangements late last year. What it does is it brings together the seven territory-owned aquatic facilities into a single management place. Previous to that, Education had a single pool that they were managing, and we had six. It brings

them all together so that we have one team across the service that is managing the territory-owned facilities.

THE CHAIR: Okay. On the active leisure centre—it is a very well-patronised, 25 metre pool, with a toddler play area, lots of aquarobics and swim school activity, as well as normal lanes. I am assured, Minister, that you have had a lot to do with a user group.

Ms Berry: Yes.

THE CHAIR: They have raised a number of issues with you about the standard of the facilities at the pool. There was a government commitment to upgrade the facilities at the active leisure centre. Can they, through me, ask for some sort of a timeline or what the scope of those facility upgrades might be? What can they expect and when?

Mr Rynehart: At this stage, from our perspective, we are at fairly early days with it, so we have only just taken over, and we are still working with Education to transition the former management across to us. One of our first steps is to undertake an assessment of the standard of the facility and where it is at, and then we will have a look at what the next steps are.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I very much urge you to reach out to the users, because they all have a list of ideas and propositions.

Ms Berry: Yes. I have been in touch, and they have been in touch with me, and I have met with them, and we have definitely got the information, and we will pass it on to the team—the pools team. But they will go in themselves and put eyes on the facility and see what is required. When I did talk to the group out there, there was a lot of work done during COVID, as well, to upgrade that pool, but pools are pretty tricky environments, and they need regular upgrades and support because they are wet areas.

Erindale, being an older pool, as well, needs a little bit of extra care, so we will get the team out there to have a look, and, hopefully, be able to bring the pool user groups on the journey with us and see whatever else we can do. I think iCBR has much more capacity to do that than the P&C-run organisation or Education, as pools are not Education's expertise, but iCBR will be able to do that stuff much better.

THE CHAIR: That makes sense. One final question on this. What does the change encompass? Is it all the facilities at Erindale Active Leisure Centre—the gym, the squash courts, the hall—or is it just the pool area that is being transferred to Infrastructure Canberra?

Mr Rynehart: We are finalising that, but it will be the broader leisure centre area, not just the pool itself, so it is the gym and the—

THE CHAIR: The entirety—

Mr Rynehart: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will then have to work with the college to ensure they can still use

it for sports use.

Mr Rynehart: Yes, we are certainly doing that at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Thanks very much.

MS CARRICK: You mentioned that you spoke to the ice sports and they said that they could do with a facility on the south side and that Tuggeranong would be good. How do you plan this sort of social infrastructure and how do you apply the capital framework, which requires articulation of the need and the strategic policy, a detailed options analysis, the delivery model, cost, revenue, risk, financial analysis, economic analysis—all of those due processes. How do you apply that to the decision to the ice rink or to the pool in Commonwealth Park or, indeed, the Phillip pool?

Ms Berry: That is probably not a question for me. It is probably either EPSDD or Planning. You are talking bigger planning. I am saying that we have made a decision based on these conversations. But the question you are asking is not in my area.

MS CARRICK: No, but if you make a decision, you have to go through due process and follow the capital framework. In theory, that is ACT government policy. So who follows the capital framework for investment decisions?

Ms Berry: When we make these decisions, we do not just go, “Let’s do something there.” Obviously, we consult with the various directorates on the piece of land that we might be wanting to use for that facility and whether it is appropriate and can be utilised in that way, which is, I guess, what you are directing the question to. But, again, it is not my area. We would consult with different parts of government to make sure we have got the right piece of land or that that is the only land available and then go from there.

MS CARRICK: But what about the business case with the options analysis and the delivery model? Where is that? Can you provide that to us?

Ms Berry: No, because that would be something that would go to cabinet and a decision for government to make.

MS CARRICK: Thank you. It is a transparency thing.

MR EMERSON: I have a question about barriers to participation, especially for children facing disadvantage. It is my understanding that every other jurisdiction has now introduced an active kids sports voucher scheme or something similar. Are we aware of the level of need for such a scheme in the ACT? Is this something we are monitoring and considering? Are there alternative solutions to the problem? I certainly hear from families who feel pretty distraught that they cannot afford to have their kids playing sport.

Ms Berry: There are a couple of things that we do in the ACT. You will have heard about the Education Equity Fund, for example. There is significant support through that fund for families, particularly families who are facing financial disadvantage, to access sport. We also provide funding to Every Chance to Play, which works with sports

groups specifically and gets referrals from families who are facing financial difficulties and cannot afford different parts of sports, which might be equipment, fees or whatever. They provide those families with the chance to take up a sport of their choice.

What we have understood through some of the other sports voucher schemes is that New South Wales and WA halved it because it was not being utilised in the way that they, I guess, were thinking it would be. We think our targeted programs are a much more equitable way to provide funding and support to families who really need it.

MR EMERSON: On that program, are there any concerns around other barriers for people facing disadvantage in accessing these sorts of things? It can be shame and not wanting to reach out and ask for help. Is there a level of outreach there to make sure that that is not a barrier? Is this one of the concerns that you have had raised?

Ms Berry: I think Every Chance to Play are probably the place I would point to first. But they are not the only organisation that supports people who might have barriers around financial ability. I know that the MARSS, the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Service, also provide supports to migrants and refugees who are wanting to play sport in the ACT but cannot access a range of different things. I know they work directly with supports to support funding an individual that might need to be supported through the Every Chance You Can Play Program, as well as the Future of Education Equity Fund.

I was contacted by a sport just the other week who were asking me about MARSS and whether they should work with them, and I was like, “absolutely”. We can definitely do more to make sure that sports, at the grassroots level, understand that there is a range of different areas that can support people in their community who might be wanting to engage in sport. We can easily do that through the peak bodies and get them to send it out through to their membership.

We do a range of different, sort of, heads-up emails at the start of the seasons or at the start of the year for sports about different things that might be happening across the country—obviously, placing a focus on spectator behaviour and things like that. I think we already send this information out, but we can do it again.

MR EMERSON: Thank you.

Ms Kelley: I would just add to what the minister was saying. To your point about the reluctance of some families who may be struggling to come forward and ask for assistance. We are actually talking to Every Chance to Play at the moment around working more closely with sporting organisations so that they might be a conduit for funding like this, so that it can be done more discretely and the clubs who are aware of it might actually be able to work with families on their behalf. It is certainly an issue that has been raised with us as well, and we have been talking to the Every Chance to Play about how that affects the way that they might be able to support families and make sure it gets to where it needs to.

MS CARRICK: My question is also about access. When I am out there doorknocking, people tell me that they do not access sports because the families cannot drive their children to the facilities to do training after school, because, for example, they are at work and cannot leave work to drive their children. Do you consider, when you are

locating these facilities, whether they are accessible by public transport from around the suburbs?

Ms Kelley: It is certainly one of many aspects that goes into planning considerations around facilities. Accessibility is part of the business cases when we develop those in conjunction with our colleagues in Infrastructure Canberra. It is absolutely important, because, as you rightly point out, if these facilities are not usable, then they are not serving the purpose that the government would be constructing them for.

MS CARRICK: If you cannot give us the business cases, can you give us the criteria that you use to assess sites for facilities—like a multi-criteria analysis? When you are doing your options, what are the criteria that you assess against?

Ms Berry: A directorate of the government might identify some land that might be suitable for a sports facility, for example, and we will then go through a process of understanding where it is—that it is not in the middle of nowhere; that people can access it; and that it is hopefully flat and does not have too many earless dragons on it and floodways. All of that kind of work is done as part of a whole range of due diligence that is done to identify a site that might be suitable for a particular facility—in this case, a sports facility. We go through that process and then the community who want to engage in this, through YourSay, or a variety of other means, can also be taken through that process to understand the reasons that we might make a decision on a particular site.

MISS NUTTALL: I am really happy to see the government had commissioned this review into Barriers to Participation in Sport from ORIMA. I know there are no concrete recommendations from that, but there are a few opportunities. One of them, which is on page 7, is to develop a collated central source of information about sports and physical activity. Is that the kind of thing that the government has been looking into, as a user-focused guide to the different sports and recreational opportunities available to them?

Ms Kelley: That is a really good point, because it remains an outcome that we have identified from the ORIMA research as a useful tool for community members. It tends to be sport focused at the moment. So that was an achievable step, if you like, given that we have thousands of sporting clubs in the territory. If I use basketball as an example, in the rollout, when the season comes out, they are able to promote all of the region's registration or trial dates so that you do not have to go searching for three different clubs that might be based in Gungahlin, Woden or Tuggeranong, as the case may be. So I think it is a progressive thing that we are working with. But we certainly agree that it would remain a useful tool.

MISS NUTTALL: Okay. Thank you.

MR RATTENBURY: I want to ask about the Casey Sports and Recreation Facility. Can you give us an update on the status of that project?

Ms Kelley: We are working closely with EPSDD, JACS and Health, given that the intention for that site is that it is a multi-facility site, with various co-locations of the health centre, the emergency services centre as well as an indoor sports centre. At the

moment, EPSDD are taking the lead in terms of a DA has been submitted for the subdivision of the site, which will enable next step planning to look at the intricacies of the individual areas to allow design to progress for each of the three individual projects. I am not sure whether Infrastructure Canberra has anything further to add.

Mr Cahif: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. This is one of those projects that is coming across to Infrastructure Canberra for delivery, and we are working through that transition and the planning.

MR RATTENBURY: Has a decision been taken yet on the scope of the sport and recreation facilities that will be on that site?

Ms Kelley: It is intended to be a four-court facility. That will be our starting point as the basis for the design.

MR RATTENBURY: What sports are you anticipating will then be accommodated there?

Ms Kelley: Basketball has been the primary driver, as we know, for some time around indoor facilities. So we would envisage that they would be a primary user. But there are other groups, such as volleyball, netball and table tennis. There is a list of sports that are talking to us about their need for indoor sports. We would need to address—similar to what we have done with the Stromlo District Playing Fields—who the potential stakeholders are for that facility. That is the work of consultation that we will undertake in due course as part of the design.

MR RATTENBURY: Have you taken a decision on what the operating model will be? Will it be government or a community organisation or—

Ms Kelley: Not yet.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: So, at this point in time, you do not know who will be managing or operating that venue. Will it include any outdoor facilities or be purely an indoor sporting centre?

Ms Berry: We are very, very early in the design brief of that. It is just four courts that we are asking for at this stage.

MR MILLIGAN: And the current budget?

Ms Berry: Nothing at this stage. It is very early days.

MR MILLIGAN: With Taylor Playing Fields, what has happened in that space in terms of sports and infrastructure and everything else? What is still to plan for that precinct? What budget and money have been allocated for any improvements or new builds?

Ms Kelley: We have had the initial delivery of the grounds adjacent to the school,

noting there was always potential for a stage 2 within the Taylor District Playing Fields site, because at the moment we would not say that they are fully realised district playing fields, which reflects the government's election commitment to progress the facilities within that. In our infrastructure survey from 2023, it was one of the top priorities for rugby league, and they continue to advocate for that. It is certainly a facility that we will be looking to seek government's consideration of further.

MR MILLIGAN: Is that an outdoor facility?

Ms Kelley: Yes. The remaining fields, the space for the fields, which is two further grounds, lighting and a pavilion.

MR MILLIGAN: Any facilities, like storage and change rooms—anything like that?

Ms Kelley: That would all be part of the pavilion design.

MR MILLIGAN: Any expectation in terms of when this will start and when it will come to fruition?

Ms Kelley: It is subject to a future budget process at this time.

MR MILLIGAN: Who are the current users of those fields? Currently, Nicholls is under a lot of use between different clubs and they call that their home field. Who is currently using Taylor as their home field?

Ms Kelley: The Gungahlin Bulls is the primary user.

MR MILLIGAN: Anyone else?

Ms Kelley: We would have to check with TCCS booking to see the other users.

MISS NUTTALL: I have a question about the Dickson Squash Club. Recent plans announced by Dickson Tradies has put the future of the Dickson Squash Club in question. What, if any, engagement have you had with Dickson Squash Club to discuss where they may be located in the future?

Ms Berry: I have a feeling they may have met with my office or someone during the election period. But I have not personally met with anyone from the Dickson Squash Club. It is a privately owned facility. If you have been in touch with them and if you want to send that through, we can certainly make a time to meet with them.

MISS NUTTALL: Yes.

MR RATTENBURY: What will be the status of squash facilities in the ACT if we do lose the Dickson Squash Club?

Ms Kelley: The squash centre in Woden remains the primary facility for squash.

MS CARRICK: It is old. It is like the last thing standing in our recreation precinct.

MR RATTENBURY: Sorry to interrupt, Ms Kelley.

Ms Berry: Stop trying to upset Ms Carrick.

MS CARRICK: You can come to our squash courts.

THE CHAIR: Order.

MS CARRICK: You are welcome.

MR EMERSON: Thank you.

MS CARRICK: Come south across the way to our squash.

MR EMERSON: Maybe when the tram is up.

MS CARRICK: When the tram comes.

Ms Kelley: Squash ACT are a very proactive manager of that facility. They obviously manage that facility and run the competitions out of it. Other courts still remain primarily at the tertiary institutions. It is fair to say that squash does not have the participation base that it used to. So, while as an organisation they continue to advocate for the importance of their facility in Woden, there is not really evidence for greater investment in squash facilities at this time. But it is certainly something that we continue to work with government on.

MR HANSON: Is it that squash is becoming less popular or is it because there are so few squash courts that people do not access them. Anecdotally, across Australia, what is happening is squash courts were sort of built in the 70s or 80s—or whenever it was—and they have now become quite premium sites for development and a lot of them have just gone. So it is just not accessible as a sport. Has that factored in your planning at all?

Ms Kelley: I think it is an interesting question. Traditionally, the majority of squash courts were also privately owned. So they have been a provision of facility that sits beyond the remit of government in terms of the certainty of future. It is a bit of a chicken-and-egg thing, I think in terms of your question there. We can only work with Squash ACT on their data. We cannot speak to what is happening nationally. But certainly they have had a decline and then a plateau. We would say that they are one of our lower participation sports. But they are still quite fortunate that they do have their own facility, which is a far better position than many others.

MR HANSON: Who owns the courts at the community centre at Cooleman Court in Weston Creek? Are they owned by the community centre? Is there any funding for those from the government?

Ms Kelley: There is no funding from the government that I am aware of—certainly not through our funding schemes. I am not certain of the ownership, sorry.

THE CHAIR: I would like a very quick update, if possible, on remediation or fixing

up what happened down at Gordon Playing Fields. How long and when, with the footy season around the corner?

Ms Berry: It might be better for the next round; sorry, Chair. It is just that we will have people who are on the ground.

THE CHAIR: Actually on the ground?

Ms Berry: Yes, who will be able to speak to you about that detail.

THE CHAIR: I am happy for you to take it on notice and provide me with that information, or I will put a question through. This is something that I have wanted to ask for a little while. I once drove past the Crace Community Recreation Park. Is that within your remit? Is it a park with lots of sports facilities, or is it sports facilities with a park?

Ms Berry: It is a park that was built as part of the Crace development. That was built well before my time here anyway. I think I had just got here, and it appeared.

Ms Kelley: I can talk about a bit of history on that.

Ms Berry: Okay; good on you. It is not even really in our space.

THE CHAIR: If it is not in your space that is fine; I will find out.

Ms Kelley: From a planning provision perspective, historically there has been a sportsground provision model. It reaches from neighbourhood ovals, which is a single unit—which was what was rolled out across most suburbs as the city was developing—stepping up to district playing fields, which is our primary mode of delivery now because that is the feedback from sports, who said, “We need multiple fields in one location, because it is far more efficient and resource intensive to have fields spread out all over the city.” That is the primary delivery model. Then we have enclosed ovals, which are for match play only, that are generally enclosed. They are at Gungahlin, Phillip Park in Woden and Greenway.

As there was a shift towards district playing fields, there was still provision within some of the suburbs for space. That is where a community recreation park started to come in, in place of a neighbourhood oval. They were designed to still have recreational space but some limited greenspace for training capability—whether that be bootcamps or junior training spots, as an alternative to booking a formal sportsground. But they have now been moved into TCCS as part of parks management. That is kind of the history of how they evolved.

THE CHAIR: I will come back to parks management. I am interested in how the model has worked and if there are going to be anymore.

MS CARRICK: My question is about the Molonglo town centre. What is your involvement in planning for sports and rec facilities in the Molonglo town centre?

Ms Berry: We are very involved in the process.

MS CARRICK: Can you elaborate on what sorts of sports and rec facilities will go there?

Ms Berry: Not really at this stage. Definitely, when the government plans a new centre like Molonglo, directorates—Education, Sport, TCCS, Roads—all get involved in what is required and where it could possibly be as part of the plan for a new area.

Ms Kelley: In addition to that, new school facilities in an area. Where there are new school developments, it is a key part of our planning process now that schools are community hubs after hours and to make sure that the sporting facilities within a school campus are actually accessible for the community as well. There are conversations happening around the potential for a future school site and what that could deliver for sport and recreation as well.

MS CARRICK: Can you tell me why we are expanding the Belconnen basketball courts when you could just use the facilities in the schools?

Ms Kelley: Because demand is that high. Basketball ACT have advocated to the minister—certainly to our team at Sport and Rec on many occasions—that schools do not cater in the same way for competition standards. They are at the mercy of school events, so sometimes they cannot get access. Spectator seating is sometimes limited. And there is the spread of resources for Basketball ACT—there are limited Basketball ACT staff at times, in terms of supervisors, so it becomes difficult. There are also high-performance needs that will be addressed through the expansion of basketball at the Belconnen stadium. At the moment, they do not have a show court that enables NBL1 competitions. They are starting to get fairly large attendance at those events, so the plan for the expansion will include a show court with capacity for 1,800 seats and a middle court where the seating comes across. It will cater for a whole range of participation, not just junior games that would otherwise be supplemented by what the schools can provide.

MS CARRICK: You will have the AIS, and the UC wants a big stadium as well, so potentially there will be three big stadiums within five kilometres of each other in Belconnen, yet the Dodgers are scattered across six school halls and a church hall and really struggle with access and managing access to the school. This comes back to planning and putting facilities where people can access them by a bus and having equitable distribution of them.

Ms Kelley: Future indoor provision in Woden has also been identified through our studies that have been done to date. We are still actively looking at the potential sites for that as well. We are certainly aware of the Dodgers' pressures.

MS CARRICK: And it is not only Dodgers; volleyball and a range of indoor sports are struggling. You cannot build up your community if you are scattered like that. It is massive fragmentation. When might we get a facility on the pipeline of projects? We can get on the pipeline before a site is identified.

Ms Kelley: As I said, we are actively looking at it at the moment because it was an identified recommendation from our last study in 2019. There is additional court access

at the Garran school, so we hope that might assist further provision within the immediate precinct.

MR HANSON: You mentioned a study in 2019. Has that been publicly released?

Ms Kelley: Yes.

Ms Berry: Yes.

Ms Berry: Anything that happened in 2019 got lost a little bit during COVID, but it is still an active document, from our perspective.

MR HANSON: Could you get a link to it for the committee?

Ms Berry: Sure.

MR HANSON: Thanks.

MR EMERSON: I have a question about funding for Canberra United and how they are treated differently for funding compared to some of our other sporting teams. My understanding is that teams like the Brumbies and the Raiders are funded through, I think, Tourism—it is certainly with the Chief Minister—whereas Canberra United is funded through Sport and Recreation. Is there a mechanism to shift that and make it a more commercial investment? Is there a reason for that kind of demarcation for the women's soccer team?

Ms Berry: Yes; there is. Canberra United are a semi-professional team. They are not at the level of some of the bigger teams which are funded based on their economic contributions to the city as well as the sport.

MR EMERSON: They are certainly a professional team, but I take the—

Ms Berry: Regarding the way they work across the country, they are considered semi-professional. I would like them to be considered as professional and paid duly to that effect, which is why Labor made a commitment during the election to increase funding to all our women's sports teams, because they are not treated the same. They operate differently. Giving millions of dollars to a team that just does not bring the economic impact yet—it could in the future—is not the way the funding model could work for teams like the Caps, Canberra United, the Meteors, Chill and Heat. We are always working towards making sure that their funding is increased. We work with their organisations to make sure that they are appropriately supported by the ACT government. The ACT government does not own teams, but we do support a range of teams in different ways, depending on what they bring to the community.

MR EMERSON: Would you say it is an objective for you to have those women's sports teams become great investments? You invest in them on their trajectory towards bringing a lot of attention. There are opportunities to invest in McKellar Park and so on that would build them into that kind of a team. Then their ambition—

Ms Berry: Yes. McKellar Park is privately owned by the McKellar Football Club.

Again, we will work with the club on opportunities there. I have had lots of conversations with them. With regard to the other bigger teams—the NRL, the Brumbies and the AFL—questions might be better put to the Chief Minister in his area of Economic Development. I have always wanted to back in and make sure that our women’s teams are supported in ways that they probably have not been previously. Other state and territory governments probably do not have the same kind of funding and support that we have in the ACT. We probably do over and above what other states and territories do, based on our size. We should be proud that we stand up for our women’s teams.

They are national sports, so, as much as I would advocate for increases and changes to wages and conditions for women’s sport, and I do whenever I get the chance, we are limited in what we can do in that space; but we can certainly lead by showing our support for these sports and showing other states and territories what is possible. But I agree: organisations that operate at the national level need to do a bit more work in supporting women’s sport.

MS CARRICK: My question is about the management of government pools and Belgravia. Can you tell us why YMCA finished their contract early? They are a not-for-profit organisation and now we have Belgravia, which is a for-profit provider. What was the rationale for changing from a not-for-profit provider? Why did they leave and we now have a for-profit provider?

Ms Berry: The decisions that they made are probably questions more suited for the YMCA. The government went through an expressions of interest process for the management of our pools in the ACT. Belgravia won that expression of interest and now they are operating our pools. Their contract is a—

Mr Rynehart: Five-year contract, with options.

Ms Berry: five-year contract, with options. Obviously, we pay very close attention to making sure that they are operating our pools in a way that we would expect them to be operated, and we will work with them through the tenure of their contract. If there is an opportunity to change things in the contract in the future, we can certainly look towards that in the five-year time period.

MS CARRICK: Are the contracts publicly available now?

Mr Rynehart: Yes; they are on the Contracts Register.

MS CARRICK: Thank you. My understanding is that, because they are for-profit, they are more interested in swimming lessons because that is where the money is. They make more money out of swimming lessons than out of lap swimmers. Are there elements in the contract that say you must have a 50-metre pool for a certain amount of time? I am hearing that it is hard to access 50-metre pools.

Mr Rynehart: The contract sets Belgravia’s management of the existing facility. Each side has a particular set-up regarding the pool and what facilities are available. I may have to take on notice the specifics of how much availability is required under the contract. I will get back to you on that one. We certainly work really closely with

Belgravia and we monitor. For example, the fees are set through the Public Pools Act. The entry fees are legislated so that the entry cost to the public is controlled. We monitor Belgravia's conduct very closely through the contract, and we have been quite satisfied with the way they have approached their management since commencement.

MS CARRICK: Are they expected to do the maintenance around the pool? It is publicly owned, so I assume that the government pays for the maintenance and upkeep?

Mr Rynehart: They operate the pool, but maintenance and upgrades are generally funded through our program. For example, we have undertaken some work at Dickson this year to replace the irrigation system and some other works around filtration et cetera.

MS CARRICK: I noticed when I was at the Stromlo Leisure Centre one day that, for the swim squad, there were four or five people in each lane, in a 25-metre pool, and it was quite packed. Can you follow up and see whether the programs that they are running are more skewed towards swimming lessons, where there is more money to be made, and whether that has had an impact on the availability of 50-metre lengths for squad swimmers?

Ms Berry: I am going to guess and will happily be corrected if I am wrong. I do not think the availability of 50-metre swimming at Stromlo has changed under Belgravia.

Mr Rynehart: I do not believe so.

Ms Berry: We will check. I swim there.

MS CARRICK: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: In my experience, the Lakeside pool has a boom, but it is very rarely, if ever, put out to 50 metres. It is 25 metres for open lap swimming, and sometimes there are 25-metre lanes and 25 metres for lap swimmers and lessons. Do the different locations have different timings? Are they at 50 metres or 25 metres at different periods? And what is the percentage? Is it based on community need or community requests?

Mr Rynehart: Each pool is managed according to its own design. Not each pool has the capacity or ability to make it a 25—

THE CHAIR: It does not have a boom.

Mr Rynehart: Each has its own management strategy according to demand and balance. Regarding the detail of how each is broken down to open lap swimming versus program versus swim schools, I do not have it with me, but we can certainly come back on notice with the information we have about how the bookings are split throughout each of the pools.

THE CHAIR: I would appreciate that.

Mr Rynehart: The answer to your first question around the number of people in the

hydrotherapy pool is 12.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Rynehart: And the Stromlo Leisure Centre program pool is set to 32 degrees. All other 50-metre pools managed by Belgravia are set to 27 degrees and it is monitored each 15 minutes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. That is very helpful. That is a wrap. On behalf of the committee, I thank you all for your attendance today. If you have taken any questions on notice, please provide your answers to the committee secretary within five business days of receiving the uncorrected proof *Hansard*.

The committee adjourned at 3.35 pm.