



QUESTION TIME
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

Edited proof transcript

Wednesday, 5 February 2025

This is an **EDITED PROOF TRANSCRIPT** of question time proceedings that is subject to further checking. Members' suggested corrections for the official *Weekly Hansard* should be lodged with the Hansard office as soon as possible.

Wednesday, 5 February 2025

Questions without notice:

Racism—antisemitism	1
Crime—offences committed while on bail	1
Planning—Phillip	2
ACT Gambling and Racing Commission	4
Transport Canberra bus fleet—MyWay+	4
Emergency Services—Storms.....	5
Sports and recreation—international events	7
Waste—recycling	8
Planning—approvals	9
Correctional facilities—Alexander Maconochie Centre	11
ACT Policing—major event safety	11
Correctional facilities—Alexander Maconochie Centre	12
Justice and Community Safety Directorate—grants	13
Correctional facilities—Alexander Maconochie Centre	15
ACT Policing—Molonglo Valley	16
ACT Policing—Winchester Police Centre.....	17

Questions without notice
Racism—antisemitism

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. As I am sure all members are aware, Australia's Jewish community is being subjected to a national hate based campaign of harassment, intimidation, property damage and, most recently, a potential terrorist attack. Minister, on behalf of the government, will you condemn these antisemitic attacks and commit to supporting and defending the safety and welfare of Canberra's Jewish community?

DR PATERSON: I thank the member for the question. Absolutely, the government condemns the attacks that have occurred in other jurisdictions around Australia. We have seen what has happened around Australia, and that has led to ACT Policing establishing an ongoing operation here to coordinate a response to antisemitic incidents in the ACT. Police are monitoring the situation closely and have had very close engagement with the Jewish community in the ACT. While there have been some incidents of antisemitic sentiment and graffiti, there have not been broader incidents than that. ACT Policing has increased patrols around synagogues and Jewish community facilities and is working with the community to ensure that they are feeling safe and supported.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, since the New South Wales Premier declared that a terrorist threat exists against the Jewish community, what steps have you personally taken to ensure the community's safety?

DR PATERSON: I have been working very closely with ACT Policing and they have been working closely with the Jewish community and other communities in the ACT to ensure their ongoing safety.

MS BARRY: Minister, will you meet with the leaders of Canberra's Jewish communities to discuss their concerns and publicly commit to ensure their safety?

DR PATERSON: Yes; I am very committed to working with the Jewish community and am very happy to meet with them. Again, if they have very serious concerns, they should contact ACT police, and I am most definitely committed to meet with them.

Crime—offences committed while on bail

MS MORRIS: My question is to the Minister for Police. Minister, in recent months there has been a spate of violent, criminal offences committed by individuals who are out in the community on bail. These offences not only endanger the community but take up valuable police time, which would otherwise be spent better protecting the community from offenders. Are you concerned about the danger this poses to the community and, if so, what are you doing about it?

DR PATERSON: I think recidivist offending is a serious concern to everyone in the ACT. This formed a lot of the work that happened last term in the Assembly, which saw the establishment of Operation TORIC. That operation has now been committed to a more formal operating response from ACT Policing.

Obviously reducing recidivism is a key priority of the government, but ultimately the number of offences that are occurring in the ACT has decreased quite significantly in the last financial year, by 7.5 per cent. It is an ongoing issue, and we will continue to work to address recidivist offending.

MS MORRIS: Minister, yesterday we learned that the ACT Attorney-General has terminated a review of our bail laws. Do you believe the ACT's bail laws are protecting the community?

DR PATERSON: I think that is a question for the Attorney-General, who has responsibility for our bail laws.

MR CAIN: Minister, shouldn't the government reform bail laws, given the critical understaffing and under-resourcing of police?

DR PATERSON: I will speak to the resourcing of ACT police. ACT Policing operates with only a marginally lower rate of operational staff than other jurisdictions, with 218 operational staff per hundred thousand of population. That is only 10 fewer operational staff than New South Wales. ACT Labor has been very committed to seeing more investment in ACT police through more police officers. The commitment was made in the budget last year for 107—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

DR PATERSON: Mr Speaker, I cannot speak if Mr Hanson is speaking.

MR SPEAKER: You are raising a point of order?

DR PATERSON: Yes, a point of order. Mr Hanson was speaking at me when I was trying to speak.

MR SPEAKER: All right. Mr Hanson, if you can allow Dr Paterson to answer the question.

DR PATERSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The government committed \$107 million to fund an additional 126 police positions over the next five years, and ACT Labor took a commitment to the last election to see that number increase to 150. Since becoming the minister responsible for this portfolio, I have been working very hard with ACT police around seeing the works progress for a new City Police Station and city police headquarters. I am very supportive of resourcing ACT police to do the very important work that they do on the ground in our community.

Planning—Phillip

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Planning. In November 2023 the new Territory Plan removed housing from all of the Phillip service trades area. This was done without consulting directly with the owners and the traders. In July 2024, the

government agreed to consult with the owners and traders of the Phillip service trades area about the zoning changes. What consultation has occurred and what was the outcome of that consultation?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question about housing in the Phillip trading area. The government understands that the purpose of zoning is to balance the different types of land uses that we have in the territory. From time to time, there are conflicts between land uses. We made a deliberate decision in the past in relation to zoning changes within the Braddon services and trades area to rezone that area to allow more mixed use development—residential and other forms of commercial development. That has resulted in some services and trades leaving that area. We want to carefully consider what the potential impact of further zoning changes would mean in areas like Phillip or, indeed, places like Mitchell.

Ms Clay: A point of order. I am so sorry, Minister, but it is just that we have a minute left and I am worried that you are not going to get to the point. It was actually about consultation with the Phillip traders and what consultation the government has done, having made an undertaking to do that consultation with the Phillip traders.

MR SPEAKER: Minister, I would ask you to be relevant to the question.

MR STEEL: I have even less time to answer now, Mr Speaker!

As the government considers those competing land uses, we also said before the election that we would consult with the businesses, the Phillip traders, as well as the landowners, most of whom were pushing for some sort of zoning and mixed-use change in the Phillip precinct, to look at what changes might be permissible in that area. We know that the community relies on a lot of those services. So I want to bring the community into that discussion as well, so that they can have that say. I have asked EPSDD to establish a roundtable to have that discussion, and I am looking forward to updating the community on the exact timing of that.

MS CLAY: Has any consultation happened yet with the Phillip traders and the Phillip landowners?

MR STEEL: That will occur as part of the consultation that I want to do, bringing all of the interested and affected parties together to look at sensible zoning change. It will be nuanced. At the moment, there are not large numbers of people living in the Phillip trades areas. There is a large automotive presence. We do not want to necessarily see that automotive presence leave because those land uses are incompatible with residential dwellings. So it may be a nuanced approach where mixed-use development might be permitted in one area and not another.

That is a discussion that we need to have with the traders—who are not necessarily the owners of the buildings and the land that we are talking about rezoning—and we need to have that discussion with the landowners. But we also need to bring the community into the discussion to hear what their views are. Do they want to travel all the way to Fyshwick to access a service? The Fyshwick business community itself has tried to stop some of those services from operating there, particularly waste services. There has to be a place to deliver some of these services, which are often incompatible with some of

the existing land uses surrounding them.

MISS NUTTALL: Minister, what evidence will be taken into consideration by EPSDD when reviewing its decision to change the zoning in the Phillip service trades area?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I think this would require a major plan amendment. So it would not just be EPSDD considering that; it would also be myself as minister. Then, of course, there is a committee process, where the committee may intend to inquire into that and make recommendations as well. This is quite a significant change. In the context of all of the reforms that were being undertaken under the planning system review, this is one where we acknowledged that there was more work to do and more consultation that was needed with this community before we saw major mixed-use development occurring in this precinct at a loss of trades to the community.

ACT Gambling and Racing Commission

MR CAIN: My question is to the Minister for Gaming Reform. Minister, I refer to reports that the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission has imposed a fine of \$1.2 million on the Hellenic Club following the tragic suicide of a patron in 2020. I also refer to reports that the minister was not made aware of the fine by the commission and only learnt about it through the media. Minister, why were you not told about this fine?

DR PATERSON: I thank the member for the question. The reason why I was not told about the fine or the determination of the findings is that under the Gambling and Racing Control Act it contains very strict secrecy provisions. Importantly, section 35(2) makes it an offence for any person who has been a gaming officer—who are the people who investigate these issues—to disclose any information obtained under or in relation to the administration of gambling law.

MR CAIN: Minister, aren't you, really, just throwing your regulator under the bus?

DR PATERSON: No. I am demonstrating that the regulator is upholding the laws of the ACT.

MS MORRIS: Minister, what else aren't you being told about?

DR PATERSON: I don't know!

Transport Canberra bus fleet—MyWay+

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, the ACT government has stated that MyWay+ readers will not be installed on some older buses that are scheduled to be withdrawn from service in the near future. Minister, when will all buses that do not have a MyWay+ reader installed be removed from service and hence we will have 100 per cent coverage across the fleet?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We have a small number of buses that are due to be retired over the year, with the continued supply of replacement buses through our contract with VDI Australia to deliver Yutong buses. In looking at the

figures, in terms of the cost of having to install the hardware and the cost of continuing to maintain those buses, we have made the decision that those buses would not be fitted out with the MyWay+ ticketing system. As a result of that, people who are accessing those buses do not have to pay for public transport, so they get a free ride if they happen to find that they are travelling on one of those buses.

Work is underway to finalise the fit-out of the buses that were due to have the hardware fitted and that are not due to be retired. We are very close to having 100 per cent of those buses fitted out, but there will still be those ones that are due to be retired that will not have the hardware, and a deliberate decision was made before the ticketing system came into force in November that that would be the case.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, will those buses which will not have a MyWay+ reader installed be removed from service?

MR STEEL: I think I answered that question: this year. They are planned to be retired this year, as part of the renewal of the fleet, with the contract for 90 Yutong E12 buses replacing those buses, and they will have the new MyWay+ hardware fitted in them. We expect more people to be able to use the MyWay+ system as a result.

MISS NUTTALL: Minister, how will the government in the meantime manage the network, in light of the data gaps arising from buses where passengers are not tapping on and off?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. Yes, during this transition period to the new MyWay+ system, there has been a change in the data provided, so we will be using a range of different metrics to look at patronage. Firstly, we will be using door counts, particularly on light rail vehicles, which provide an accurate indicator of the number of people using light rail. Of course, we will be looking at how we can make assumptions about the patronage based on the number of buses that are not fitted out in the system, which will change from time to time, because those buses will not be retired all at once. As soon as we get a replacement bus in, those older buses without the MyWay+ equipment will be removed from service. We can take that into account in the assumptions that we make about the patronage modelling. As more and more people tap on and off with public transport, we will get clearer patronage figures.

We have not started to enforce the penalty fares for not tapping off at this point in time, but we will do that later in the year, as people become more confident with using the MyWay+ system. That will give us far greater data around how people are moving around Transport Canberra's network.

Emergency Services—Storms

MS TOUGH: My question is to the Minister for City Services and Minister for Government Services. Minister, how has Access Canberra and City Services supported the government's response to the damage caused by frequent storm events in the territory?

MS CHEYNE: Thank you. I thank Ms Tough for the question. Alongside the ACT Emergency Services agency and the ACT State Emergency Service, both Access

Canberra and our City Services crews have played significant roles in addressing the damage experienced across the community.

To relieve pressure on the SES, Access Canberra responded to 428 calls for assistance from the Canberra community related to storm events across January. Stemming from the event on 15 January alone, City Services identified a total of 495 cases resulting from the storm and subsequent strong winds. Gungahlin and Belconnen yet again experienced the brunt of the damage, with Nicholls and Ngunnawal being the worst impacted.

City Services crews have worked hard to triage and to respond to requests based on their need and priority. Of the 495 cases, over 70 per cent have already been completed, while the remaining cases are being progressed. This is testament to the dedication and hard work of our frontline City Services crews.

MS TOUGH: Minister, can you provide further details of where these agencies have gone above and beyond to help Canberrans.

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Tough for her supplementary question. Our terrific staff at Access Canberra and City Services have worked incredibly hard to support our community. As I mentioned, to support the SES in the storm recovery efforts, the Access Canberra contact centre was stood up across five days in January, including 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17 January. Not only was Access Canberra operating significantly longer hours, but they also continued to fulfil the standard operations. This includes having the busiest day ever for our Access Canberra service centres on 6 January.

I know that on the day many of our service centres worked later so that they were able to see everybody who was waiting. I really thank the community for their patience. I have heard anecdotally that there were many people who came along, were advised of what the wait time was, and were able to get their QR code and get a coffee—exactly what that was established for—and many were simply patient enough to wait there, and I heard that they treated staff with respect. By all accounts, we heard some terrific things that day, but our biggest thanks need to go to the service centre staff, who work incredibly hard.

City Services crews have not only worked late hours during the storm events, but have also worked overtime to address damage and subsequent impacts across the territory. Roads ACT received direct after-hours response calls for flooded roads and debris. Their role, as part of storm response and responses to other emergencies, is a considerable one, and I really want to underline the efforts of those individuals, and their work as a team, because they are vital to making the spaces we move through safe.

Another team which continues to respond to the effects of a storm long after the immediate impact is the urban treescapes team, and I hope I get a chance to talk about that in the next supp!

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Minister, what resources are available to assist the community in the clean-up efforts?

MS CHEYNE: One of the major resources is the urban treescapes team. This team has

worked overtime to conduct tree inspections until we get on top of the mammoth clean-up effort and throughout some very hot days that we have experienced. We are indebted to them.

Naturally, with storm events comes green waste. City Services has placed temporary green-waste skip bins in Amaroo, Ngunnawal and Nicholls for the community to use. These bins have been available for close to three weeks, now, supporting the most affected communities with the ongoing clean-up and recovery, with skip bins at Nicholls and Ngunnawal requiring emptying weekly.

TCCS is monitoring the ongoing clean-up and recovery, including consideration of how long these facilities will be required in those areas. Of course, there are some things that Canberrans should not take into their own hands. Trees causing damage to power lines should be reported to Evoenergy, and downed trees on public land should always be reported through Fix My Street.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind members and the broader community to please slow down and respect the safety of our teams when driving past—especially our clean-up crews who are working on foot. Supporting our crews in this way means they are able to work efficiently, and, most importantly, safely, in getting the job done.

Sports and recreation—international events

MR EMERSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Many Canberrans have expressed frustration over our city's exclusion from hosting 2027 Rugby World Cup matches, particularly given the Brumbies are the most successful rugby team in the country. This is not only a missed opportunity for local fans, businesses and our tourism industry but is also a blow to Canberra's reputation as a premier sporting destination. In light of the territory's budget constraints and the potential embarrassment this disappointing outcome poses for our city as the capital of the host nation, could the Chief Minister please inform the Assembly whether he approached his federal Labor colleagues about a potential joint bid with the commonwealth to secure Rugby World Cup games in Canberra, as the nation's capital, or whether he will do so in the future for similar events?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Emerson for the question. The commonwealth is involved in any sporting event held in the Institute of Sport precinct and at GIO Stadium, because ultimately it owns that venue. We simply lease it from the Commonwealth. In relation to this particular tournament, I understand the Commonwealth played some role in supporting Rugby Australia. Most of the negotiations around particular venues, stadia and host cities were effectively undertaken as competitive bids between the states and territories, complicated somewhat by the Victorian government's initial decision, in protest at Rugby Australia's decision to remove the Rebels from Super Rugby, to withdraw from the bidding process, then, at the 11th hour, they decided to come back in. They, perhaps together with the New South Wales government, were the reason we were outbid.

MR EMERSON: Will the Chief Minister please detail the ACT government's level of engagement with the Australian government's national sports strategy, Sport Horizon, with respect to its focus on the "green and gold decade" providing Australia with "an

unparalleled opportunity for international engagement through sport”?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Emerson for the supplementary. Undoubtedly, the territory, as the host of the Australian Institute of Sport, will play a role in that national approach as we look to future events being held in Canberra. That includes the Brumbies hosting the British & Irish Lions at GIO Stadium in a few months.

Rugby Australia, before the International Rugby Board made its announcement around World Cup hosting cities, wrote to us indicating a range of other international rugby content involving Australian teams playing international fixtures that would be available, again, though, in a competitive bidding process. Noting that we were successful in relation to the Brumbies and the British & Irish Lions and that the offer we put forward was accepted by Rugby Australia and was broadly similar to the offer we put forward to the World Cup Rugby folk, I think we can look forward to being successful with future bids at a national level.

MR MILLIGAN: Can the Chief Minister explain how we will capitalise on the inevitable tourism we will see in Australia during the Rugby World Cup in 2027, including how we might entice tourists to add the national capital to their trip while they are here?

MR BARR: There will be a number of lead-up events to the tournament. The timing of pool matches, for example, directly clashes with Floriade, when we are already at a point of peak tourism in the territory. There are generally no hotel rooms available over that October long weekend in the school holidays and over the peak part of the Floriade festival. We will have our major event on during most of the Rugby World Cup.

Waste—recycling

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for City and Government Services. I was pleased to hear that in 2028 we will at last get a new recycling facility out at Hume to replace the facility that burnt down in 2022. This means that when Canberrans put recycling in their yellow-topped bin at home, it will get recycled out at Hume like it used to. Will the new facility recover and recycle soft plastics?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Clay for the question. We are all very excited that we are able to get the build and the operation of this new facility underway. Ms Clay would know that soft plastics is an issue that we are tackling at a national level. Currently, it is material that would not be accepted by the new facility. However, the work at a national level to address issues around soft plastics has included developing national criteria to achieve collection and recycling at scale and packaging reform to design out hard to recycle packaging. Soft plastics recycling trials across Australia have been necessarily limited. There have been a handful of councils that are trialling some soft plastics recycling, but it is very, very small and not at a scale that would suit the ACT at this time. The good news, though, is that the contract has flexibility to incorporate new innovations, improvements in technology and to adapt to changing recycling priorities and materials. A value-for-money assessment could be undertaken in due course to consider whether it would be appropriate for that facility to receive soft plastics.

MS CLAY: Will the new facility recover and recycle all of the standard packaging that comes from a supermarket, including bamboo containers, small pieces of paper, coffee cups, plastics and mixed material?

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Ms Clay. The answer is “I think so,” but let me check for you. There will be advanced sorting technology, particularly sophisticated data collection, management and analysis systems. The advanced sorting technology will be equipped with automatic recognition: using screens to separate paper; laser optical identification with air jets to separate plastics; and powerful magnets to extract metals. This will help us better separate, identify, sort and segregate recycling to higher purity levels and reduce contaminants for better quality end-market products. In terms of the other types that Ms Clay mentioned, I will take that on notice to come back, for completeness.

MR BRADDOCK: How much will the ACT government have paid in contract fees to ship our recycling interstate from when the old facility burnt down in 2022 to 2028 when the new facility opens?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Braddock for the question. I do have that information, or at least that information to date. I will check that I have the most up-to-date figures as well as figures into the forecast modelling in taking that question on notice and coming back to Mr Braddock.

Planning—approvals

MS CARRICK: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development. Minister, the Planning Act 2023 introduced the new outcomes based planning framework. How many applications have been made to ACAT for public housing developments since the new framework was introduced?

MR STEEL: I am happy to take that on notice and provide Ms Carrick with some detail. But what we do know is that the data over the last five years, back to 2019, shows that there have been 20 appeals of public housing developments that were already approved by the planning authority. That represents over 100 public homes that have been appealed and, as a result, have been either delayed or blocked from being built. That has a significant impact on families and on people who are on our Housing ACT waiting list.

As a result, I have introduced a bill into the Assembly, which I hope to get the support of the Assembly for, to remove this significant barrier for more public housing being built in the territory under our new Planning Act and our new outcomes based planning system, which includes not only continued assessment by the independent planning authority and opportunity for community input through that as part of the consultation process but also an outcomes based approach that includes new mechanisms like design guides to make sure that what is proposed is required to respond to those to make sure that those homes are well designed for the people that are living in them.

MS CARRICK: The minister referred to evidence from the old planning framework.

What evidence do you have under the new outcomes based planning framework to

justify the decision to remove third-party appeal rights in the Planning Act 2023 for new public housing developments?

MR STEEL: I do not draw a distinction between the two acts in terms of the third-party appeals. I am happy to provide the information about the specific appeals that have been made, but it is relatively still early days of the new Planning Act. Third-party appeals exist under both acts currently. Whilst the call-in powers were removed under the new Planning Act, there is a new process called Territory Priority Projects—a mechanism that was meant to and intended to enable the streamlined approach to be able to deliver priority projects that have a significant benefit for the community and the people of the ACT more quickly and without the uncertainty and planning risk of a third party appeal.

What we have seen in practice since the new Planning Act began is that that mechanism does not operate as intended, especially for public housing, because there are a large number of individual development applications that are required for public housing. Because of our salt-and-pepper approach that we take, which we are very proud of here in the ACT, there are large numbers of development applications for smaller numbers of dwellings.

Each one of those would require a declaration under chapter 8 of the Planning Act as a TPP, which would require an additional process, in addition to the DA assessment, and would consider some of the same details about the developments that would be required in a DA, which would delay the timeline for the bar on third-party appeals for two months, but only after the Assembly has actually approved the individual TPP declaration—after the Chief Minister and minister have. We do not think that it is going to operate efficiently for the purposes of delivering what is going to be a very extensive program for new public housing—1,000 homes over the next five years to support the most vulnerable in our community.

MS CLAY: Minister, from 2019 to 2024, how many ACAT appeals were lodged on all DAs?

MR STEEL: You could probably do some of the maths yourself. I am happy to provide the exact raw number, but 13 per cent of all development applications that were appealed to ACAT were public housing projects. It is a considerable number, and I think it is out of line with the number of public housing applications made compared to the number of private development applications that are made overall. That is a concern and it shows that public housing is being held up in the appeals process.

That is why we have put forward a practical bill to make sure that we can deliver this housing for people who need it and are on the waiting list. I hope the Assembly has the opportunity to consider that now that the bill has been introduced to the Assembly.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR STEEL: We have been called on to do this by a range of different community groups, because it is a real barrier to getting more homes built. We have a significant plan to deliver more homes in the future, and we do not want those held up as a result of third-party appeals for projects that have already been approved.

Correctional facilities—Alexander Maconochie Centre

MR BRADDOCK: My question is for the Minister for Corrections. Minister, following the Integrity Commissioner's Operation Falcon report into the falsification of observation records at AMC, what action have you as minister taken to ensure correction officers undertake medical observations in accordance with the instructions set out by qualified medical practitioners?

DR PATERSON: I thank the member for the question. The Operation Falcon report, delivered by the Integrity Commission a couple of weeks ago on 17 January, investigated actions of two corrections officers at the AMC. Findings revealed that a corrections officer had failed to complete hourly observations for a detainee on four entries in the detainee observation form. The investigation also identified misconduct by a senior executive in not formally reporting this officer's actions.

A lot of work has been done since this occurred. This was a number of years ago, in 2020. Last year, a new detainee observations operating procedure was implemented. That was notified on the ACT Legislation Register in October of last year, so that has been fully implemented. I have received numerous briefings on this issue, and I am assured that the new observation procedures are working well.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, what management or employment action with respect to those ACT corrections officers was undertaken by the directorate?

DR PATERSON: One officer no longer works for ACT Corrective Services, and one officer is on leave.

MR RATTENBURY: Minister, what steps have you taken as minister to ensure that the culture of AMC is focused on meeting the detainees' medical needs?

DR PATERSON: AMC has a significant program of work in changing the culture of correctional officers and how they record observations within AMC. But there has also been a whole lot of further work, as a broader issue around the culture of AMC that was recognised years ago, that saw the Blueprint for Change report and program established. That was established in 2022, with the objective of improving the safety and wellbeing of correctional officers. Basically, there was an evaluation of the Blueprint for Change findings, which has seen significant reform happen within ACT Corrective Services and out at AMC. I am really excited about working with Corrective Services to continue this important work.

ACT Policing—major event safety

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Minister, over summer we have seen a number of major events held across Canberra, including New Year's Eve, Summernats and the Australia Day celebrations. Can you update the Assembly on the success of these major events?

DR PATERSON: I thank the member for the question. Yes, there have been some very exciting events happening over the summer, and Canberrans have been letting their hair

down, celebrating the new year and associated events. On New Year's Eve, 40,000 to 50,000 people attended celebrations by Lake Burley Griffin. Only four people were taken into protective custody; and, pleasingly, no-one was detected driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Over the Summernats weekend, ACT Policing ran a high visibility operation at the festival. Compared with last year, there was also a reduction in the number of arrests at the festival. I commend the impeccable behaviour of Canberrans during this time and look forward to another successful event next year.

There was also the Braddon Fringe Festival, which was expanded from one night last year to three nights this year. Again, it was a fantastic success. It saw an increase in the numbers of police on the streets; but, ultimately, patrons enjoyed themselves and it was a very successful event, with minimal issues.

The Multicultural Festival will be held this weekend. Again, it is another festival where ACT Policing will be involved in ensuring that Canberrans can celebrate this great event.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Minister, how does ACT Policing work to ensure that these events are safe for all Canberrans to attend?

DR PATERSON: During the summer period, ACT Policing has run the Safe Summer campaign, which I was pleased to speak about in the last sitting, and launched with the Chief Police Officer on 6 December last year. The Safe Summer campaign has been developed so that ACT Policing can actively educate and engage with the Canberra community around dedicated enforcement throughout the summer period.

The campaign will run until the end of February and will focus on reducing alcohol-related violence, promoting safe behaviours and road safety. This program runs every year and to date has been really effective at promoting how Canberrans can keep safe while celebrating during the holiday period.

MS MORRIS: Minister, an outlaw bikie gang also hosted a national event in Canberra recently. What are you doing to support ACT police regarding bikies?

DR PATERSON: An outlaw motorcycle group did come into the ACT on the weekend. ACT Policing ran a very successful operation with New South Wales police.

Opposition members interjecting—

Correctional facilities—Alexander Maconochie Centre

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. I refer to recent media reports that the Assistant Commissioner of Custodial Operations was caught on a video throwing a female detainee with such force that she physically rolled into her cell—a sickening video, I might add. Could the minister please inform the chamber whether it is ever appropriate for an official to throw a female detainee.

DR PATERSON: I thank the member for the question. I appreciate that that vision was

quite shocking and confronting for the Canberra community to see. That was an incident that took place in 2015. I am advised that that incident was fully reported at the time by the officer involved. It was fully investigated, and the matter is closed. That was a long time ago, but since then—over the last couple of years—there has been implementation of a use of force oversight committee. Unfortunately, our corrective officers do have to use force within AMC at times. It is an unfortunate part of their job. Ensuring that officers are highly trained and supported in those roles, and ensuring that we have appropriate oversight through this committee, is a priority.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, do you support officials who engage in this conduct? Should they keep their jobs or even be promoted?

DR PATERSON: This was not misconduct. I believe that if misconduct had occurred then it should be reported and investigated.

Mr Cocks: I have a point of order on relevance. The question was not about misconduct but, rather, “this type of conduct”.

MR SPEAKER: I think the minister is attempting to answer the question, and I am happy to let her continue. Are you finished, Minister?

DR PATERSON: Yes.

MR CAIN: Minister, do you believe that the throwing of female detainees is consistent with the government’s stated commitment to human rights.

DR PATERSON: The AMC operates within a human rights framework, as do all other ACT government services. As I said, unfortunately ACT correctional officers are at times required to use force, and when they do they are required to report it. Then that report is investigated. After that incident in 2015, all the appropriate reporting took place by the officer involved. It was investigated and the matter is closed.

Since then, the use of force oversight committee has been established over the last couple of years. Every incident and use of force in ACT government places of detention is monitored by this group. There is also the Inspector of Correctional Services. There is a whole range of oversight institutions that can look at incidents that happen, so I am confident that we are doing everything to ensure that staff are fully trained and supported to conduct their jobs.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate—grants

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Gaming Reform. I note that the Canberra Labor Club, an associated entity of ACT Labor, received a grant of \$202,820 from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, as reported in the 2023-24 AEC Transparency Register. I also note the Labor Club received \$165,000 from the same directorate in 2022-23. The club’s turnover in those two years was \$105 million each year. Minister, is it appropriate for a Labor government to make grants to the Labor Club, which in turn makes donations to the Labor Party?

DR PATERSON: I thank the member for the question. I will take on notice which fund

that is. I assume it is the sustainability club fund. Those funds were granted under a Greens minister in the previous government. The Labor Party has not received donations from the Labor Club in over a decade.

Mr Cocks: A point of order on relevance. The question was not about the structure but, rather, the appropriateness of the relationship that results in a Labor government making grants to the Labor Club, which makes donations to the Labor Party.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Berry?

Ms Berry: On the point of order, I think the minister was answering the question quite succinctly and was explaining where the grant came from under a previous government.

Mr Hanson: On the point of order, the question was about the Labor government, which this group proclaims they were last term. Regardless of who the minister is, the question was that it was a Labor government giving money to the Labor Club to keep its pokies going, and then there was the donation that directly goes to the Labor Party.

MR SPEAKER: Members, I am wondering whether, in the 50 seconds remaining, we can allow the minister to attempt to answer the question.

DR PATERSON: I already answered the question.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, as a former advocate for gaming reform, do you believe the other receipts declared by the Labor Club would be better directed to organisations which specialise in gambling harm minimisation?

Mr Pettersson: Point of order: the question is asking for an expression of an opinion. It is clearly out of order, “Do you believe it is appropriate?”

MR SPEAKER: Ms Castley, could I get you to either repeat or rephrase the question, because I am not sure whether Mr Pettersson’s point of order is relevant. If you can have another crack—either repeat or rephrase—

MS CASTLEY: I can repeat it. Minister, as a former advocate of gaming reform, can you enlighten the Assembly—

Mr Pettersson: You’re changing it! So you are not repeating it?

MS CASTLEY: I can repeat it, if you would like me to. Is it going to be allowed if I repeat it?

MR SPEAKER: I cannot recall the specific wording of the question.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, as a former advocate of gaming reform, do you believe the other receipts declared by the Labor Club would be better directed to organisations which specialise in gaming harm minimisation?

MR SPEAKER: Members, the question does ask for an opinion, so I am going to rule it out of order.

MS BARRY: Minister, why did these grants go to the Labor Club when there are far more deserving community organisations with very urgent needs?

DR PATERSON: As I said in answer to the first question, I will take on notice which grants they were, but I suspect they were sustainable club sector grants, which are directly for clubs. They can apply to seek these grants. There is a tier 1 level for large clubs and there is a tier 2 level for smaller grants.

Opposition members interjecting—

DR PATERSON: You can look up on the JACS website who those grants are awarded to. I will come back to the Assembly with clarification on the exact fund.

Correctional facilities—Alexander Maconochie Centre

MS MORRIS: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. I also refer to reports that the Assistant Commissioner of Custodial Operations was caught on video throwing a female detainee. Minister, who leaked the video?

DR PATERSON: You will have to ask the *Canberra Times*.

Mr Hanson: There he is!

MR SPEAKER: No, I am not going to call Mr Lindell!

MS MORRIS: Minister, do you have confidence that sensitive, operational information on the security of the jail will not also be leaked?

DR PATERSON: No, I do not, which is why the matter has been referred to relevant authorities to investigate how that footage was leaked.

MR COCKS: Minister, do Corrective Services staff have confidence in their executive leadership?

DR PATERSON: Yes, I believe so, and this is why there has been significant work over the past decade and reform in ACT Corrective Services to see culture reform in the AMC. I think the recent evaluation that came out, evaluating the Blueprint for Change, found that these measures had been implemented to the highest standard. There is significant work going on to the tune of about—

Mr Hanson: Point of order, Mr Speaker, in her response the minister said, “I believe so.” She offered an opinion. I wonder if she could—

MR SPEAKER: No. No, Mr Hanson, there is no point of order. There is no point of order.

Mr Pettersson: On the point of order, on the original question, the question did ask for an expression of opinion. I was not going to call it until Mr Hanson raised it—

MR SPEAKER: I am not sure that it did.

Mr Hanson: It did not. It asked if they have confidence. It did not ask what is the Minister's opinion? Now she did not answer the question. She offered an opinion. I am saying that if you are going to hold us to the point—If they are going to—

Members interjecting—

Mr Barr: It is the standing orders. A question cannot ask for an opinion. It has been that way for 35 years, Mr Hanson!

Mr Hanson: We asked a direct question. Therefore, if she is offering an opinion, that is not answering the question.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, if you could take your seat.

DR PATERSON: The only extra point I would like to make is that to implement the culture change, activities within AMC have been budgeted to the extent of \$30 million over the past two years. It is a significant priority for the government to see Corrective Services officers supported and working in a workplace that is professional and supports our detainees.

ACT Policing—Molonglo Valley

MR COCKS: My question is to the Minister for Police. Labor's 2024 election commitments included the establishment of a police station in the Molonglo Valley. However, this commitment, made just a few months ago, following a lot of advocacy from the Canberra Liberals over many years, is now described by the minister on Facebook as, "a longer term plan. Minister, this is critical infrastructure for addressing the escalating crime rate in the Molonglo Valley, which already exceeds the ACT average. Why has this commitment been deferred and what is the specific timeframe for delivery?"

DR PATERSON: Delivering a police station in the Molonglo Valley is a priority for the ACT government. It will form part of the town centre development. That development will need to progress, and then we will progress with the police station. There is a whole lot of work in terms of the planning and feasibility studies and what type of facility ACT police want. That planning work has already begun and will progress throughout this term as the development of the town centre progresses.

MR COCKS: Minister, can you rule out a 10- to 15-year timeframe for this project, which I have heard in a number of reports from the community?

DR PATERSON: Yes, I can rule that out. The police station and the town centre will begin before 10 to 15 years.

MR HANSON: When will the Molonglo police station be open for business?

DR PATERSON: Once work starts on the town centre, work will then begin on the construction of a Molonglo police station. This is a priority for the ACT government.

We recognise that this is a new town centre and developing community.

ACT Policing—Winchester Police Centre

MS MORRIS: My question is to the minister for policing. Winchester police station recently sustained significant water damage after heavy rain in January. Footage was captured of water pouring from the ceiling onto officers' desks and electronic devices. The AFPA President, Alex Caruana, said, "The incident reflects years of neglect and inadequate funding for police accommodation by the ACT government, endangering the lives of our members." Minister, don't ACT police deserve a safe work environment that does not endanger the lives of our officers?

DR PATERSON: Yes, ACT police definitely deserve a safe workplace. In relation to the leak at Winchester through the roof, that was due to a blocked drain. That work was rectified; plumbers were called. It was a blocked drainpipe. The damage was isolated in one corner of the building. No injuries were reported, and affected staff were moved to other areas of the Winchester station.

What I do think is that it highlights the urgency of the work to deliver on in terms of a new city police station and headquarters. That is something I am strongly committed to and spoke about in my ministerial priority statement this morning. Work is well progressed on that and will continue to progress, and I will continue to work with ACT Policing to see that they are delivered facilities that are fit for purpose.

MS MORRIS: Police officers in the ACT serve with the knowledge that they may have to put their lives on the line to protect members of the community. What steps are being taken by the government to ensure that repair works at Winchester police station are prioritised?

DR PATERSON: As I said, it was a blocked drainpipe. That was cleared, repair works were implemented, and it is all fixed.

MS BARRY: Minister, will you commit to tabling a repair and maintenance plan for the ACT Policing station to provide officers and the community with real transparency and accountability?

DR PATERSON: The repairs have been completed. There is nothing to report.

Mr Barr: I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.