Government business

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

Bills introduced

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Bill 2012 (presented on 22 March 2012)

Financial Management Amendment Bill 2012 (presented on 22 March 2012)

Bills debated

Emergencies (Commissioner Directions) Amendment Bill 2012

Summary: The purpose of this bill is to amend the Emergencies Act 2004 by including provisions which will give the Emergency Services Commissioner the express authority to give directions to the chief officers of the emergency services.

Proceedings: Debate resumed on the bill on 22 March 2012. Both the Opposition and the ACT Greens supported the legislation and outlined their reasons for doing so. The Attorney-General thanked all parties for their support of the bill.

The bill was agreed to by the Assembly without amendment.

Long Service Leave (Portal Schemes) Amendment Bill 2011

Summary: This bill will amend the Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act 2009 to amend provisions relating to long service leave entitlements for workers in the construction and cleaning industries and entitlements on retirement, incapacity and death under all schemes.

Proceedings: Both the Opposition and the ACT Greens indicated that they would support the passage of the legislation through the Assembly. In closing debate the Minister for Industrial Relations thanked other parties for their constructive involvement during consultation on the bill. The bill was agreed to in principle. During the detail stage minor amendments, moved by the Government, were also agreed to.

The amended bill was passed by the Assembly.

Road Transport (General) Amendment Bill 2011

Summary: This bill will amend the Road Transport (General) Act 1999 by inserting provisions relating to police powers to direct a person to remove an item that obscures all or part of their face. The bill also makes amendments to the concepts of “repeat offender” and “first offender”.

Proceedings: During debate on the bill on 20 March 2012 the Opposition stated that they would be supporting the legislation. The ACT Greens indicated that they would be moving an amendment during the detail stage of the bill to address concerns they had with a section in the proposed legislation dealing with the manner in which head covering may be removed.
In closing the in principle debate the Attorney-General thanked Members for their support and outlined the purpose of the bill. The bill was agreed to in principle. During the detail stage the amendment by the ACT Greens was moved, however, it was not supported by either the Government or the Opposition.

The bill was passed by the Assembly without amendment.

**Workers Compensation (Terrorism) Amendment Bill 2012**

*Summary:* This bill will amend the *Workers Compensation Act 1951* to remove any time based limitation in the legislation covering acts of terrorism.

*Proceedings:* Debate on this bill resumed on 20 March 2012. During debate the purpose of the bill was discussed by Members. The legislation received support from all parties in the Assembly.

The bill was agreed to without amendment.

All bills introduced into the Assembly are available from the ACT Legislation Register at www.legislation.act.gov.au.

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**Private Members’ business**

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

**Bill debated**

**Liquor Amendment Bill 2012—**

Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA (Molonglo—ACT Greens)

*Summary:* This purpose of this bill is to amend the *Liquor Act 2010* to provide individuals and businesses that hold a liquor licence with a minimum of three months notice of any changes to the annual licence fee paid to the ACT Government.

*Proceedings:* This bill was debated on 21 March 2012. During the debate both the Government and Opposition stated that they would support the passage of the legislation through the Assembly. In closing the debate the bill’s sponsor thanked Members for their support.

The bill was agreed to by the Assembly without amendment.

**Motions debated**

On 21 March 2012, Mr Brendan Smyth MLA (Brindabella—Canberra Liberals) moved a motion relating to *family businesses* in the Territory.

The terms of the motion included noting the important role of family business and calling on the Minister for Economic Development to write to the appropriate Federal Ministers to ensure that family businesses are accommodated in the development of business policy. During debate several amendments were moved by both the Government and the ACT Greens which sought to expand the terms of the motion to highlight the importance of micro, small and medium business in the Territory. All proposed amendments were passed by the Assembly.

The amended motion was then agreed to.

The issue of *post school options for young people with a disability* was the subject of a motion moved by Ms Meredith Hunter MLA (Ginninderra—ACT Greens) on 21 March 2012. The motion sought to highlight the issues faced by young people with a disability, and their families and carers, when seeking post school options. During debate an amendment was moved by the Opposition which called on the Government to work more closely with existing service providers to assist them with providing additional supported employment places. The amendment was agreed to.

The motion, as amended, was passed by the Assembly.

Ms Mary Porter MLA (Ginninderra—Australian Labor Party) moved a motion concerning *egg production* in the ACT on 21 March 2012. The terms of the motion included calling on the Government to undertake further negotiations with Parkwood Farm to convert to a barn-laid facility. Amendments moved by the ACT Greens sought to, among other things, highlight the cruel and inhumane practice of battery cage egg production and call on the Government to undertake further negotiations with Parkwood Farm to adopt alternative egg production methods.
Several of the amendments moved by the ACT Greens were negatived by the Assembly. Further amendments moved by the Opposition, which sought to draw attention to the alleged animal activists activity at Parkwood Farm in early March, were also negatived by the Assembly.

The amended motion was agreed to.

Other matters discussed on 21 March related to:

**Enlarged Cotter Dam Project**
Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (Ginninderra—Canberra Liberals)

**William Hovell Drive Congestion**
Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (Ginninderra—Canberra Liberals)

### Assembly business

*Includes any business relating to the establishment or membership of a committee or the proposed referral of a matter to a committee. It also includes business which proposes to amend, disallow, disapprove or declare void any instruments which are made under specific Acts agreed to by the Assembly. Assembly business also includes any notice or order of the day which deals with the administration of the Assembly or how the Assembly conducts its proceedings.*

### Motions debated

A motion seeking to adopt a number of temporary orders of the Assembly as permanent standing orders was agreed to on 22 March. The relevant orders are as follows:

- 27. Hour of meeting
- 69. Time limits for debates and speeches
- 79. Matter of Public Importance
- 118. Answers to questions without notice
- 172. Agreement in principle to be determined at a later meeting
- 182A. Amendment to bills
- 213A. Order for the production of documents
- 254A. Request for explanation concerning government response to committee report.

### Papers presented

*The following is a list of papers of interest that were presented*

- Chair of the Board of the Australian Crime Commission Annual Report 2010-11 (*presented by the Attorney-General on 20 March 2012*)
- Emergency response guide—ACT Government, Education and Training (*presented by the Minister for Education and Training on 20 March 2012*)
- Report on campaign advertising for the period 1 July to 31 December 2011 by the Independent Reviewer (*presented by the Speaker on 21 March 2012*)
- Report of the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Advisory Committee (*presented by the Attorney-General on 22 March 2012*)
- Review of OHS Liaison Officer funding by Chair, Work Safety Council (*presented by the Minister for Industrial Relations on 20 March 2012*)
- Review of the ACT’s Compulsory Third Party Insurance Scheme (*presented by the Treasurer on 20 March 2012*)

### Statements by Ministers

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services made a statement on 20 March 2012 concerning the ACT Emergency Services Agency response to prolonged extreme weather conditions experienced in the ACT in early March 2012. During his statement the Minister placed on record his support for all emergency services’ personnel in the work they carry out in and for the Territory’s community.

Mr Brendan Smyth MLA (Brindabella—Canberra Liberals) spoke in support of the Minister’s comments.

The Minister for Education and Training made a statement on 22 March 2012 in relation to a police investigation into an incident at a Canberra high school. The Minister indicated that the statement was in response to a number of questions asked by the Opposition during the sitting week.
Mr Steve Doszpot MLA (Brindabella—Canberra Liberals) also spoke on the matter.

On 22 March 2012 the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs made a statement in relation to the National Close the Gap Day. During his statement the Minister highlighted the purpose and importance of the National Day.

On 20 March 2012 the Assembly agreed to amend the reporting date for the committee’s above inquiry. The committee is now to report by 10 May 2012.

Further information on the committee’s inquiry can be found here.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

On Tuesday, 13 March 2012 the committee held its second public hearing for its inquiry into the Gaming Machine Amendment Bill 2011. Appearing before the committee were the Minister for Gaming and Racing, Ms Joy Burch MLA, and Mr Greg Jones, Chief Executive ACT Gambling and Racing Commission.

Considered in the hearing were:

- questions of the effect of the bill, if passed, on clubs and other venues in the ACT;
- the circumstances of the introduction of gambling machines into clubs in the ACT;
- the effect and distribution of reductions in the number of gaming machines in the ACT; and
- the prevalence of problem gamblers and whether the bill would address concerns about problem gambling if passed into law.

On Thursday, 15 March 2012 the committee held a public hearing for its inquiry into the Appropriation Bill 2011-2012 (No.2).

The Treasurer, Mr Andrew Barr MLA, appeared before the committee with officials from the Treasury, Territory and Municipal Services and Education and Training Directorates.

Considered in the hearing were appropriations in the bill which relate to enterprise bargaining agreements with public sector employees and the Government’s decision to authorise additional funding for two capital works projects from the reprioritisation of unspent capital

(i) the replacement of the Malkara school hydrotherapy pool; and
(ii) the upgrade of Ashley Drive in Tuggeranong.

Also on Thursday, 15 March 2012 the committee held a public hearing for its inquiry into the Auditor-General’s Report No.1 of 2011: Waiting lists for elective surgery and medical treatment.
The Minister for Health, Ms Katy Gallagher MLA, appeared before the committee with officials from the Health Directorate and Calvary Hospital—Public. In the course of the hearing, the committee’s discussion with witnesses included:

- efforts made by government to address waiting times for patients;
- consultations which had been conducted with service providers in the health sector, including surgeons and other doctors;
- variations in demand for elective surgery;
- how the ACT compares with other Australian jurisdictions on waiting times; and
- planning efforts to predict and meet demand.

The Assembly agreed, on 20 March 2012, to amend the reporting date for the committee’s inquiry into the Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Amendment Bill 2011. The committee is now to report by the second sitting week in May 2012.

**Government response to committee report**

**Public Accounts—Standing Committee**

Report 20—Inquiry into the exposure draft of the Financial Management (Ethical Investment) Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 (presented 20 March 2012)

**Matters of public importance**

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

**An evidence-based approach to reducing crime in the ACT**—Ms Meredith Hunter MLA (Ginninderra—ACT Greens)

**The importance of older Canberrans to the ACT**—Mr Steve Doszpot MLA (Brindabella—Canberra Liberals)

**Next sitting**

The Assembly will sit again on Tuesday, 27 March 2012.

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