ACT Auditor-General’s report entitled *Performance information in ACT public schools* as part of its inquiry.

The committee invited written submissions in May 2018 from key interest and stakeholder groups and received nine submissions. The committee has already held two public hearings, hearing evidence from the ACT Principals Association, the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations, Professor Andrew Macintosh of the ANU and a retired ACT teacher.

The committee will be holding further hearings during September and October 2018 to hear from the ACT Audit Office, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Canberra Montessori, the Australian Education Union and the Association of Independent Schools.

**Executive business—precedence**

*Ordered that executive business be called on.*

**Nobel peace ride**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (12.05): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) welcomes the arrival in Canberra of representatives of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on the Nobel Peace Ride;

(2) congratulates ICAN for its advocacy and leadership in the passage of the United Nations (UN) Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize;

(3) notes that the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons:

(a) is the first ever treaty to explicitly prohibit all aspects of the development, production, possession, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, or assistance or encouragement to engage in any of these prohibited activities;

(b) was passed by a majority of countries at the UN on 7 July 2017 and will come into effect when 50 countries have signed and ratified it;

(c) has been signed by 60 countries and ratified by 15 including New Zealand; and

(d) has not been signed or ratified by the Australian Government; and

(4) calls on Members of the Legislative Assembly to:

(a) join with other city and state governments around the world in passing a resolution in support of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;
(b) sign the ICAN Parliamentary Pledge in support of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and

(c) urge the Australian Government to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

My motion welcomes to Canberra representatives of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, or ICAN. Members who drove across Commonwealth Avenue Bridge this morning will have noticed ICAN’s flags flying as they renew representations to the Australian parliament on this critical global issue. The flying of those flags marks the end of ICAN’s Nobel peace ride, a ride that started in Melbourne on 2 September and arrived in the nation’s capital today some 656 kilometres and 18 days later.

The peace ride has no doubt been an epic journey for ICAN, but its purpose is to draw support for a far longer journey, one begun but not yet finished. I think all of us in this place can recognise and admire a determined and organised movement like ICAN. I am pleased to stand here and speak for ACT Labor members in offering our support for their work. Indeed, our recent branch conference passed a resolution in support of this campaign. I have been advised by the secretary of Unions ACT, Alex White, that Unions ACT are also in support of this campaign.

We offer our support to this movement. I would like to draw attention to the influence that ICAN has already had in pursuing denuclearisation in our world. As the motion notes, many years of determined work and advocacy helped enable passage of the United Nation’s Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year.

Australia puts great trust in the rules-based global order overseen by the UN and other democratic institutions. It is through no small amount of luck that since the Second World War nuclear weapons have not been used in conflict. Labor holds the strong belief that maintaining the central role of institutions is key to this continuing.

We know, however, that gaining the agreement of the world at the UN is no mean feat and the significance of ICAN’s achievement has been acknowledged with the highest honours. In 2017, ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequence of any use of nuclear weapons and their groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.

In the seven decades since their first use, nuclear weapons have been vastly more advanced. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki are estimated to have killed more than 200,000 people. It is deeply worrying that today’s nuclear weapons are 100 times more powerful.

If a nuclear attack happened today or in the future, the damage would extend far beyond immediate and massive loss of life. There would be dramatic environmental and climate changes that would last for decades. Because of this indiscriminate destructive power, their very existence presents an ongoing risk to human life and our planet.
The global community has made significant progress to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, down from an estimated high of almost 65,000 weapons in the mid-1980s to around 10,000 today. However, for the first time in more than 30 years, there are no nuclear disarmament negotiations underway or planned.

Instead, we are witnessing investment by nuclear-armed states to modernise their nuclear arsenals. This is deeply concerning. As I have said, we must show our support for international efforts to halt and reverse this worrying trend. This may seem like an issue far removed from the responsibilities of the ACT government, but all governments and elected representatives have a responsibility to stand together in calling for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Madam Speaker, I know that many in ACT Labor and the union movement, including me, have attended their share of protests in the past and we are proud to stand again together in this call. By making the pledge, members of the Legislative Assembly can express their deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons and stand together in calling for national governments around the world to ban their use.

Thanks to ICAN’s leadership and advocacy, the UN treaty was signed by 60 countries and passed on 7 July 2017. Many of our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific, including New Zealand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam, have either signed or ratified the treaty. It is unfortunate that the Australian government has done neither.

We appreciate the many nuances of the international diplomacy rightly handled by the national government on our behalf. But the Australian community is entitled to tell their government that they expect denuclearisation to be a principle that is pursued. I deeply hope that the Australian government can find a way to join with the nations I have mentioned already by signing, and eventually ratifying, this treaty.

My motion today calls on members of the Legislative Assembly to join with colleagues from parliaments and communities around the world in sending exactly this message and signing the ICAN parliamentary pledge in support of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Again, I welcome the arrival of the ICAN Nobel peace ride to Canberra and I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (12.11): The Greens are very pleased to support the motion moved by the Deputy Chief Minister. On behalf of the ACT Greens, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, on their recent receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. It is the first time that an organisation founded in Australia has won the Nobel Peace Prize.

As members would be aware, the Nobel Peace Prize is the pre-eminent accolade for people and organisations working toward the peaceful resolution of some of humanity’s most difficult and dangerous problems. The Nobel Committee awarded the prize to ICAN for its work:

… to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.
The committee made this acknowledgement in their statement when awarding the prize:

We live in a world where the risk of nuclear weapons being used is greater than it has been for a long time. Some states are modernizing their nuclear arsenals, and there is a real danger that more countries will try to procure nuclear weapons, as exemplified by North Korea. Nuclear weapons pose a constant threat to humanity and all life on earth. Through binding international agreements, the international community has previously adopted prohibitions against land mines, cluster munitions and biological and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons are even more destructive, but have not yet been made the object of a similar international legal prohibition.

It is for their ongoing efforts to address this legal gap that ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. ICAN first opened its offices in Melbourne in 2006. It has since grown into a coalition consisting of several hundred non-government organisations, from local peace groups to global federations from over 100 countries representing millions of people.

The Nobel Prize committee has acknowledged that the coalition has been a driving force in prevailing upon the world’s nations to pledge to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. To date, 127 states have made such a commitment, known as the humanitarian pledge.

Although ICAN began in Australia, the Australian government’s recent track record on nuclear non-proliferation is less impressive. Australia did not participate in the negotiation of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It voted against the UN General Assembly resolution in 2016 that established the mandate for nations to negotiate the treaty. Earlier that year, Australia had attempted to derail a special UN working group on nuclear disarmament in Geneva, which adopted a report recommending the negotiation of the treaty.

While it is certainly disappointing, it is perhaps no surprise that former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull made no effort to congratulate ICAN on their award. Australia’s recent attitude towards disarmament is particularly disappointing considering that Australia played a very proactive role in this space in the early days of the United Nations.

Today marks one year since the treaty opened for signature. Sixty countries have signed on and 10 have ratified. The treaty is well on the way to entering into force, which we hope will be within the next year or two. To mark one year since the treaty opened for signature, as the Deputy Chief Minister noted, a group of cyclists has cycled from Melbourne, where ICAN originated, to Canberra, where action is needed to ensure that Australia signs the new treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The group is carrying a copy of the treaty and also the Nobel Peace Prize medal. It has stopped along the way to raise awareness of the nuclear weapons issue, the treaty and Australia’s role. They left Melbourne on 2 September and are arriving at Parliament House in Canberra today. I would like to extend a warm welcome and congratulations to the riders.
It is because of the federal government’s inaction on this issue that this motion in the Assembly is so important. As the motion calls for, we are joining other city and state governments around the world in passing a resolution in support of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Just as we have done on the issue of climate change, when national leadership is lacking, the role of state and territory parliaments becomes particularly important.

The motion further calls for all members to sign the ICAN parliamentary pledge. The pledge commits its signatories to:

… work for the signature and ratification of this landmark treaty by our respective countries, as we consider the abolition of nuclear weapons to be a global public good of the highest order and an essential step to promote the security and well-being of all peoples.

This pledge has been signed by hundreds of parliamentarians around the world. In the past two weeks another 30 state and territory parliamentarians in Australia from across the political spectrum have also pledged their support. Both I and Ms Le Couteur have signed the pledge. I note from ICAN’s website that other members in this place have also signed it. I welcome that. At a federal level, I am pleased to confirm that all of my Greens colleagues have signed on.

Too often governments ignore the concerns of civil society, preferring instead to operate within a closed loop of military-industrial advisers and policy hawks. ICAN has been a leading actor in the strengthening of civil society’s voice in the pursuit of a transparent, multilateral and diplomatic transition to a safer world.

At such a point in history, when the threat of nuclear war seems closer now than it has been for more than five decades, the work of ICAN has never been more important. However, on this issue I believe that the tide is turning and that it is inevitable that Australia join the ban.

I would like to finish by directly congratulating the hardworking members of ICAN Australia, including president Richard Tanter, Canberra’s own Sue Wareham, Jessica Lawson, Marcus Yip, Margaret Beavis, Daisy Gardener, Daryl Le Cornu, Ruth Mitchell, Tilam Ruff, Dave Sweeny, Tim Wright, Gem Romuld and Chrys Gardener.

To all the members and volunteers of ICAN Australia and throughout the international coalition, I congratulate you on this well-deserved recognition. I thank you for your ongoing and tireless efforts to make the world a safer place for all of us. The ACT Greens salute ICAN’s enduring commitment and tireless work to deliver our world from the dangers of nuclear weapons.

Having worked myself in the space of trying to deliver international treaties and agreements, I know that the progress of international treaties is often slow and frustrating. We congratulate ICAN on the broad success that the organisation has had
in attracting signatories to both the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the humanitarian pledge.

The Australian Greens’ founding principles of peace and nonviolence, social justice and grassroots democracy are all present in the work of ICAN. I would like to thank the Deputy Chief Minister for moving this motion and I commend it to the Assembly.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Disability, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Government Services and Procurement, Minister for Urban Renewal) (12.19): It gives me great pleasure to speak on the motion moved by the Deputy Chief Minister regarding the work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, or ICAN, and I thank her for enabling a discussion on these matters in this place. As someone who has signed the ICAN pledge alongside many fellow Labor Party members, this is an excellent opportunity to pay tribute to the work of ICAN and congratulate this outstanding organisation on its much-deserved Nobel Peace Prize.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons was founded in Melbourne in 2006, as others have noted, and since then its model of advocacy and partnership has grown to encompass more than 450 organisations in 103 countries. Its Australian partner organisations range from established social justice and welfare groups to unions, environmental advocates and faith-based groups.

The ACT community is represented by organisations such as the Canberra region antinuclear campaign and the Conservation Council of the south-east region and Canberra. As members in this place we are well aware of Canberrans’ commitment to activism, to progressive values and social change, so it is not surprising that so many Canberrans support ICAN’s global mission. And that global mission is clear: ICAN recognises the catastrophic harm of nuclear weapons.

In the scale of the devastation they cause and in the long-term effects of fallout, they are like no other weapon. While we no longer live in the world of mutually assured destruction, the possibility of existing nuclear arsenals and the associated radioactive material falling into the hands of terrorist organisations remains a significant threat. As others have said, sadly some countries have renewed their efforts towards growing their nuclear weapons capabilities.

ICAN’s response to this threat is simple: nuclear weapons should be prohibited; nations should cease developing, testing, manufacturing and stockpiling nuclear weapons; national governments should not assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in these activities; and countries with existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons should agree to their disposal in accordance with a legal protocol that is binding and has a clear timeframe.

ICAN’s activism has resulted in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which, as the motion states, was passed by a majority of UN members on 7 July 2017 after an extensive process of negotiation. The treaty lays out ICAN’s aims in
international law and has been signed by 60 countries and ratified by 15, including New Zealand.

It is based on the principles of international law that underpin the biological weapons convention of 1972, the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, the anti-personnel mine ban treaty of 1997, and the Convention on Cluster Mines of 2008. It closes a loophole, as prior to the treaty’s adoption nuclear weapons were the only weapons of mass destruction not subject to a categorical ban, despite their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The new treaty thus fills a major gap in international law.

The Australian government did not endorse the treaty, did not support the original motion to commence negotiations which led to the development of the treaty, and has not ratified the treaty since its creation. This is a failing of the Liberal-National coalition at the federal level.

Many of my territory Labor colleagues have also signed the ICAN pledge, including the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and the Attorney-General. Many federal Labor members have signed it as well, including then-ACT Senator Katy Gallagher, the shadow attorney-general Mark Dreyfus MP, Linda Burney MP, Mark Butler MP and other members of Labor’s shadow ministry.

In signing the pledge, parliamentarians warmly welcome the adoption of the UN treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons on 7 July 2017 as a significant step towards the realisation of a nuclear weapon-free world. The pledge states that we share a deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons and we recognise the consequent need to eliminate these inhumane and abhorrent weapons.

As parliamentarians, signatories pledge to work for the signature and ratification of the landmark treaty by our respective countries and we consider the abolition of nuclear weapons to be a public good of the highest order and an essential step to promote the security and wellbeing of all peoples.

As the Deputy Chief Minister has said, it may seem to some that the Legislative Assembly is going beyond its remit by tackling issues of nuclear disarmament and the horrors of future war. These are weighty issues certainly. But our position as legislators speaks to our values as elected representatives and members of the broader community.

The way in which ICAN has developed a model of collaborative activism, gaining support from across the non-government sector, working with elected representatives and raising awareness in the community has been a resounding success. Not many other Australian-based community campaigns can say that they have swayed the United Nations into supporting changes in international law.

I congratulate ICAN again on its well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize and I look forward to one day seeing the Australian government sign up to the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We all want to see a better and more peaceful world for our families and our communities.
ICAN is a great reminder of the power of activism, and I also congratulate those who have ridden from Melbourne to Canberra to raise awareness and continue the discussion with the Australian parliament. I thank the Deputy Chief Minister again for her motion and for the timely reminder of what the community working together can achieve.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (12.25): Last night I was very privileged: I attended the peace banquet that welcomed the riders from Melbourne to Canberra with the Nobel Peace Prize. So I have actually seen and touched the Nobel Peace Prize, which was not what I expected to do and it was quite an amazing event.

I also read out to the 50 people at the banquet the calls on part of the motion and to say I was confident that the Assembly would pass it tomorrow. Everybody was really pleased to find that we live in a progressive jurisdiction which believes in international action; believes in activism; believes in peace; and believes that a better world is possible.

I thank the many people of ICAN, including in particular Canberra’s Sue Wareham, for the work they have done over the years in progressing the goal of peace and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Everyone in the world should be in favour of it, and so I commend this motion to the Assembly.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (12.27): I also support the motion and thank the Deputy Chief Minister for bringing it on. I add my welcome to the arrival in Canberra of the representatives of ICAN on their Nobel peace ride. I add my voice to what has already been said: the Nobel Peace Prize essentially speaks for itself. It is the culmination of ICAN’s persistent and relentless work in advocating for a ban on nuclear disarmament, and it really is a tribute to what the determination of individuals acting together can achieve.

As Minister Rattenbury and others reflected, in the face of ever-more potent nuclear technology and a pretty skittish world, to put it mildly, it is a strong acknowledgement that there is a choice and that all nations can choose and should choose to avoid the mistakes of our past.

I am proud to also note the Australian Labor Party’s recognition of the potential for nuclear weapons to cause catastrophic humanitarian consequences and the urgent need to ensure nuclear disarmament and our steadfast support of the movement since and the many Labor members who have gone on to sign the pledge, including some of us in this place a number of months ago.

I underline what the previous speakers said: that the federal government’s inaction on this, including in congratulating ICAN, is pretty appalling. Hopefully they wake up to themselves over the coming few days, particularly now that ICAN has arrived in Canberra with the prize.

I urge all my colleagues to sign the pledge; it just makes sense. I add my voice by finishing with the most important point I can make, that is, thanking the members of
ICAN, including Canberra and, indeed, Belconnen’s own Sue Wareham, for their relentless pursuit of our mutual dream of ridding the world of the worst weapons of mass destruction.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Committees—standing Membership**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members, I have been notified in writing of the following nominations for membership of the general purpose standing committees of the Ninth Assembly:

**Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee**
- Mr Hanson
- Ms Orr
- Mr Pettersson

**Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee**
- Ms Lee
- Mrs Kikkert
- Mr Pettersson

**Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee**
- Ms C. Burch
- Mr Milligan
- Ms Orr

**Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee**
- Ms Cody
- Mrs Dunne
- Ms Le Couteur

**Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee**
- Ms Cody
- Ms Lee
- Mr Pettersson

**Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee**
- Ms Le Couteur
- Ms Orr
- Mr Parton

**Public Accounts—Standing Committee**
- Ms Cheyne
- Ms Cody
- Mrs Dunne
- Ms Lawder