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MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Calls for Canberra to fly the Purple Flag for a good night out!

Canberra is a vibrant community with so much to offer – from world class artists and performers to our classic speakeasys. Work has been set in motion for Canberra’s Night-Time Economy which will help support our city to become a leading worldwide nightlife destination!

“Canberra has so much potential to be a national destination for our night-time economy – from everything a foodie could dream of, to those who want to hit the dance floor, go to the theatre or see live entertainment! I want to make sure that as we work on a night-time strategy, that we ensure public safety is a core part of the consultation and consideration. Key to a good night out, is everyone returning home safely at the end of the night - the night-time economy work the ACT Government is doing, is a key opportunity to progress discussions around public safety and ensure Canberra at night is a welcoming and safe destination” said Dr Paterson, MLA.

The 2019, YWCA *Our lives: women in the ACT* survey found that 54% of women reported feeling unsafe in public spaces after dark, which is exasperated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women with a disability. Further, in the first three months of this year (January 1st 2023 – March 31st 2023) ACT Policing crime statistics list 65 assaults, 10 sexual assaults, 33 property damages offences and 197 “other” offences in Canberra City, these are most commonly associated with drunken behaviour. There is clear room for improvement when it comes to safety after dark in Canberra.

“Canberra’s vibrant nightlife provides opportunities for working and socialising, but the success of the night-time economy is fundamentally tied to perceptions of public safety. For women in particular, their personal safety is a key consideration when choosing to go out with friends or take on a late-night shift.

Responses to our 2023 Our Lives survey, so far indicate that while women generally feel safe during the day, a majority do not feel safe moving about the city in the evening. Public safety must be a core consideration for the ACT Government when taking steps to further develop Canberra’s night-time economy” said Frances Crimmins, Chief Executive Officer YWCA Canberra.

On Thursday, Dr Paterson will move a motion calling on the ACT Government to explore the potential for Purple Flag accreditations in Canberra's premier nightlife precincts of Civic and Braddon, as well as other areas as part of the ongoing consultation and work on the development of the ACT’s nightlife.

The Purple Flag initiative accredits nightlife precincts that meet a set of best-practice standards in safety measures, access to public transport, adequate street lighting and great food and beverage offerings. The purple flag accreditation has been met by 90 locations across the world including cities like Sydney, Stockholm and Dublin, all who have reported benefits including a raised profile and improved public

image for the area, reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour, and a more successful mixed-use economy in the long-term.

Chrystina Stanford, CEO of the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre said, "The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre is really pleased to see this important initiative being presented. We fully support the Purple Flag accreditation being adopted in the ACT and also support the leadership from government in progressing strategies that have an end goal of keeping our community safer."

The ACT Government is currently consulting with the community and industry and working to support a safe, vibrant and thriving nightlife in Canberra as part of the recommendations provided in the Better Regulation Report 2022. As part of this process, Dr Paterson is calling on the ACT Government to consider the purple flag initiative as well as a public safety plan in future nightlife initiatives.

The motion will also call on the Government to explore the potential safety, social and cultural benefits of Purple Flag accreditation for Civic and/or other areas of Canberra as part of the consultation to improve and expand upon the ACT's nightlife offering.

Statement ends

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