Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

15th Assembly



Parliamentary Record
Debates and Questions



Tuesday 5 May 2026

CONTENTS

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS 4345
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT 4345
Media Presence in Chamber 4345
RETURN OF WRIT 4345
ADMINISTRATION OF AFFIRMATION 4345
VISITORS 4345
YouthWorX 4345
MESSAGES FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR 4345
Message No 14 – Assent to Bills Passed in March 2026 4345
Message No 15 – Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill 4345
VISITORS 4345
Alana Kaye College 4345
SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS 4346
Filming by Media 4346
Committee Membership – Standing Committee on the ICAC 4346
STATEMENT BY CHIEF MINISTER 4346
Death of Kumanjayi Little Baby 4346
REORDER OF BUSINESS 4346
Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill 4346
APPROPRIATION (2026–27) BILL 4346
Serial 63 4346
TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 4346
Serial 64 4346
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT 4353
Notice of Motions 4353
NOTICES 4353
QUESTION TIME 4355
Infrastructure Program – Roads 4355
Budget 2026–27 – Highlights 4355
Budget 2026–27 – Cost of Living 4356
Budget 2026–27 – Community Safety 4357
Maternity Services 4357
Maternity Services – Supplementary Question 4358
Corrections – Infrastructure Master Plan 4359
Wages Policy 4359
Budget 2026–27 – Justice 4360
Budget 2026–27 – Law and Justice Groups 4361
Flood Recovery Fund – Flood Prevention 4362
Air Routes 4363
Housing – Affordability 4363
Land Release – Regional Areas 4364
Budget 2026–27 – Child Protection 4365

Alice Springs Infrastructure Projects 4366
Budget 2026–27 – Health Investment 4367
PAPERS TABLED 4368
Opposition Portfolio Responsibilities 4368
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – Inquiry into the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 4368
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – Inquiry into the Heritage Amendment Bill 2026 4369
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – 4369
Inquiry into the Mineral Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 4369
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – 4370
Inquiry into the Pipelines and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Industry Development) Bill 2026 4370
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – 4371
Inquiry into the Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 4371
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – 4371
Inquiry into the Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026 4371
Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – 4372
Inquiry into the Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2026 4372
APPROPRIATION (2026–2027) BILL 4373
Serial 63 4373
TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 4373
Serial 64 4373
FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 4392
Serial 61 4392
VISITORS 4397
Family and Friends of Member for Nightcliff 4397
INAUGURAL SPEECH 4397
Mr Smelt – Member for Nightcliff 4397
FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 4400
Serial 61 4400
PAPERS TABLED 4404
Government Response to Public Accounts Committee Report on the Inquiry into the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum 4404
Government Response to Public Accounts Committee Report on the Inquiry into the Darwin Ship Lift Facility 4404
RESPONSE TO PETITION 4404
Petition No 20 – Immediate Pause on the Closure of the Pine Creek Police Station 4404
MOTION 4405
Note Petitions – Petitions No 21 and 22 4405
ADJOURNMENT 4410

Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge some dignitaries who are with us in the gallery today: Senator Malarndirri McCarthy; Marion Scrymgour; Luke Gosling OAM; former Chief Ministers Eva Lawler and Clare Martin; and former Speaker Hon Jane Aagaard. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Media Presence in Chamber

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have given approval for media to be present in the Chamber to record the swearing-in of the Member for Nightcliff.

RETURN OF WRIT

The Clerk laid on the table the return of writ issued by His Honour the Acting Administrator, Chief Justice Michael Grant, on 12 February 2026 for the election of a member for the electoral division of Nightcliff on 7 March 2026, certifying the election of Mr Edward Stewart Smelt.

ADMINISTRATION OF AFFIRMATION

The Member for Nightcliff, Mr Edward Stewart Smelt, made and subscribed the affirmation required by law.

Madam SPEAKER: On behalf of Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, I congratulate you on your election and welcome you to the Assembly as the Member for Nightcliff.

VISITORS
YouthWorX

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of young adults from YouthWorX, accompanied by their program leaders. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

MESSAGES FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 14 – Assent to Bills Passed in March 2026

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received Message Number 14 from His Honour the Administrator notifying assent to the Bills passed in the March Meetings of the Assembly. The message is dated 14 April 2026.

Message No 15 – Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have also received message number 15 from His Honour the Administrator recommending to the Legislative Assembly a Bill for an Act that authorises an amount to be paid from the Central Holding Authority to the purposes of the agencies or other purposes specified in the Bill for the financial year ending 30 June 2027. The message is dated 29 April 2026.

VISITORS
Alana Kaye College

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received notification that there are students from Alana Kaye College in the Assembly this morning. Welcome to Parliament House, on behalf of honourable members.

Members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS
Filming by Media

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, as is the normal practice each year, I have given permission for media outlets to record the Treasurer's delivery of the budget speech from the Chamber floor this morning and the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech tomorrow morning.

Committee Membership – Standing Committee on the ICAC

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I report that pursuant to Standing Order 181 on 19 May 2026 the Member for Mulka was appointed to the Standing Committee on the ICAC.

STATEMENT BY CHIEF MINISTER
Death of Kumanjayi Little Baby

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart and ask that this Assembly pause and honour the life of Kumanjayi Little Baby. Kumanjayi was only five years old. Her passing has devastated her family, the Old Timers' community, the people of Alice Springs, Territorians and Australians.

At this time, our thoughts must first be with her mother, brother, grandfather her extended family and all who loved her. No words spoken in this Chamber can ease the depth of that grief, but we can stand with them in respect, sorrow and solidarity.

We acknowledge the hundreds of searchers, the police, community members and everyone who gave their time, energy and hope over those difficult days. This matter is now before the judiciary and we should be careful not to say anything that may prejudice that process, but as a parliament, we can recognise the profound loss of a young child and the grief being carried by her family and our community.

I ask that all members rise and observe one minute of silence in memory of Kumanjayi Little Baby.

Members stood for one minute's silence as a sign of respect.

REORDER OF BUSINESS
Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing or sessional orders:

1. Government business has precedence over Assembly business this morning.

2. The Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 64, be presented at the same time as the Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill, Serial 63, and the Bills be considered together through all stages in the Assembly.

3. The Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill and the Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 have precedence over other business tomorrow morning to allow the Leader of the Opposition's reply to proceed after 10 am.

4. Government business will be interrupted at 6 pm today for the Member for Nightcliff to deliver his first speech to parliament.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION (2026–2027) BILL
Serial 63
and
TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 64

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled the Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill 2026, Serial 63, and table the budget papers. I also present the Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 64, and table the explanatory statement.

I move that the Bills be now read a first time.

Today the Finocchiaro Country Liberal Party government delivers its second budget which delivers phase 2 of our plan to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle, just as we promised Territorians we would.

This is a budget for everyday Territorians. At a time when household budgets are under pressure, this is a budget that sensibly funds a range of important services for Territorians that they rely on whilst living within our means and not adding to inflation and the cost-of-living pressures all Territorians now face. Put simply, it is a budget that makes your life better.

Through disciplined financial decision-making this is a budget that delivers an operating surplus in our general government sector in 2025–26 which means for the first time since 2022–2023, the Territory will not be borrowing money to pay wages.

For eight years Labor racked up deficits and debt to $9.02bn. That is a 22% increase in net debt every year. Everyday Territorians know you cannot just keep maxing out the credit card and cannot do it without a plan to pay it back. That is what Labor did; it is a big part of why they failed Territorians.

Pointless debt does nothing but waste money that could be spent delivering the public services and infrastructure that Territorians deserve. Even worse, pointless debt adds to inflationary pressure which, in turn, increases cost of living challenges for all Territorians. The Finocchiaro CLP government has not and will not follow in the footsteps of the train wreck that Labor was. We will not make every day Territorians foot the bill for Labor's failures.

In our first budget we dealt with Labor's time-limited programs and funding cliffs, its project cost blowouts, broken promises and our unsafe streets.

In just 18 months we have turned the books. The economy and our collective future have turned around. For the first time in as long as anyone can remember, the government infrastructure program is properly funded. We will not wallow. The Territory is too important. We must get back on our feet.

We acted. We backed our front line. Under the Finocchiaro CLP government there are 100 more police officers on our streets and more than 80 additional nurses in our hospitals than under Labor. We have reduced the number of victims Territory-wide by 10.2%. We put in the effort and made our capital works program worth the paper it was written on, with phantom projects removed and the program refocused on giving Territorians a better future and growing our population with our home build scheme.

We are leading the nation, off the back of what would have been the year of lowest home builds since records began. Our hard work has paid off. For the first time in a decade we moved off the bottom of the CommSec State of the States ranking, rising from last place to fourth. The last time the Territory ranked fourth was in 2016, when the CLP was last in government.

This year's budget is sensible. It is focused on making the lives of everyday Territorians better, and it is fiscally responsible. It starts with yet another record law and order spend of $1.73bn because community safety is Territorians' number one priority.

It secures $4.25bn in capital works, including $496m in economic-enabling infrastructure and $2bn on roads and transport. We have provided $460m in additional capital works cash in the 2026 budget to deliver the capital works program rather than just making promises that remain undelivered and revoting year after year like a broken record. That is how you deliver growth, certainty and security.

I will explain to everyday Territorians how this budget makes their lives better. Territorians want a healthcare system that supports them from birth throughout their life. That is why this record health budget of $2.52bn will deliver better healthcare for us all. Our $68m funding for St John Ambulance will see more paramedics on the ground and deliver faster response times when people desperately need it.

This budget delivers a record spend in education, and it will deliver a brand-new $110m high school for Palmerston for special needs students and their families. We are investing in our kids' future and making life easier for Territory families.

A total of $15m has been allocated to design brand-new men's and women's prisons in Darwin so we can focus on tackling the root causes of crime and keeping Territorians safe.

A $15m direct injection into our national parks means that everyday Territorians and tourists can enjoy more of our unique Territory lifestyle.

This budget prepares the Territory for the future with more than $130m dedicated for flood recovery and resilience to build back better Territory-wide. This is following five major weather events in just five months.

Today's budget is about putting money where it is needed most, making our community safer and allowing Territorians to back themselves to grow their businesses, and not increasing the debt and cost-of-living burden on Territory households. It focuses on safer streets, better services, easing pressures on families and having a government where the grown-ups are once more back in charge. It backs Territorians here and now, while helping to build a stronger future for tomorrow.

The 2026–27 budget has been delivered in some very challenging circumstances. Natural disasters, national economic headwinds and international instability have placed pressure on Territory families, businesses and communities. The conflict in the Middle East pushed up fuel and energy prices, and Territorians felt it. Economic modelling in the 2026–27 budget assumes the price of oil will average about $100 per barrel from April to September 2026 before starting to trend down. The full economic impact will depend on the extent and duration of the conflict.

Price increases are stoking inflation and increasing the likelihood of the RBA raising the cash rate at upcoming meetings, including the meeting today. Territorians feel that pressure every time they fill a tank, with the freight on goods or pay rising household bills.

That is why we backed fuel relief measures, contributing $19.7m to reducing fuel excise by 5.7c per litre, and acted to ensure Territory motorists were not being ripped off at the bowser. We triggered the 77-year-old *Price Exploitation Prevention Act* to compel fuel retailers to provide their full cost structure upon request, and appointed a controller so motorists can feel confident that retailers are not profiteering from price volatility.

Despite all these challenges, the Finocchiaro CLP government has been sensible and strategic, which is why public debt growth is back onto a sustainable trajectory. The Finocchiaro CLP government is proud to have reduced debt growth by 18%, while delivering significant growth in frontline workers of more than 6%. In 2025–26 the Territory's net debt will be $11.35bn. It is forecast to stabilise at around $13.2bn in 2027–28 and 2028–29 before reducing from 2029–30. This effort is reflected in the stable credit outlook issued for the Territory by the international ratings agency Moody's on 26 April.

I am pleased to announce a general government net operating surplus of $95m in 2025–26, followed by a modest forecast deficit of $42m in 2026–27 with a return to surplus from 2027–28. Operating surpluses mean we are fully funding our private sector wage bill without borrowing money to pay the wages. Labor was paying public servants with a credit card.

On public sector numbers, since the September quarter of 2024, we have seen total growth in the Northern Territory Public Sector by 884 FTEs, driven by increased frontline school-based staff. That is more teachers, nurses, police and correctional officers—the people we rely on—working for Territorians, those people on the front line.

Importantly, executive and other non-frontline staff remain largely unchanged from those September 2024 levels. What that means is that we are seeing growth in frontline services whilst back-of-office staffing is restrained or modestly declining through natural attrition. We are holding agencies to account for their budgets and no longer allowing unfunded positions to be created in head offices, which ran rampant under Labor and their union mates for the best part of the last decade.

Our net debt-to-revenue ratio is expected to average 15 percentage points better when compared with Labor's forward projections. The 2025–26 fiscal balance deficit sits at $583m, increasing to $1.06bn by 2026–27, and by 2029–30 this figure will have greatly improved with a negligible overall deficit of just $5m. Commonwealth revenue is projected to be $7.7bn in 2026–27. Total revenue for the non-financial public sector is expected to increase to $10.7bn in 2026–27 and rise to $11.31bn by the end of the forward estimates.

We continue to prioritise increasing the Territory's own-source revenue capacity by growing our economy. Government departments are expected to be responsible with their budgets, so we have increased the efficiency dividend budget repair measure in 2026–27 to 1.5%. The improvements in the Territory's fiscal outlook are a result of the work the Finocchiaro CLP government has done to reduce crime, cut red tape, reform payroll tax, implement the Territory Coordinator and exercise responsible spending. Royalties and

GST have also improved. Have no doubt, there is more work to do as we make the Territory a more competitive place to live, work, visit and invest.

Earlier this year the Territory experienced widespread flooding, with Katherine suffering its worst floods in almost 30 years. Families, businesses and communities were impacted. The Finocchiaro CLP government stepped up to help those flood-affected communities. This budget responds with more than $130m for flood recovery and resilience initiatives, including a $100m flood recovery fund and a $30.5m roads repair package.

We have already committed immediate funding for flood mitigation in Alice Springs, levee upgrades in Katherine, support for Nauiyu and rebuilding critical road links across the Territory. Joint funding arrangements with the Commonwealth are also in place under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement 2018. There is still a long way to recovery, but we are with the community every step of the way to ensure that we build back better.

Communities are counting every dollar. That is why this budget is about giving families confidence, giving business certainty and communities security.

This year's budget delivers more than $290m in concessions, subsidies and targeted household support, including $225m in power and water concessions and subsidies. Everyday Territorians deserve support, and this year they will see the discount delivered by the Finocchiaro CLP government on their power bills. This includes support with subsidised power and water; Back-to-School vouchers; Sport Vouchers; Learn to Swim vouchers; free swimming lessons for primary students; free meningococcal B vaccinations; early childhood subsidies; support for our seniors delivered by the Minister for Youth, Seniors and Equality, Minister Charls; and free TAFE and vocational training for eligible Territorians. This is practical help where it matters the most.

As the Chief Minister made clear at the start of this year, community safety remains our number one priority. It was our focus last year, and whilst we have reduced the number of victims by 10.2%, we know that there is much more to do and are getting on with that job. Our core pillars are interlinked. Reducing crime helps lay the foundation to rebuilding our economy and both help to restore our lifestyle.

This is a law and order budget. A record $1.73bn is budgeted for investment in police, courts and Corrections. We will continue to put victims first and community safety ahead of offenders, and redouble our efforts, delivering our Reducing Crime strategy.

Crime statistics are just one measure of how people are feeling about safety over the past 12 months, and we have seen encouraging results because of stronger legislation and backing our police with the tools where they need them most. Another measure is when Territorians feel safe taking their kids to the shops, catching up with friends and family in our parks, walking to their cars or going for a run around their own neighbourhood, and this budget helps deliver that.

It invests in our police, supporting the rollout of the brand-new 212-strong police public safety officer workforce, backed by an additional $48m over four years and $15.8m of ongoing funding. This is providing visible patrols in public places and freeing more experienced police to focus on serious crime.

This budget delivers record funding of $654m for police, with 150 recruits budgeted to go through the police college in 2026–27, building on the more than 100 additional police already added to the force since the September quarter of 2024. Every one of our disciplined and diverse CLP team has heard from their communities and seen firsthand the role police are playing, day-in and day-out in our communities, on the streets keeping us all safe.

Reducing crime is not just about policing. We need our whole justice system to be working efficiently and focused on victims and not offenders and apologists.

Labor members buried Corrections and left them out of sight and out of mind. Wearing T-shirts with pro-offender slogans on them, they dropped the ball and failed in their primary role which is to keep Territorians safe. By not investing in our Corrections for ideological and political reasons, they left families and communities to pay the bitter price with tragic effect. We build choice for families and opportunities for people now and into the future.

Once again, this budget puts an end to Labor's soft-on-crime offender-led justice system. This year's budget invests a further $250m under the Corrections infrastructure master plan to construct new prison work camps in Darwin and Katherine, and delivers upgrades at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre, providing more correctional capacity while supporting rehabilitation to tackle the root causes of crime. These facilities will

provide low-risk offenders with structured employment, training and education pathways that reduce reoffending and ease pressure on prisons.

This budget has allocated $15m to continue the work underway for new adult male and female correctional facilities in Darwin. This is something our Corrections master plan makes clear is sorely needed and was left undone by those opposite. Unlike those opposite, we will invest in required infrastructure to give effect to our commitment to Territorians on reducing crime.

As the Deputy Chief Minister and Corrections Minister, Hon Gerard Maley, has made clear, if you break the law, he will find you a bed.

This budget also continues to strengthen our courts with ongoing funding for additional judges and electronic monitoring as we continue our reform to make courts more victim-centred and efficient. This investment secures a permanent full complement of 19 judges and is helping to deliver faster justice for Territorians. Our courts are now processing cases at record rates, with nearly 25,000 matters resolved this financial year to date. More than 74% are finalised within six months, which is well above the national average. For the first time in more than a decade matters are being resolved faster than they are entering the system, clearing the backlog left behind by Labor.

These results build on reforms such as the successful TIG-ER Taskforce, which has handled nearly 1,000 matters and resolved close to 800 cases, many through early guilty pleas.

The CLP government will continue to strengthen laws, boost frontline services and invest in the programs that tackle the root causes of crime.

Despite the mess the Finocchiaro CLP government inherited, we continue to deliver on rebuilding the economy strategy, locking in growth, certainty and security for Territorians. Our credit rating has been rated as stable by Moody's, and the steps we are taking to diversify our revenue and constrain debt are designed to improve our credit rating and lessen the interest bill that Territorians are paying. We show improved rankings in comparative analyses such as the Business Council's Regulation Rumble, the ANZ's Stateometer and the final CommSec State of the States report showing the Territory leading the nation in economic growth, dwelling starts and relative population growth.

Real growth comes from businesses, household confidence, private investment and jobs. That is why this government is backing the industries that keep the Territory moving: Defence; mining; energy; agriculture; and tourism. We are keeping payroll tax settings competitive, supporting apprentices and trainees, unlocking land, backing home ownership and attracting workers to the Territory.

We raised the payroll tax-free threshold to $2.5m, which is the highest in the nation, and exempted apprentices and trainees from that. Our payroll tax revenue since taking this decision has gone up. Territorians recognise that they would not be penalised for investing in their workforce, for taking a punt on new apprentices or for starting and growing a new business. We gave them certainty. Not only do many small and medium business no longer pay payroll tax, but another 115 Territory employers have claimed more than $27m in exempt wages for apprentices and trainees, saving about $1.5m in payroll tax whilst helping train the next generation of Territorians—our next generation of tradies.

As part of this budget there will be a further change to our payroll tax arrangements, introducing a new payroll tax rate of 6.5%—a 1% increase for employers and payroll tax groups within annual Australia-wide wages of $100m or greater. We feel it is important to ensure that local and growing Territory employers are not asked to carry the same relative tax burden as large national businesses.

The additional payroll tax revenue will help the Territory government to fund essential services and infrastructure that supports business activity, workforce attraction and long-term economic stability in the Northern Territory.

Territorians will be please to hear that the HomeGrown grants for new homes will be extended as part of this year's budget. More than 1,400 grants have been processed, resulting in payment of around $30m that will support more than $217m in construction activity across the Territory.

Territorians are choosing to build, buy and put down roots in the Territory, and that is exactly the kind of confidence that we want to see.

Under the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Hon Josh Burgoyne's portfolios, we are unlocking land and development opportunities across the Territory. This budget provides an additional $4m for land releases in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

We are also backing business growth as part of Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, Hon Robyn Cahill's area, with $4.4m for the Safer Business, Stronger Economy and Better Lifestyle grants and $4m for migration, trade and investment attraction.

The Territory economy is showing encouraging signs, with growth in population, housing and business activity. More than 5,500 international students from more than 60 countries studied in the Northern Territory last year. They were supporting our economy, workforce and future population growth. The Territory is open for business again. Confidence is returning, investment is growing and jobs are being created.

Earlier this year Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro announced the first Territory development area under the *Territory Coordinator Act* for the Northern Marine Complex. This will bring together the Darwin ship lift and Marine Industry Park into one coordinated maritime precinct, creating jobs, attracting investment and strengthening the Northern Territory's role in Australia's national security.

This is more than an infrastructure project; it is a strategic asset for the Territory and the whole nation. The Northern Marine Complex will support Defence capability in northern Australia, enabling the sustainment of military vessels and landing craft. It will further position Darwin as a key maritime sustainment hub, supporting readiness and interoperability across the entire Indo-Pacific region. It will also help position Darwin as a world-class marine servicing hub for commercial vessels, our offshore industry and Defence fleets that are operating across our region.

It will grow our sovereign capability, reduce reliance on interstate and overseas maintenance facilities and create high-skilled jobs for Territorians in engineering, fabrication, logistics and maritime services. As Defence investment in the north continues to grow, the Territory must be ready to capture those jobs, contracts and the long-term opportunities that will come with it.

Only last week we saw the highly successful delivery of NT Defence Week, with the talks of the generals, admirals and Defence industry experts being centred on exactly this. Darwin and the Northern Territory stands at a strategic juncture, both in time and location, given the geopolitical headwinds at play. The Finocchiaro CLP government will not rest on its laurels and is aggressively pursuing this opportunity for the betterment of the Territory's businesses, jobs and overall economy.

To this end, the ship lift becomes important infrastructure, but Territorians deserve the truth. What began as a $100m capped CLP commitment in 2015 blew out under Labor to $820m and rising. The Public Accounts Committee found that in 10 years not once was a business case prepared. Labor signed the contracts and signed up to the blow-outs. Labor pushed this project beyond the point of no return. That is what we have inherited. The Public Accounts Committee made clear that walking away would cost up to $600m in break fees for zero material gain—a gross misuse of public funds we simply could not countenance.

The Finocchiaro CLP government is backing the delivery of the ship lift. We will see the job done. Our laser focus will remain on maximising the benefit of this strategic asset for all Territorians. Through the adjoining marine complex we will ensure as many businesses as possible can grow and provide quality jobs to Territorians in this globally significant precinct. This government is now delivering the project properly, with strict cost controls and Treasurer-level oversight. We have also established a new Defence Industry Council to drive investment, create local jobs and position the Territory as Australia's northern Defence gateway.

This budget delivers $4.25bn in our infrastructure program to build roads, housing, schools, police facilities and economic opportunity across the Territory. This includes:

- $278m for Tanami Road sealing and upgrades
- $240m for highway upgrades and flood resilience
- $201m for the Central Arnhem Road
- $133m for the Outback Way
- $608m for remote housing land servicing and essential services across the Territory.

Importantly, 59% of this year's infrastructure program is allocated to remote and regional communities, proving that this government backs every part of the Territory.

This budget also provides record investment in health, housing and education. As part of the Minister for Health's budget, it delivers $2.62bn for health services, including more beds, upgraded equipment, stronger ambulance services and better regional care. This includes $18.3m per annum to open a new 32-bed ward at Royal Darwin Hospital, an additional $10m per annum for road ambulance expansion, and $20.6m to support a new aged-care facility next to Palmerston Regional Hospital.

I am also proud to announce that, as part of this budget, $4m will be allocated to Tennant Creek Hospital to install a new CT scanner, which will greatly alleviate pressure on that community. The Finocchiaro CLP government has also secured a landmark $1bn deal from the Commonwealth for Territory hospitals, ensuring better care now and stronger health services into the future.

This budget also supports housing supply, social housing and vulnerable children, including $22.8m to support community housing providers with applications to the Commonwealth Housing Australia Future Fund round 3, and $20m over two years to strengthen statutory out-of-home care.

It invests a record $1.73bn in education, including new and upgraded schools, free training pathways and support for young Territorians to build their futures. This includes $110m to build a new Palmerston secondary special education school, which was announced last week by the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Jo Hersey. It gives Territory families access to modern specialist education far closer to home.

Territorians work hard and deserve a quality of life that is second to none. Ours is a lifestyle built on freedom, the outdoors, strong communities and the natural beauty that makes the Territory unlike anywhere else in Australia. We are fiercely proud to protect this. That is why last year the Finocchiaro CLP government secured 30,000 hectares through the purchase of Silkwood Estate, expanding our iconic Litchfield National Park. Bringing Silkwood to public ownership has protected this remarkable landscape for current and future generations while further strengthening the Territory's reputation as one of Australia's premier outdoor destinations.

This year's budget continues to back our parks and includes a $10m boost for land management, visitor access, infrastructure improvements and further safety works. This spending is necessitated by Labor's neglect of visitor park infrastructure such as parking, toilets and signage.

Longer-term planning for Silkwood informed by stakeholder feedback will also identify sustainable tourism and commercial opportunities that create regional jobs, support local businesses and grow the economy whilst preserving the environment and cultural values that make Silkwood so special.

This is about protecting the Territory lifestyle that we all love while creating new opportunities for the future. What better way to showcase this than through our Minister for Major Events, Hon Marie-Clare Boothby. Major events, sport and community activities generate about $85m a year for the Territory economy while strengthening our lifestyle and our liveability.

This budget invests in parks, roads, sport, fishing, community facilities and major events, including an additional $5m per annum for parks and reserves, $9m over three years for AFL matches and $2m over two years for international cricket in the Territory. Howzat! It supports the Territory lifestyle that makes this place unique. From local sport to national events, camping spots and our great parks, this government is protecting what Territorians love most about living here. We are backing the Territory lifestyle because it is worth protecting.

This is a budget for every Territorian. It is not just balancing the books; it is about building the Territory. This budget backs Territorians now while building a stronger future. It makes our community safer, grows our economy, protects and enhances our lifestyle and provides certainty. It is responsible, and it delivers on our commitments.

The Territory is moving forward again, but we are moving safer, stronger and more confidently. She is a wonderful place worth backing. The Finocchiaro CLP government knows that our best days are ahead of us, and our disciplined and diverse team will keep working tirelessly to that end.

I commend the Bills to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bills read a first time.

The Assembly suspended.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Notice of Motions

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, before I call for notices, I will provide some guidance to members about the form and content of notices of motions.

Standing Order 70 requires notices of motions are in the form of a concise proposition. Standing Order 76 provides that where a notice of motion contains content that contravenes any standing order, the Speaker may order the notice to be amended or withdrawn. Similar practices are widespread across Australian parliaments.

The purpose of a notice of motion is to inform the Assembly of a proposition that the member intends to bring to the Assembly for debate and determination; it is not the opportunity to put forward arguments.

I advise members I will pay close attention to this standing order for all new notices.

NOTICES

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion calling that the Assembly condemns the Finocchiaro CLP government for delivering a budget that completely fails Territorians, delivering no real cost-of-living relief, no pipeline of infrastructure works, no plan to support the growth and prosperity of critical job-creating sectors and no economic vision for the future of the Northern Territory.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall move that the Assembly resolves that:

1. there be appointed an Estimates Committee of the Legislative Assembly (known as the committee) for the purpose of examining and reporting on the:

   (i) estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill (the Appropriation Bill) and related budget documents

   (ii) Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 64

   (iii) activities, performance, practices and financial management of the Power and Water Corporation, Jacana Energy and Territory Generation with reference to those corporations' Statements of Corporate Intent of 2026–27.

2. The membership of the committee will be three government members, one opposition member and one crossbench member to be nominated in writing to the Speaker by the relevant Whip or crossbench member. Nominations to the Speaker should occur no later than Monday 11 May 2026.

3. The committee may hold hearings on the following days:

   Tuesday 9 June 2026
   Wednesday 10 June 2026
   Thursday 11 June 2026
   Monday 15 June 2026
   Tuesday 16 June 2026
   Wednesday 17 June 2026
   Thursday 18 June 2026.

4. The total time for the hearings of the committee may not exceed 60 hours.

5. The maximum time of the appearance of the Chief Minister and the Treasurer shall not exceed eight hours. The maximum time of the appearance of the Auditor-General shall not exceed 30 minutes. For each other minister and the Speaker the maximum time of their appearance shall not exceed seven hours.

6. The committee will publish a schedule of the days and times of hearings and the times allotted for hearings from ministers, the Auditor-General, the Speaker and board Chairs by Friday 15 May 2026. The committee may only amend the published schedule with the consent of the Leader of Government Business.

7. The committee shall examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill by portfolios in accordance with an agenda published by the committee, and the proposed expenditure shall be considered on an output-by-output basis for each portfolio unit, except that the Auditor-General's Office shall be examined separately from outputs relating to the Chief Minister's portfolio.

8. At the hearing for the Auditor-General's Office:

   (i) questions relating to the Auditor-General's Office shall be put to the Auditor-General

   (ii) no agency-related whole-of-government budget and fiscal strategy questions shall be asked, except questions strictly relating to the office's appropriation or administrative arrangements.

9. All questions should conform to Standing Order 109, and answers will be concise and directly relevant to the question asked.

10. Answers to questions taken on notice during the hearings or additional information about an answer given by or on behalf of a minister, the Auditor-General, the Speaker or board Chair, are to be written and given to the Estimates Committee Secretariat by Monday 13 July 2026. Answers or additional information so received are authorised for publication.

11. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is authorised to publish a transcript of the committee proceedings, whether or not it has been edited, as soon as practicable.

12. Evidence taken in public by the committee and documents presented to the committee are deemed to be authorised for publication by the committee unless the committee orders otherwise.

13. At a hearing of the committee the Chair may, after a warning, order any member of the Assembly whose conduct, in the opinion of the Chair, continues to be disorderly or disruptive, to immediately withdraw from the committee for a period of one hour.

14. Following their second reading, the Bills stand referred to the committee for report by 18 June 2026, after which consideration in detail will take place followed by the third reading.

15. The Assembly's routine of business for Thursday 18 June 2026 is:

   (i) 2.30 pm—prayers and acknowledgement of country

   (ii) report from Estimates Committee and consideration of the Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill 2026 and the Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

   (iii) Government Business notices and Orders of the Day.

16. When the committee's report on the Appropriation Bill is presented, the Assembly shall immediately consider the question that the expenditure proposed in the Appropriation (2026–2027) Bill stand as printed and the report of the Estimates Committee be noted.

17. The following time limits shall apply to the debate on this question:

   - ministers, Leader of the Opposition and shadow ministers, 20 minutes

   - any other member, 10 minutes

   - the maximum period for consideration shall be five hours.

18. When the question on the expenditure proposed in the Appropriation Bill is agreed to, the following question is proposed and put immediately: that the remainder of the Bill and the Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill stand as printed.

19. When the Bills have been agreed to by the Assembly, their third reading may be taken into consideration immediately.

20. This resolution shall have effect, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

QUESTION TIME

Infrastructure Program – Roads

Ms UIBO to TREASURER

Your own budget has revealed that this year you underspent on infrastructure by $341m. At a time when Territory roads are in some of the worst conditions they have ever been, that money should be fixing our roads, supporting jobs locally and delivering critical projects across the Northern Territory. Instead, projects have stalled, and communities are being left behind under your watch. How can Territorians trust you to fix roads when you cannot even spend the money that you budgeted last year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not sure where the Leader of the Opposition has been for the last six months because we have had some of the worst weather events the Territory has had in many a year in Central Australia, across the Barkly region and across the Top End. She is talking about the infrastructure program and the underspend. I will clear that up because she may not have thought this through before asking.

To deliver infrastructure projects you have to get out in the bush to deliver them. The lion's share of the Northern Territory Government infrastructure program for the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure is in roads. We are talking about the big roads—the Tanami, the Carpentaria Highway, the Plenty Highway and the Outback Way and numerous other roads across the Territory.

In December, January, February and March there were unprecedented rain events. It means that, sadly, the contractors who are delivering those programs cannot get out there to do that. This is the reality. Yes, we had an infrastructure program and the cash to deliver these programs. Trust me, DLI was doing everything it could; it knows it needs to deliver those programs. When the programs cannot be delivered, the money cannot be spent. That has not happened.

What we have done is put $130m straightaway into our flood recovery program. There is $100m being rolled out as we speak to help affected communities across the Top End and in Central Australia and the Barkly.

There is $30m straight out the door to try to start to fix some of the damaged roads in the Barkly, Central Australia and the Top End. That work is happening now. The department, under section 8 of the *Emergency Management Act*, can use additional contractors to start the repairs rather than having to wait and put out tenders and use existing contractors. The department is doing that work because our road networks are important to the people in the communities that have been affected by these unprecedented weather events—you only have to look at the people who had to be relocated and taken away from their communities. We are doing everything we can to get them back.

There has been an underspend in the logistics and infrastructure program, but there is a clear and simple reason for that: if we cannot get out there and do the work, we cannot spend the money. Unfortunately, we have not been able to do that, but we are now getting on with the job to do those repairs.

Budget 2026–27 – Highlights

Mr O'GALLAGHER to TREASURER

Congratulations on handing down your second budget to the Legislative Assembly this morning. It is a budget for all Territorians, including those living in my electorate of Karama. Can you outline the highlights of the 2026 budget and how it delivers for everyday Territorians after years of Labor deficits, debt and underinvestment? How does this budget show Territorians that the Finocchiaro CLP government is not repeating Labor's approach of unfunded promises and growing debt, but is instead delivering action, certainty and security for families, businesses and communities across the Northern Territory now and into the future for generations ahead?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as a former member of the business community in the Territory, the Member for Karama knows all too well what budgets, appropriate spending and fiscal responsibility means.

This budget delivers for all Territorians because it funds the priorities that matter most to everyone—safer communities, better services, stronger infrastructure and responsible financial management. Under Labor, the Territory saw deficits, debt, unfunded promises and too many projects that were announced but never delivered. Net debt grew to $9.02bn, and too often the Territory was borrowing money just to pay the wages.

This Finocchiaro CLP government is taking a different approach. We are restoring discipline, delivering an operating surplus in 2025–26 and putting the budget back on a sustainable path.

The highlights are clear and this budget delivers:

- a record $1.73bn law and order investment, including record police funding, 150 recruits through the police college and a 212-strong recruit course of a police public safety officer workforce
- a record $2.62bn health budget, with more beds, stronger ambulance services, upgraded equipment and far better regional care
- a record $1.73bn investment for education, including $110m for a new Palmerston secondary special education school, which is much-needed for those kids
- more than $290m in concessions, subsidies and targeted household support, including power and water support for families who are counting every dollar
- more than $130m for flood recovery resistance, which I have spoken about
- a $4.25bn infrastructure program, with 59% of that program going to remote and regional communities.

This is the difference between the CLP and Labor: Labor left the Territory with debt, delays and excuses, but this Finocchiaro CLP government is delivering growth, certainty and security. This is a budget that backs Territorians now to build a stronger future, which those opposite failed to do and we were left to pick up the pieces. We have picked them up, are running with it and will deliver for Territorians.

Budget 2026–27 – Cost of Living

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for PEOPLE, SPORT and CULTURE

Territorians are doing it tough. Power prices are rising, interest rates are biting and families are being forced to make real sacrifices just to get by, yet your budget freezes support for Sport Vouchers and Senior Recognition Schemes while locking in massive power price increases. At a time when Territorians need help the most, you have ripped away the support. How can you justify supporting a budget that completely ignores the cost-of-living crisis for many Territorians?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: The Minister for People, Sport and Culture will be heard in silence.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, Territorians know that we are going through a hard time, and the Finocchiaro CLP government is supporting them through these difficult challenges. We have seen that throughout the course of the last few weeks, when the fuel prices were high. We have seen the actions of the Treasurer and Attorney-General to put things in place that provide support and set the prices in a way that is according to legislation.

The Treasurer said this morning that there is almost $290m in relief measures going to Territorians. It may be nearly $225m in subsidies for electricity and other things. When it comes to the Sport Vouchers and swimming vouchers for Territorians over the last year, we are providing these real measures to Territorians to assist with the cost of living.

If the question is, ‘Is that enough?’ I would personally say it is not enough. What is the reason we cannot make it more? Because of the debt that was handed over by Labor. That is, sadly, the reason we cannot support Territorians, because of the astronomical debt handed to the CLP government by the Labor government. This morning it was around $12.55bn.

The Treasurer outlined how it will be in the forecast, and how he and this government are making sure we are tracking down and not blowing out the $15bn ceiling left by the Labor government.

We are looking after and supporting Territorians by looking after our budget, because that is under our control. Labor worries about too many things it cannot control. Labor talks about world politics and other things, but we are the government of the Northern Territory and we provide that support for Territorians. That is what our focus is, and that will be our focus moving forward.

There are measures put down by our government that we are continuing. One is the Sport Vouchers, which I understand about 18,000 people have already used, including me. I am using that for my children engaging in swimming. That is happening; Territorians are looking at their options and taking that opportunity. As a government, we look forward to how we can support more Territorians in the future.

Budget 2026–27 – Community Safety

Mr PATEL to CHIEF MINISTER

Community safety is the number one priority for Territorians. People deserve to feel safe in their homes, at the shops, on the road with their families, and in the community. Can you update the Assembly on how the CLP government's second budget is delivering on its plan to reduce crime and build a safer, stronger Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina's community wants safer streets, and law and order is their number one priority, just like it is the priority of every other Territorian. That is why this budget delivers; it stays true to the promises that we took to the people of Casuarina, Drysdale and Karama. We said to them that the number one priority for us would be to reduce crime.

This year's budget doubles down on our efforts last year. Last year's record law and order budget of $1.5bn has been surpassed by another record $1.73bn budget this year. We are putting Territorians' money where they want it the most. This budget is for the everyday Territorian, because it makes their life better. That is our job in this Chamber.

That commitment is important. Because of the work we have already done, the number of victims Territory-wide dropped by 10.2%. That is 2,700 people who were not victims of crime under the CLP government, because of the strong action we have taken, who would have otherwise been victims under Labor.

I compare this year with last year. House break-ins are down by 23%; commercial break-ins are down by 26%; motor vehicle theft is down by 16%; assaults are down by 8%; and the one crime that increased by 82% under Labor is domestic and family violence, which is down by 9% under the CLP. That is making a real difference in people's lives; it is meaningful change.

This budget for the everyday Territorian makes their life better because in this budget there will be 150 new police put through the police college, 100 police public safety officers, and 150 more Corrections officers. That is on top of the 100 more police we have under the CLP government than we had under Labor. We have an additional 80 nurses than we had under Labor, because we are growing our front line while bringing in the debt.

To have achieved a reduction in debt from 22% increases year on year under Labor, down to 4%—that is a reduction in debt growth of 18%, while investing in and growing our front line, reducing crime, growing our economy and restoring our unique Territory lifestyle. That is governing for the people of the Northern Territory.

This budget is a better budget because it delivers for the people who matter most: the everyday Territorian. It invests in making their lives better and we are very proud of that.

Maternity Services

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Your budget confirms record levels of Commonwealth funding for health in the Northern Territory. Instead of delivering meaningful upgrades in the maternity ward at Royal Darwin Hospital, your budget focuses on minor

works across the hospital with no clear commitment to supporting maternity services in Darwin. You dismissed that issue months ago when Territory mothers came to you directly.

After repeated questions and no clear answers from you or the CLP government, will you finally tell Territorians when Darwin maternity services will be restored, what concrete actions you are taking to fix this crisis, and explain why you continue to sit on your hands until it becomes politically convenient to react?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we are delivering a record $2.56bn budget for NT Health. When we hear those figures, we can say that we are delivering for all Territorians across all regions, including Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy. Maternity is a longstanding issue that the opposition has been silent about. We have heard nothing from the opposition when it comes to advocating for additional money from the federal government to support maternity services in Darwin.

Ms Uibo: You know that is not correct. Why are you telling rubbish stories …

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, Opposition Leader.

Mr EDGINGTON: Not only have we heard nothing from the opposition, but we have heard nothing from Luke Gosling, Malarndirri McCarthy or Marion Scrymgour. We have been asking for $10m for close to 12 months. Where have the opposition members been in advocating for money to be brought into the Territory to support maternity services? Healthscope closed the private maternity in June last year; it gave a few weeks' notice that it would close in June last year.

We wrote to the federal government in May, straight after the federal election, asking for $35m. Eventually, after asking for $35m, we it got whittled down to $10m—and we are still waiting. Next week, when the federal government delivers its budget, I am hoping for—as should you be—$10m to support maternity in the Northern Territory.

Do not come to Question Time whingeing and carrying on. Why not get out in public and start advocating for maternity services in the Territory? You have been silent about maternity. You can whinge, complain and blame other people, but you have done nothing when it comes to maternity services in the Northern Territory. Where are you? All of you, why not get out in public and say something? There are five of you now, and not one of you has been out in public saying that the federal government will increase funding by $10m. There is not one bit of advocacy from the Labor opposition. They just want to sit around and blame everybody but themselves. After eight years in government they did not upgrade maternity services.

Maternity Services – Supplementary Question

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Can you explain to Territorians why you took the good part of eight months to ask for assistance from the Commonwealth when the Darwin Private Hospital maternity ward closed, and why it took your government many months to submit the plan for the $10m for the maternity service upgrades at Royal Darwin Hospital, which you have still failed to deliver to this day?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will give a quick answer because we wrote to the federal government straight after the federal election asking for $35m to upgrade maternity services.

Ms Uibo: It was eight months after. That is not straight after. Could have had a baby in that time.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, please be quiet.

Mr EDGINGTON: The opposition does not like the answers. We wrote to the federal government in May last year, straight after the federal election, to ask for support for the pending closure of the maternity ward in Darwin. Nothing was said by the opposition. We wrote to the federal government and asked for $35m. We have been asking for $10m after correspondence with the federal government for months and months.

That mob over there had eight years to upgrade the maternity ward and did not commit one cent to upgrading it. Now they are sitting around blaming us rather than advocating for the federal government to hand over $10m to support maternity services in the Northern Territory.

Corrections – Infrastructure Master Plan

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

When our government came to office the Corrections system was in crisis. Prisons were overcrowded, and police watch houses were being used as overflow prisons. What a shame. Staff were under enormous strain.

Can you update the Assembly on how the Corrections master plan is taking pressure off our prisons and police watch houses, what progress has been made in expanding and repurposing Corrections facilities, including for women and youths, and how these reforms are improving safety, rehabilitation outcomes and community confidence in our Corrections system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Blain understands how important community safety is. We were elected with a clear mandate to fix the problem that the previous Labor government left. There was crime throughout the community.

We came to government and the Northern Territory's Corrections system was underfunded and in crisis. The prisons were overflowing, staff were under pressure and the Labor government's answer was to put prisoners into watchhouses and leave them there to rot.

This CLP government, led by Lia Finocchiaro, has fixed that. We funded the Corrections system. We are making it safe for prison officers and prisoners and offering rehabilitation services for prisoners, because we want to break the cycle of reoffending. We are focused on rehabilitation, education and work. We have stopped using those watch houses as prison cells. Now we have invested in a master plan.

Since late 2024 the master plan has delivered over 1,000 new beds into the Corrections system. That is because we want to keep the community safe. We want to send a clear message to people who break the law that there will be a consequence. This is unlike the previous Labor government, which was just 'release, release, release'. It was not keeping the community safe.

We delivered on the master plan. We delivered rehabilitation. More than 646 prisoners have completed a psychoeducational program. In March 182 more prisoners were educated, were in training and undertook real rehabilitation, which Labor never delivered. There are 865 prisoners working in commercial industries.

This year we have put $525m into the Corrections system because we will protect prison officers, offer rehabilitation and house prisoners in a facility that is designed for them, not a watch house like the previous Labor government did.

We opened a 16-bed youth justice facility at Alice Springs, the Paperbark facility. We are just about to open a juvenile holding facility in the western part of that building.

Work is underway for a Katherine work camp and a Holtze work camp, again focusing on breaking the cycle of reoffending, offering rehabilitation and training and for industry to go out there and give these offenders a chance to become good citizens and give back to the community. That is unlike the previous Labor government, which neglected Corrections and the community and made sure …

Madam SPEAKER: Your time has expired, minister.

Wages Policy

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

Your own budget shows the consumer price index (CPI) rising to 5.2% this year, yet you are capping wages at 3%. This is a clear decision to cut real wages and force Territory workers backwards while the cost of living keeps rising. Workers are already under pressure, and now Corrections officers are taking protected industrial action because your policy simply is not working. Will you admit your wages policy is a failure and

explain why you are picking and choosing which workers you support through your CLP government and why you are deliberately locking Territory workers into pay cuts?

Mr Edgington: Didn't you freeze wages?

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please!

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I find that a bit rich coming from the opposition, and there is a reason those members are now in opposition. I remind the Opposition Leader that under their government there was a pay freeze. When we came to government almost two years ago we had a crippling debt. The Treasurer has done a mighty fine job over the last 18 months to try to get that under control.

We had to go through eight enterprise bargaining agreements, and all of them have been with a 3% pay increase year on year. There have been many negotiations going on so far. What we have said in all the enterprise bargaining we have done so far is that if people want to see above 3%, they need to come with something that they can sell back to get it. Those negotiations have been had in good faith with the Commissioner for Public Employment. We still have some negotiations to go.

Being fiscally responsible and staying within the wages policy we have set is also an important thing for Territorians. It is their taxes that are paying for this, and we will not be like the opposition …

Ms Uibo: You did not do that for one group of public servants.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Mrs HERSEY: Maybe the Opposition Leader would like to listen to the answer.

We will not be like the opposition and blindly spend, getting Territorians into debt that we cannot jump over. As I said, the Treasurer has done a great job in clawing back some of that.

The Opposition Leader can say that we are not doing enough for public servants, but we value every one of them.

Corrections officers are still going through bargaining. The firefighters are going through, and many others still need to be finalised. We are doing everything we can, working with them in good faith to remain fiscally responsible for Territorians.

Budget 2026–27 – Justice

Dr RAHMAN to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Territorians know that a strong justice system is critical to keeping our community safe and restoring confidence after years of neglect by multiple former Labor governments. Can you articulate how the Finocchiaro CLP government's 2026 budget is backing our courts and will help reduce crime and deliver faster justice, safety and confidence outcomes for Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fong Lim's constituents know that this budget is about backing the everyday Territorian. The way we do that is keeping safety our priority. That is at the core of this budget, which builds on the work we did last budget.

This year we upped the ante with spending for law and order, where we have a record $1.73bn to spend. In relation to the work we have already done, the Member for Fong Lim was telling me earlier about the work he has been doing in his community, particularly in Stuart Park on Westralia Street, and how he had been talking to the community and getting them on board with the law changes and new police powers. The confidence we have put in the justice system has allowed Westralia Street—which was seriously under threat because it was terrible under a Labor government—to be cleaned up.

The best thing about that is that people in that area are now happier, and there are two brand-new businesses moving in as tenants. That shows confidence in our justice system.

I will name one of the businesses, because it is exciting for them to go to Westralia Street: Outback Kebabs and Pizza. Hopefully we can go there for a wing dinner; that would be great. There is also a new bakery, which is yet to be named.

These new businesses can start up because of the work we already did, like the record spend I talked about, locking in 19 Local Court judges, which is a record number of judges, and supporting the $2.4m Supreme Court figures that need to happen to make sure trials can go ahead. That is after an underfunded court system for a long time under Labor.

We are moving the justice system more quickly. As the Chief Minister has said many times, the number of victims of crime has decreased by 10.2%, compared with what it was under a Labor government, which is a huge decrease. That is people who will no longer be victims of crime.

I increased our victim levy about a year ago, and it has now received $3.82m into the coffers. That is money toward victim support, which is huge. We are proud of that.

Our court system has seen 25,000 court matters, which is a huge number, because of our new laws and the differences we are making. Of those 25,000 matters, 70% have been resolved within the last six months. That is a huge pressure relief for the courts.

Our TIG-ER Taskforce has finalised 1,200 cases, reducing delays and delivering faster justice for victims, and 60% of those have been resolved in guilty pleas.

Budget 2026–27 – Law and Justice Groups

Mr GUYULA to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Can you please advise whether law and justice groups will continue to be funded into the new financial year, how many years of funding have been committed to, and will these groups be expanded to include more communities so that elders and leaders can be properly recognised within the law and justice space?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, from the outset, we are unapologetic about the way in which we are dealing with law and order in the Territory. The numbers speak for themselves. The everyday Territorian knows that this budget is about backing them. The reduction of 10.2% in victims of crime over the last year is no accident; there is a reason that is happening, which is all the law changes we have made.

The law and justice groups form a small part of that. I say that because, under Labor, they created the system and the agreement was signed, but it was not even funded; we could not even look to the future to see how that would go. As a new government, we had to find a way to fund these projects to give them the chance they need to see whether it is successful or not. If it is successful after a period, of course I will back it. We do not know that data because it has only been operational for a short time, and the numbers through the new system are very low.

Member for Mulka, if it works, I will be more than happy to back it, but the law that we are putting in place …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; conciseness. The Member for Mulka specifically asked what in the budget will be funding law and justice groups? If the Attorney-General does not know, maybe she should say that.

Madam SPEAKER: Please make this relevant. There were specific parts to the question that you probably have not answered.

Ms BOOTHBY: Sure. Thank you for clarifying that for the Member for Mulka.

We are one year into the law and justice groups. Five community law and justice groups are operational now, and they will continue to be operational for the next 12 months. We want to give them the chance to succeed. Under the Labor budget, there was a funding cliff; it just stopped, so there was no more money to fund it even further. I do not know how those opposite expected it to continue.

Those five law and justice groups are operational now and will continue to be operational until we can do the evaluation.

Flood Recovery Fund – Flood Prevention

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

After seven extreme weather events that affected almost every region of the Territory over the past few months, we know that flood-proofing the Territory is a top priority. We have seen the best of the Territory spirit, with community members coming together and rallying around each other in these difficult times. From the rural area to the Barkly, through Katherine and the Daly, Territorians are keen to know what the next steps for future prevention are.

Many in this Chamber would love to ask this question, including those opposite and those on the crossbench and backbench. Perhaps if the Leader of the Opposition let one of her other members ask a question today, they would have. Can you update the Assembly on how the CLP government's $100m flood recovery fund will help protect Territorians from future flooding events?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Goyder is right; despite dealing with Labor's projected $15bn debt legacy, we have been disciplined and sensible in our spending, which has allowed us to focus on things that matter most to Territorians.

This has been an historic Wet Season, certainly one of the wettest I have seen in my 36 years in Katherine. Futureproofing the Territory from weather events is a priority for our Finocchiaro CLP government. This is why we established the $100m flood recovery fund to restore critical roads and bridges, carry out mitigation works and build essential infrastructure for long-term resilience.

After years of inaction and previous flooding, we have committed $500,000 to the Nauiyu future plan—I have been there over the weekend and know that will go a long way—progressing a pathway to relocate the Nauiyu (Daly River) community to higher ground. There have been lots of conversations with native title holders, departments and community people. That work will continue. The community was evacuated twice in as many weeks. This financial commitment will give certainty to staying on country by forward planning.

We are strengthening our emergency preparedness with $2.5m invested in early warning IT solutions, including an early warning app so that residents can receive notifications on their mobiles for hazards like fires, floods and cyclones. At the same time we are more than doubling the NT's emergency surveillance drones to enhance our remote monitoring capabilities and give communities more opportunities to act early and stay safe in volatile conditions.

In our major centres of Katherine and Alice Springs we are investing almost $9m in flood mitigation and drainage works. I look forward to that. The next time we are faced with rising water levels, our systems will be more robust.

Additionally, $600,000 will be delivered through the Jawoyn Association to begin work on a detailed design plan for the Maud Creek bridge, the first step to restoring all-year access to Nitmiluk National Park and Jodetluk community, along with access for residents on the Nitmiluk side of Maud Creek.

To complement the fund and aid ongoing recovery efforts, a $30.5m road package is also being fast-tracked through the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure. As someone who travels those roads, I know that they are needed.

We have not seen the last of these extreme weather events. Evacuations are distressing to communities and costly to the Territory, but we must plan for the future. In my role as minister responsible for the fund, I visited affected communities over the weekend. Our CLP government will continue to work collaboratively with the federal government and deliver a package of works that allow our Territory to be built back better.

Mr Young: You are embarrassing. Over one month, it took you.

Mrs Hersey: I beg your pardon?

Madam SPEAKER: Okay, just pause. I do not think that is in order. Please refrain from making those sorts of insulting comments across the floor. We will try to keep it civil.

Air Routes

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

Territorians are dealing with fewer flight options and higher airfares under your government, with airlines such as AirAsia and Jetstar cutting routes and reducing competition. Despite $8.5m allocated to the Territory Aviation Attraction Fund last year, you have failed to deliver additional airline capacity. In fact, the Territory has now lost 45,000 seats on airlines under your watch. Will you admit that you have been too busy redecorating your office and have taken your hand off the throttle when it comes to meeting your hollow promises of better air connectivity for Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not sure where the Leader of the Opposition has been for the last two months or so, but in the event she has missed it, we are in the middle of a fuel shortage potential crisis. We are in the middle of a Middle Eastern blow-up-the-world situation where our fuel supplies have been at risk, including our aviation fuel supplies, where the Chinese government stopped supplying aviation fuel for a period, and airlines have—not unreasonably—said, 'We need to maximise the available fuel and keep people flying as much as possible'.

The reality is that all the flights currently in play will potentially not happen. We have taken steps to see some longevity in the fuel supply chain over the next few months while the situation in the Middle East is resolved. Unfortunately, I am not sure it will be resolved anytime soon. Earlier today we heard the Treasurer allude to how difficult it is to gauge what will happen, because every day we get a new message from the USA about what will or will not happen in the Middle Eastern situation, which is putting our fuel supply at risk.

We have to be smart and clever, and we must keep things in place. All the airlines the Leader of the Opposition mentioned have said, 'So that we can fly and provide secure services in to the future until this situation is resolved, we need to cut back in some spaces'.

It is short term; it is not permanent. They have suspended flights; they have not cancelled flights. On the matter of AirAsia, it was not part of anything other than AirAsia saying they wanted to give it a go. They gave it a go, did not like it, stopped flying and we were disappointed. I made it clear what I thought about that decision; I took them off my Christmas card list. It is not okay to make commitments to Territorians and then back out of them. They are very clear about what is happening, and many discussions are underway to replace those flights and make sure Territorians can still fly and remain connected to their families and loved ones interstate.

I encourage Territorians to keep flying, because if we do not use the flights available to us, there is a risk they will not be sustained. Please, get on a plane, take a holiday, visit your family and do some business, because that is the best thing you can do for the Territory.

Housing – Affordability

J DAVIS to TREASURER

The major issue that everyday Territorians in my electorate come to me with is housing and the inability to find a safe place to live, including an affordable rental. Given almost half the Territory's population rents privately or through social housing, how does this budget address the urgent need for rental and social housing and meaningfully reduce cost-of-living pressure for renters—and I am not talking about swimming lessons; I am talking about finding an affordable place to live.

Mr Young: He wouldn't know; he's out fishing.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, stop it!

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I have not even started talking and the Member for Daly is already interjecting; he cannot help himself.

I will answer the question for the Member for Johnston as best I can. We are investing in housing programs across the Territory. A lot of our housing is in remote and regional areas, and the housing program in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government is rolling out to help those regions.

We are also investing money into round 3 of the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) across the board. We are looking at projects specifically in the Top End. They are not in these budget papers as we speak, but we are looking at how we can roll them out in partnership with industry. We understand that there is a need for more housing. Rental markets are tight in Darwin, as they are in my home town of Alice Springs. We are rolling out HAFF housing at St Mary's to provide additional housing that the rental market needs.

Specifically for Central Australia and the Barkly we have some housing stock beyond economic repair that belongs to the Territory government. We are looking at letting industry purchase those houses with specific caveats to get them back in the marketplace as either a sale or a rental because, as we know, housing is tight. We are looking at what we will do in the Top End. Minister Edgington, through community housing, is doing quite a lot of work in the social housing space to make sure we have properties available.

A larger piece of work happening in Darwin is land release. We have put investment into Holtze to release additional blocks, which will make it easier for people to build and purchase homes. Once we deal with supply, that will reduce demand. We are trying to increase supply through land release and new homes into the market, which will deal with demand and increase the number of rentals.

I always like to talk about what is happening in Alice Springs. There were 70 houses that had been out of the marketplace, and I thank Minister Edgington because his team got them back into the market and people are living in those homes. That is 70 repaired houses and 70 families back into homes.

We are trying to address and alleviate the housing issues. We are working on the Top End to provide additional housing.

Land Release – Regional Areas

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

I have spoken to you many times about this topic, and you know all too well that the people of Fannie Bay have their fair share of land available for development. The people of Fannie Bay are reasonable and intelligent, and many of them are business minded. They understand that the Finocchiaro CLP government knows that maintaining a continuous supply of development-ready land is critical to rebuilding the Territory and supporting sustainable growth in our regions. Can you update the Assembly on how this government is supporting land release in our regional areas?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Finocchiaro CLP government knows how important it is to drive economic growth and ensure a steady supply of development-ready land. We are making it clear that the Northern Territory is open for business and we are committed to driving the regional growth, which the Member for Fannie Bay spoke about. That is why during our government's year of growth, certainty and security, we are committing $4m over the next two years to support land investigations, infrastructure planning and concept design for enabling infrastructure in two important regions: Central Australia and the Barkly.

This work is essential to unlock Crown land and ensure land is available when needed, and this government is delivering the priority investment to our regions. We have not seen that in some of those areas for many years. This government is delivering for those areas.

Unlocking this land for development does not happen overnight. Successful land development involves significant up-front investment and long lead times to ensure that we have planned for essential infrastructure such as power, water, sewerage, roads and drainage, and addressed environmental tenure considerations. That is why our government is investing now and maintaining a pipeline of land releases to ensure timelines do not become a barrier to growth. We have seen this happen over the years, when land is not available to develop and builders go elsewhere. We want to keep them in the Northern Territory building houses for Territorians.

In Tennant Creek we are investing $1m to progress land investigations and infrastructure planning. This will inform future capital investment and support the timely release of residential and industrial land. In Alice Springs we are investing $3m for land investigations, infrastructure planning and concept design to

support industrial land release south of the Gap and to inform enabling infrastructure requirements to unlock the next stage of residential land releases at Kilgariff estate.

When I look up at the gallery today, I see a young man called Enoch Strickland, who is currently at university. I give a shout-out to Enoch because one day, when he comes back to Alice Springs, I want there to be land available for young people like Enoch so that he can invest in the Northern Territory. He can take up the $50,000 first home owner grant, and we can ensure that he sets down roots in the Northern Territory. That is what we are doing through this budget: delivering for all Territorians.

Importantly, this work builds on our broader land release program across the Territory. In greater Darwin residential land supply is more than double, with 298 titled lots released so far in 2025–26 compared with 143 the previous year.

This is our government getting on with delivering for all Territorians.

Budget 2026–27 – Child Protection

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Protecting the Territory's most vulnerable children is a fundamental responsibility and a priority for our community. This budget recognises the importance of ensuring children in out-of-home care are safe, supported and given every opportunity to thrive, which I am deeply passionate about with my youth work background. The budget also acknowledges the vital role of carers who open their homes and hearts to provide stability and care. The Finocchiaro CLP government has made significant investment to strengthen child protection systems and expand family support services.

Can you advise what this budget delivers for vulnerable children and how the additional $10m investment in out-of-home care is making a difference for children and carers across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Drysdale knows only too well from his background in youth work the importance of having a robust system to protect our children. I know he has seen firsthand in his electorate what failure in this space looks like. I thank him for his advocacy in achieving the best possible outcomes for children he has identified in his electorate as being at risk.

Moving a child from their home is the hardest call anyone in this system ever has to make, and it is always a last resort, because the best outcome always should be keeping them with their family. The sad reality is that it is not always possible, and more often than not we see situations where children are placed in highly dangerous and risky situations. In those circumstances, this government will act to keep those children safe every time.

This budget invests an additional $10m into out-of-home care so those placements can ensure that children who are brought into care will be supported and safe. Foster carers and kinship carers—the families who open their doors to these children, take them in and keep them safe—deserve to be supported, as do the service providers who provide highly intensive support for those children who need it.

There is not just the $10m we have invested; we have also invested $49.4m in family support and $24m in child protection so we can get in early and help parents build the skills and support they need so we do not have to take children away and need the out-of-home care support system.

We will back families, just as we are backing the people who put up their hands and say that they are willing to help those kids when they need them, because every child matters and deserves to be safe. This budget speaks to the Finocchiaro CLP government's commitment to keep children in the Territory safe and protected.

We are making inroads. This current financial year we have reduced the number of children in out-of-home care, which is a fantastic achievement, and we truly hope those numbers continue to decrease. In the event we need to do more, we have investment in our budget to look after those children, deliver a safer environment and work with them to keep those families together and connected into the future. This is what our government is about: backing our community and keeping all Territorians safe and protected.

Alice Springs Infrastructure Projects

Ms UIBO to TREASURER

Alice Springs has seen its pipeline of infrastructure works gutted and projects cut with no new major investment to replace the jobs lost after you and your CLP team walked away from Alice Springs, in particular the nationally significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Gallery of Australia. Central Australians are being left behind while opportunities disappear and confidence in the local economy takes a hit. Why have you abandoned your home of Central Australia? Will you apologise to the people of Alice Springs for failing to back jobs and investment in the Centralian region?

Mr Young: Good question.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, again the Member for Daly starts interjecting before I am even on my feet. He is doing pretty well.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; I did not interject. I was sitting there. I ask him to retract.

Madam SPEAKER: No.

Mr Young: I did not interject at all.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, please.

Mr Young: You cannot just make it up.

Madam SPEAKER: Do not argue with me. Take your seat. I heard you say something across the Chamber.

Mr Young: I did not. I have not said anything.

Mr Brown: He simply said, 'Good question'.

Madam SPEAKER: If you continue to argue with me, you will spend an hour outside the Chamber, Member for Daly. No more interjections.

Mr YAN: There is nothing I like better than talking about Alice Springs and infrastructure projects. Let us talk about the gallery. Okay, $160m—$80m from us and $80m from the feds. When we came to government, we found out it would cost in excess of $350m. Where would the money come from?

We did the work to rescope the gallery to fit within the budget that we had, because I cannot in good conscience go out and spend that much money on a project like that. We would have to borrow the money. We rescoped the project and came in with a plan for a gallery that would fit on the space. We managed to keep Anzac Oval, which is a nice green space for the community.

The federal Member for Lingiari did not like the plans. That effectively knocked it all on the head. He went to our federal counterpart and said, 'I do not like it. Do not invest in it.' There was only one conclusion to that story. The simple conclusion was we did not proceed with the gallery.

We kept Anzac Oval. Happy days.

In the years they were in government, those opposite did not invest a lot of money in our community. We got an upgrade to the women's shelter, which was much needed, and we got a car park.

We have done a project in conjunction with the town council for a new home for DCA. We have invested in the library in Central Australia, alongside the town council. The Gillen Oval multi-sport precinct will go out to tender very soon. We will see more green areas for our community and more sports opportunities for our kids and families. Lights are going up at Jim McConville Oval—the Member for Braitling was out there the other day. That goes along with the multi-sport precinct in that area.

There is the Alice Springs Multicultural Centre. Labor promised a bit of money to maybe design something, but we went a bit better than that. We stumped up the money to build a multicultural centre for our ever-growing multicultural community, who were asking for this for years, and we are delivering on it. That will go out to tender in the coming months.

It is pretty rich for the Leader of the Opposition to say that there are no projects going on in Alice Springs. I need another hour to talk about the road projects, but they are just some of the things that are happening in town.

Budget 2026–27 – Health Investment

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for HEALTH

A strong health system plays an important part in ensuring we can keep our unique Territory lifestyle. This budget is about putting money where it is needed most and making everyday life easier. Territorians work hard and deserve a good-quality life. They expect a health system that is strong, reliable and can meet demands across the Wanguri electorate and the Territory.

This budget is staying focused on what matters, delivering better services and easing pressure on our families. This includes investment in our health system. Can you highlight how the CLP government's investments in this year's Health budget will help deliver better healthcare, greater certainty and a healthier Territory lifestyle for all Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Wanguri is keen to hear about the Health budget. It delivers a record $2.56bn investment in NT Health because Territorians deserve a health system that is stronger, more reliable and better equipped to meet demand.

In our year of action, certainty and security the Finocchiaro CLP government is investing in practical measures that will make a real difference on the front line. We are delivering more beds and upgrading health equipment in this record budget to ease pressure and improve care for Territorians.

The budget includes:

- $18.3m to open and operate the new 32-bed multipurpose ward at Royal Darwin Hospital
- a new 24-bed mental health inpatient unit, progressing for delivery later this year
- $10m for new hospital equipment, including a CT scanner in Tennant Creek, which we have been pushing for a long time but Labor failed to deliver
- a $10m boost for St John Ambulance to support immediate operations
- 150 duress alarms for emergency department staff
- $500,000 to improve air conditioning at Royal Darwin Hospital.

These investments deliver more capacity, better care and safer working environments. The new 32-bed multipurpose ward will support bariatric, renal and general patients, helping to ease pressure across the hospital system and improve patient flow. The new mental health unit will strengthen acute mental health care in the Top End, and that is exactly the kind of practical investment needed to reduce pressure on emergency departments and improve outcomes for patients.

We are also investing in regional health services. That new equipment funding includes the CT scanner for Tennant Creek because Territorians outside of Darwin and Palmerston deserve better access to healthcare closer to home.

Earlier this year the Chief Minister signed the National Health Reform Agreement for the Northern Territory, securing an uplift of $152m in 2026 towards running our hospitals.

Our government is focused on restoring our Territory lifestyle, and a strong health system is central to that. When Territorians know they can access care when they need it, when staff have better facilities and when hospitals have more capacity, that creates confidence across our community.

In this record budget we are delivering more nurses, beds and equipment.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I ask that any further questions be placed on the Written Question Paper.

PAPERS TABLED

Opposition Portfolio Responsibilities

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table an updated shadow ministry list.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, the shadow ministry for our Labor opposition team will include me, the Member for Arnhem, as shadow Treasurer; shadow minister for Cost of Living; Defence NT; Police; Fire and Emergency Services; Air Connectivity; Trade, Business and Asian Relations; Mining and Energy; Advanced Manufacturing; Women and Equality; and Territory Coordinator.

The Member for Daly, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, will be shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Multicultural Affairs; Public Service, Environment; Parks and Wildlife; Agriculture and Fisheries; Water Resources; Recreational Fishing and Hunting; Arts and Creative Economy; and Events and Festivals.

The Member for Gwoja will be the shadow Attorney-General; shadow minister for Health; Mental Health; Disability; Prevention of Domestic Violence; Justice and Corrections; Children and Families; Child Protection; Seniors and Aged Care; and Carers.

The Member for Arafura will be the shadow minister for Education and Training; Early Education; Workforce Development; International Education, Migration and Population; Corporate and Digital Development; Veterans; Young Territorians; People, Sport and Culture; and Volunteers.

The Member for Nightcliff will be the shadow minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Housing Construction; Tourism and Hospitality; Logistics and Infrastructure; Lands and Planning; Climate Change and Renewables; Essential Services; Community Safety; Alcohol Policy; and Racing.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – Inquiry into the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legislative Scrutiny Committee report on the inquiry into Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of the proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the report was sent to the Speaker and made public on 30 April 2026.

This report detailed the committee's findings regarding its consideration of the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026. Amending the *Firearms Act 1977*, the Bill seeks to implement specific reform proposal 5A of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce's Saying 'Yes' to Business report, which recommended the Northern Territory government, as part of implementing the national firearms register, work with industry to identify options to allow renewal of commercial firearm licences.

The committee received eight written submissions to its inquiry. The committee also held a public briefing in relation to the Bill, attended by representatives of the Northern Territory Police Force.

All submissions were generally supportive of the policy intent of the Bill. Some concerns were raised and clarification was sought in relation to:

- safeguards on certain powers given to the Commissioner of Police
- operational matters relating to licences continuing to be in force beyond their expiry
- operational matters concerning the newly inserted offence provisions relating to digital blueprint from manufacturer of firearms

- guidance available to firearm dealers for the sale of ammunition to interstate licence holders

- guidance available on the Bill's transitional matters.

Following examination of the Bill, the committee is of the view that the Assembly should pass the Bill without amendment. However, the committee makes several recommendations to amend the Bill's explanatory statement to ensure the issues raised in submissions are appropriately addressed and explanatory materials are detailed and accurate.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those who made submissions to the inquiry. The committee also thanks the Northern Territory Police Force members who attended the public briefings and provided responses to the committee's written questions. Finally, I thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to legislative scrutiny.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report – Inquiry into the Heritage Amendment Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legislative Scrutiny Committee report on the inquiry into the Heritage Amendment Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of the proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the report was sent to the Speaker and made public on 30 April 2026.

This report details the committee's findings regarding its examination of the Heritage Amendment Bill 2026. Amending the *Heritage Act 2011*, the Bill seeks to improve clarity, procedural fairness and confidence in the Territory's heritage system.

The committee received 10 submissions to its inquiry, all of which were generally supportive of the policy intent of the Bill. However, concerns were raised in relation to several of the proposed amendments as currently drafted. Clarification was also sought regarding the intended operation of some clauses and a number of the submissions put forward suggestions as to how the Bill might be improved.

Following its examination of the Bill and consideration of the evidence received, the committee has recommended that the Assembly pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in recommendations 2 and 3.

Submitters raised concerns in relation to a new power for the minister to delegate any of their powers and functions under the *Heritage Act* to a person other than the Heritage Council or a member of the Heritage Council. To ensure the minister's powers are appropriately delegated, the committee considered that the Bill should be amended to require the delegate to be suitably qualified and an experienced person.

To clarify its intention, the committee further recommended the Bill be amended to expressly state the timeframe for a suite of submissions during public consultation on the heritage significance of a place or object may be extended beyond 28 days.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those who provided submissions to the committee's inquiry. The committee also thanks the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment for its briefing to the committee and for providing advice regarding issues raised in submissions. I also thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to the legislative review process.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report –
Inquiry into the Mineral Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the report from the Legislative Scrutiny Committee's report on the inquiry into the Mineral Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the report was sent to the Speaker and was made public on 30 April 2026.

This report details the committee's findings regarding its consideration of the Mineral Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2026. Amending the *Mineral Titles Act 2010*, the Mineral Titles Regulations 2011, the *Environment Protection Act 2019* and the Environment Protection Regulations 2020, the Bill seeks to

introduce four new mineral leases, create a fossicking permit for recreational fossicking and streamline the mineral lease regulatory framework.

The committee received nine written submissions to its inquiry and held a public briefing on the Bill from the Department of Mining and Energy. Support for the Bill was split between stakeholders. However, following careful consideration of the Bill and the advice from the Department of Mining and Energy regarding the concerns of the stakeholders, the committee is of the view that the Assembly should pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in the recommendations.

Advice from the department provided the committee clarity in relation to stakeholder concerns regarding the interaction of the Bill with other legislation, including the *Aboriginal Land Act 1978*, the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993*. The committee is satisfied by the department's advice that the proposed mineral leases for small-scale mining, tourist fossicking and fossicking will be subject to the right to negotiate under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

Additionally, the committee was assured that part two of the *Aboriginal Land Act 1978* provides an appropriate mechanism for access to Aboriginal land for the purposes of preliminary exploration and fossicking. Further, the committee heard satisfactory advice that the protections of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* will continue to apply to authorise activities by title holders.

The committee's recommendations seek to address issues of regulatory clarity raised by stakeholders, identified by the committee. Some of these issues are addressed by recommendations that the explanatory statement be amended to more clearly explain the new mineral leases for small-scale mining, tourist fossicking and fossicking, bulk sampling application and approval processes and processing of materials by mechanical and non-mechanical means.

Additionally, the committee recommends amendments to the Bill as set out in recommendations 8 to 15. These include the removal of the same title holder restrictions in proposed section 57, a reduction in the number of mineral exploration licences necessary to be eligible for an exploration project area in proposed regulation 80, and typographical amendments to rectify drafting errors in the Bill.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those who made those submissions to the inquiry. The committee also thanks the Department of Mining and Energy, which briefed the committee on the Bill and provided comprehensive responses to the written questions. I also thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to legislative scrutiny.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report –
Inquiry into the Pipelines and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Industry Development) Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legislative Scrutiny Committee report on the inquiry into the Pipelines and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Industry Development) Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of the proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the report was sent to the Speaker and made public on 30 April 2026.

This report details the committee's findings regarding its examination of the Pipelines and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Industry Development) Bill 2026.

Amending the *Petroleum Act 1984*, *Energy Pipelines Act 1981* and *Petroleum Submerged Lands Act 1981*, the Bill seeks to promote and enable industry development in key onshore gas projects in the Beetaloo Sub-basin and support and facilitate broader carbon capture and storage initiatives by allowing carbon dioxide to be transmitted through pipelines in the Northern Territory to offshore areas for permanent storage in greenhouse gas storage locations within Commonwealth waters.

To support these objectives, the Bill introduces a new compliance framework, including provisions for the appointment of inspectors with expanded powers, such as using reasonable force, as well as powers for the chief executive officer to issue compliance directions and stop-work notices and to delegate these powers to a person.

Following its examination of the Bill, the committee's view is that the Assembly should pass the Bill, subject to amendments in the Bill and the explanatory statement. In particular, the committee considers it essential that inspectors possess appropriate skills, training and experience, and that the scope of their powers is

clearly defined. While recognising the need for flexibility in appointments, the committee recommends that the explanatory statement be amended to provide greater detail regarding qualifications required for the inspectors and to clarify that any use of force is limited to reasonable force against things, not persons.

The committee also examined provisions enabling the delegation of significant administrative powers by the chief executive officer and the minister. Whilst acknowledging that such delegations are necessary for administrative efficiency, the committee recommends that the Bill be amended to ensure that these powers may be delegated only to suitably qualified and experienced persons.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those who made submissions to the inquiry. The committee also thanks the Department of Mining and Energy, which briefed the committee on the Bill and provided comprehensive responses to the questions. I thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to the legislative review process.

I commend this report to the Assembly.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report –
Inquiry into the Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legislative Scrutiny Committee report on the inquiry into the Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of the proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the report was sent to the Speaker and made public on 30 April 2026.

This report details the committee's findings regarding the Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2026.

The Bill amends the *Local Court (Criminal Procedure) Act 1928* and other related justice legislation to commence reforms to streamline criminal matters within the Local Court. Key amendments include providing for greater use of audiovisual links for witnesses and detained defendants, creating a presumption of joinder for domestic violence matters to be heard together, and providing police flexibility to grant or refuse bail when a person is rested on a warrant.

The committee received six written submissions to its inquiry. Whilst submitters generally supported the passage of the Bill, the committee received some submissions that raised concerns about the expanded use of audiovisual link. These concerns related to the adequacy of existing audiovisual link facilities and the potential impact the expanded use of audiovisual may have on certain detained defendants, including those with communication difficulties.

Following its examination of the Bill, the committee's view is that the Assembly should pass the Bill without amendment. However, the committee recommends that a post-implementation review be conducted after 12 months to assess the impact of proposed section 49EB on detained defendants with communication difficulties, and the adequacy of necessary facilities to support the effective use of audiovisual link.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those that made submissions to the inquiry. The committee also thanks the Attorney-General's Department, which briefed the committee on the Bill and provided comprehensive responses to written questions. I thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to the legislative review process.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report –
Inquiry into the Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legislative Scrutiny Committee report on the inquiry into the Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4) the report was sent to the Speaker and made public on 30 April 2026.

This report details the committee's findings regarding the consideration of the Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026. Amending the *Liquor Act 2019*, Liquor Regulations 2019 and the *Liquor Commission Act 2018*, the Bill seeks to implement specific reform proposals outlined in the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce's Saying 'Yes' to Business report to improve regulatory efficiency in the liquor licensing system while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

The committee received 11 written submissions to its inquiry. The committee held a public briefing in relation to the Bill attended by the Department of Tourism and Hospitality. The committee received mixed views, with four submissions supporting passage of the Bill in full or with proposed amendments. The remaining seven submissions highlighted concerns or did not support passage of the Bill.

Submitter concerns related mainly to the newly introduced low-risk liquor application framework which exempts low-risk applications from the requirement to meet the public interest and community impact requirements of the *Liquor Act 2019*, and exempts applicants from the Act's public notice requirements. Several submissions raised concerns that the exclusions afforded to low-risk applications could increase alcohol harm.

Following its examination of the Bill and evidence presented, the committee's view is that the Assembly should pass the Bill without amendment. However, to address stakeholder concerns, the committee recommends that post-implementation reviews be conducted within 24 months of commencement to assess the impacts of the low-risk application framework on key stakeholders and the community, and the operation of a fit and proper person test.

The committee also recommended the Bill's explanatory statement be amended to ensure it is sufficiently detailed and accurate and additional guidance is published on factors the Director of Liquor Licensing may consider in determining whether to progress an application as low-risk to ensure there is consistency and transparency in decision-making.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those who made submissions to the inquiry. The committee thanks the department staff who attended the public hearing and provided responses to the committee's written questions. I thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to legislative scrutiny.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

Legislative Scrutiny Committee Report –
Inquiry into the Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2026

Mrs CARLSON (Chair of Legislative Scrutiny Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Legislative Scrutiny Committee report on the inquiry into the Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2026 and the associated minutes of proceedings. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the report was sent to the Speaker and made public on 30 April 2026.

This report details the committee's findings regarding its examination of the Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2026.

Amending the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024*, the Racing and Wagering Regulations 2024 and the *Associations Act 2003*, the Bill seeks to shift racing responsibilities from the Northern Territory Racing and Wagering Commission to the Director of Racing and Wagering, reform the governance of racing in the Northern Territory, and enhance the integrity of the Northern Territory Wagering Commission through strengthened conflict of interest requirements for members.

The committee received six written submission to its inquiry. The committee also received a public briefing on the Bill from the Department of Tourism and Hospitality. The intent of the Bill was broadly supported by stakeholders, although most stakeholders also recommended further amendments to the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024*.

Following careful consideration of the Bill and advice from the Department of Tourism and Hospitality regarding the concerns of stakeholders, the committee's view is that the Assembly should pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in the recommendations.

The committee's recommended amendments to the Bill seeks to further progress one of the aims of the Bill to reform the governance arrangements of racing and wagering in the Northern Territory to enhance independence, accountability and public trust. These include enhancing the harm-minimisation provisions of the Act by recommending:

1. that the Director of Racing and Wagering be empowered to direct racecourse licence holders to undertake consumer protection and harm-minimisation measures as the Northern Territory Racing and Wagering Commission is currently empowered to in the Act

2. that the Wagering Commission be provided a consumer protection and harm-minimisation function to align with the purpose of the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024*.

The committee also recommends an amendment to the Bill to enhance the conflict of interest provisions for members of the Wagering Commission by legislating a prohibition on commission members from wagering on races in the Territory, which is currently prohibited by the Northern Territory Racing and Wagering Commission Code of Conduct.

The committee further recommends an amendment to require delegations of the Wagering Commission's powers and functions to be made in writing.

The committee also recommended that the timeframe in which complainants must lodge complaints with the director and commission be extended from 60 days after the person became aware of the matter, giving rise to the complaint to two years, and that the director and commission should have the discretion to accept late complaints made past the two-year timeframe.

Additionally, several areas were identified by the committee that it considers should be reviewed in future, and therefore recommended they be considered in the policy review required under section 304 of the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024*. These are consideration of further enhancements of the Wagering Commission conflict of interest integrity measures and the alignment of penalties under the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024* with other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those who made submissions to the inquiry. The committee also thanks the Department Tourism and Hospitality, which briefed the committee on the Bill and provided responses to written questions. I thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to legislative scrutiny.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

APPROPRIATION (2026–2027) BILL
Serial 63
and
TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 64

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bills be now read a second time.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the 2026–27 Territory budget, a budget for the everyday Territorian because it makes their life better. I thank the Treasurer and the team for all their work in pulling this together. It is our second budget, and it delivers phase 2 of our plan to reduce crime, rebuild the Territory economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle. It builds on the work we did last year to turn the Territory around and move forward in the right direction, after nearly a decade of a train-wreck Labor government destroying the Territory.

This budget for the everyday Territorian matters because it delivers on what the everyday Territorian expects of a government that is listening to their concerns and taking decisive action. We have a budget that not only delivers a record spend on law and order at $1.73bn and significant reductions in debt—an 18% cut to the debt trajectory—but also increases the front line, delivers record cashed infrastructure investments across the Northern Territory, supports people to have better access to healthcare and education, and delivers our plan to grow the Territory in our year of growth, certainty and security.

This budget is about building confidence and showing Territorians that we will deliver on our promises to them, not take a backward step in doing what we know is right to turn the Territory around.

There is no question that the state of the Territory we inherited just 18 months ago was a mess. It was a Territory that was being destroyed by a government at the time that had lost its way and was out of its depth. It was a train wreck.

Because we have a vision and a plan for the Territory to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle, what we have done in 18 months is remarkable. It puts the Territory on a better footing moving forward so we can continue to execute our plan, as we promised Territorians we would. That is what this budget does, representing the second phase.

In the first budget last year we took the time to clean up Labor's mess, including all the funding cliffs on projects and programs that were unfunded. We dealt with the blowouts last year—such as the $400m on the ship lift—that were conveniently not added into the budget books under Labor, even though they knew the cost.

Ironically, in Question Time there was a question about law and justice groups. Again, there was no funding for them. There was a laundry list of worthless, hollow, empty promises made by the previous Labor government that did not have a single dollar to their name. Last year we tidied that up.

There is now an infrastructure program with significant cash, which means we can spend the money attached to it for the life of that project. That is a vast and distinct difference between us and the previous government.

Let us go back to talking about vision for a moment, because we were clear in 2024 about our commitment to the community to make the Territory the most competitive place to live, work, visit and invest by delivering a reduction in crime, growing our economy and restoring our lifestyle, all three of which had been eroded, if not destroyed, by Labor.

That vision makes us clear-eyed about how we must move forward in order to achieve that. It starts with safer streets and communities, which is why our record law and order investment of $1.5bn last year was so important. That delivered a 10.2% reduction in the number of victims Territory-wide, representing 2,700 Territorians who did not become a victim of crime like they would have under Labor. That focus on law and order, supporting the efficiency of our courts and police, and investing in Corrections has meant widespread reductions in crime Territory-wide, category-wide.

There is much more work to do, but the result we delivered in such a small amount of time has paved the way for our economy to grow. That was on top of all the work we have done on the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce, 48 recommendations of which will be fully implemented by June this year. It included all the work on implementing a nation-leading Territory Coordinator legislation, which is bearing fruit now; all the work we did to spend taxpayers' money in the right place, defunding the activists to genuinely protect our environment—not the activism that was pulling back our industries; and focusing on the five key areas that continue to build the Territory's gas, energy security, Defence, agriculture, mining and tourism.

We have focused our entire public sector on delivering for Territorians where it matters the most. That means we have more money to invest in our lifestyle. It means we are focused on three key components to living in the Territory, and it makes it easy to deliver a budget like this, which is not only responsible and sensible, but it is strategic and delivers enormous wins for the community of Territorians who elected us to deliver for them while reining in Labor's reckless spending.

Labor was adding $1bn a year to the credit card. What have we got to show for it? We do not have anything to show for it. We had record crime, people leaving in droves, an economy in freefall and more problems than you can poke a stick at. In just 18 months we have curved that debt trajectory, completely wound it back, knocking off $2bn on the projected debt while growing our frontline services with more police, teachers, nurses and Corrections officers and greater efficiency in the public sector. The public sector now has a purpose.

Our staff do an amazing job, and we could not be delivering the wins for Territorians without them. They have leadership now. They have a determined, focused government that is not trying to be all things to all people. This is about delivering on the promises we took to the election, making sure the vision of being the most competitive place to live, work, visit and invest is front of mind every day through our core pillars of reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. That is how we were delivering for Territorians yesterday; it is how we are delivering for them today and is how we will deliver for them tomorrow.

When the budget is under control, when the spending is going where it matters the most, it means we have more money and more opportunity to leverage the greatest amount of change to make people's lives better. That is exactly what we are intending to do and what we have been doing.

There are 100 more police officers on Territory streets today than under Labor, and 80 more nurses. This budget will put in another 150 constables, 100 police public safety officers in the next financial year—we already have a squad in place—and another 150 Corrections officers.

We are on track to support frontline workers—the people who are supporting us to deliver the Territory of tomorrow, which Territorians voted for, expect and deserve. By increasing our frontline workforce by more

than 6%, reining in the spending and delivering on the infrastructure that we have, that is a credit to the team. This budget doubles down and reinforces that, making sure we are staying the course.

Going into the new year, the greatest questions people were asking me and my team were about worries that we might quiver at the work we had done and cave to the activists and noisy people who do not care about a better Territory but care about their self-interests and self-serving politics.

We stood up in January and said that this year is about staying the course. This year is about continuing to see through the promises we made in 2024, delivering those promises in 2025, and 2026 being a year when that growth happens as we continue to deliver. That is what this budget does.

Our economy has moved from the bottom of the national economic ranking for the first time in a decade. We are now sitting fourth; the Business Council of Australia in its Regulation Rumble said that we are the third best place in the country to do business.

Our tourism and cruise numbers are through the roof. People have optimism and hope again and are investing. In today's paper we see another proponent looking to complete a high-rise project in the CBD, and we have had the construction by the Athanasiou Group of apartments in the CBD. That is the first time in a long time where the private sector is putting its money back into the Territory.

There is excitement and optimism because there is a government at the helm making sure the vision to be the most competitive place to live, work, visit and invest is front of mind for us all. Everything we do as a team, as the government and as a public sector is funnelled through those three lenses. I often say that if you are not reducing crime, rebuilding the economy or restoring our lifestyle, you are not doing your job because everyone's job is one of those three things, and that is why we have results. We are not going down rabbit warrens and listening to the activists; we are delivering on what the community put us here to do deliberately, strategically and specifically.

As Police minister I am proud to lead yet another record Police budget, increasing our budget this year by another $46m. That is because we are backing the people we ask to put on the blue uniform every day and leave their families to protect the families of Territorians. We are backing them with the funding to make sure they have the best resources; the ability to recruit the 150 new officers that we will see over the next 12 months; and the ability to be in remote communities where they have a house, a police station and the gear they need to continue to provide the all-important proactive policing support Territory wide.

The results speak for themselves: house break-ins are down by 23%; commercial break-ins are down by 26%; motor vehicle theft is down by 16%; and assaults are down by 8%. I cannot say enough times that domestic violence is down by 9%; it went up by 82% under the previous Labor government. Is it all still too high? Absolutely. Are we putting a dent in it? You had better believe it.

This reinforces the fact that Labor chronically failed. The trainwreck that was the previous Labor government crashed and burned, and it took Territorians with them. We will not let the Territory trod that path again, because people deserve better. That is what a $1.73bn law and order budget does; it delivers for the everyday Territorian to make their life better because that is what they deserve.

This budget also fully funds the 212 police public safety officers we will have on completion of that training. This is huge. It sets a target, sets a program and budgets for it, which means Territorians can have great confidence that we believe in this significant policing reform. This will be a game changer for how our police force operates and how we manage antisocial behaviour in public housing, on public transport, in our streets, at community events and at public places.

We are proud to be delivering this reform, but it is not just talk, because the days of talk are over. All Labor ever did was talk and talk and talk at people. You might notice that in our budget there was no laundry list of fictitious projects on a random list that we created. We are talking about what we are delivering for the community. If this was a Labor budget—I think everyone has forgotten what they used to be like—you would have had a Labor Treasurer stand up and pretend that they were delivering any number of private sector projects from mining through to gas, up and down the track, and pretending they would deliver it. You do not get that from us, because this is about practical realities and creating the environment for the private sector to thrive. That is what a government should do.

People want to make their own choices for their family and their business, and our job is to create the best environment for them to make those decisions. When that environment is right, people will take the lead.

No-one needs a government telling them how to live their lives, when they should do something or how they should run their business.

The best thing any government can do is get out of the way, and that is what we are doing. Our Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce is just one of many initiatives we took last year. The removal of third-party merits review was another. This budget continues that important work.

Infrastructure investment is a significant economic driver in the Territory, and this budget reinforces that, not just through my Police budget which has $176m in facilities, upgrades, repairs and new police stations, but across all the portfolios, whether it is tourism or parks. It is investing in the infrastructure that matters most to locals and the tourists who visit. As they move through this budget over days and weeks, people will see that there is money going out the door, deliberately focused on those three priorities that deliver for local contractors and people living here, and which support the people who want to visit or move here.

On the law and order front, our Corrections Infrastructure Master Plan has been an incredibly important roadmap for us to ensure we have the capacity to manage prisoner numbers, which Labor abandoned in our Corrections system. This includes funding for the 198-bed work camp in Katherine and the 192-bed work camp at Holtze. That is 390 new beds budgeted this year. There is also $15m to commence the procurement processes for a brand-new men's and women's prison.

That is on top of the spend we are doing to tackle the root causes of crime, which is important. Circuit Breaker has been a terrific program. This year's budget dedicates $8.3m to Circuit Breaker for early intervention in young people's lives who are at risk of entering the justice system, wrapping support around them and their families with one-on-one engagement, including safe accommodation if required and family responsibility agreements, which we will legislate this year to make enforceable. This is another commitment to Territorians to hold parents accountable.

Our Rebuilding the Economy strategy is an important roadmap for us as a government. It allows the private sector to understand what our targets are and where we are going. It plays to those natural strengths in energy, Defence, agriculture, mining and tourism.

We are focused very much this year on the Beetaloo. By the end of the year, Territory businesses and homes will be powered by Territory gas from the Beetaloo. This is a 4,000-kilometre resource that will not be wasted; Territorians will benefit. A lot of the investment in the budget is to support the continued development and growth of that important resource.

The Northern Marine Complex is another highly sophisticated and strategic project in the Territory, bringing in the ship lift and all the land around it into a marine precinct that will deliver for local businesses. It will allow us to secure Defence and private sector investment in the maritime industry. It will allow businesses to develop and grow by sustaining and maintaining vessels in the Territory. We are uniquely positioned.

By investing and doubling down on that project, which had been a failure for 10 years under the previous government, we will show Territorians how to turn significant public investment into something that delivers a genuine benefit in economic growth and our stronghold as a region. We are excited about the ship lift—which is being built now—and continuing the important planning and preparation for the entire precinct around it. An additional $30m in this year's budget is included for the ship lift precinct alone.

Defence is a highly critical component of our economy. It represents about 10% of GSP and continues to be a core focus. NT Defence Week was just last week. It was exceptionally well attended and fruitful. We continue to ensure that the Defence Force understands that the Territory is a good place to do business, that we can facilitate the investments required by Defence, and that our strategic location and willingness to work with the ADF and our allied partners is second to none.

Last week we launched our Defence strategic plan which was put together by my new Defence Industry Council, meaning that the Northern Territory Government and industry speak with one voice on all matters Defence and all advocacy for Defence in the Territory. We are focused on maritime sustainment, the Army's littoral pivot that it is making, northern theatre logistics, northern basing, rangers, innovation, and tests and evaluation of weapons and other systems.

We continue to be looking at how we grow our population by securing the Territory as a competitive, safe place to live, work, visit and invest. I keep drawing us back to that point because when the Territory is competitive on those platforms, the Territory grows.

Our HomeGrown Territory grants have done an incredible job in not only spinning $200m through our economy with local construction, but also bringing people into home ownership and allowing them to put down roots and stay for the long haul. I was talking at Defence Week to high-level officials about this grant program and how people across this country are struggling to get into home ownership, yet in the Territory we will give you $50,000 to build your home. We will give you $30,000 if you have already owned a home to build another one because we believe so much in the future of this place.

We want Australians and migrants to the Territory to make the most of that opportunity and raise their families to be the next generation of Territorians who will continue to carry the flame. We are proud that 1,400 grants have been delivered.

That brings me to land release. A critical part of growing the Territory and making sure that housing remains affordable is our land release program. Holtze, Farrar West and all the work we are doing in the regions are important. We have Northcrest, Lee Point, Zuccoli, Durack Heights—any number of projects on the go, delivering land to market. We must continue that critical work so we can get as many people into home ownership as possible.

Our taxation reform has been a critical part of why we have made the Territory a competitive place to live, work, visit and invest. We put more money back into the pockets of small and medium business, which are better off investing in their business than paying tax to the Territory. Our massive payroll tax cuts last year have well and truly paid themselves off. It has gone berserk; it has been fantastic.

To continue that important taxation reform, we are increasing tax for those big, multinational businesses that have over $100m in payroll nationwide. They will be going from 5% to 6%, which is more money in Territorians' pockets and more exciting things we can do here as a Territory supporting Territorians whilst we give incredibly important relief to the local Territory businesses which need it most—again, flagging how strong our priorities are to grow our own.

This budget delivers on healthcare on the back of the $1bn deal I did with the Prime Minister after months and months of negotiating. That was signed in January and now we have a record $2.62bn investment in health services Territory-wide, which is an important investment.

There is a record education budget with $1.73bn that supports government schools, non-government schools, education and training, higher education, TAFE and opportunities no matter what end of the education spectrum people are on. We are giving Territorians the opportunity to upskill and fulfil their dreams and aspirations for the future.

There is a $110m investment—another election commitment—to deliver the new secondary special education centre at the Rosebery campus at Palmerston, supporting people in that community and the rural area with greater opportunity in educational investment for their children.

The $15m of new parks infrastructure is important because it allows us to refresh what Labor left to wither on the vine: signage that is so faded you cannot read it and a lack of hand rails, road signage and general parks infrastructure like toilets and barbecues—the simple things. It is not asking too much that when you rock up to Buley Rockhole, it might be nice to put a few snags on the barbie.

This government is creating real, meaningful change for people where they need it and want it. It does not have to be a huge, shiny, fictitious project like Labor would have you believe. Sometimes the most meaningful thing you can do is a relatively small thing, but it makes a big difference to people's lives. That $15m will go a long way in our parks infrastructure.

Let us not forget our beautiful Silkwood, which we have now acquired. The sky is the limit with Silkwood, and we are excited.

Living in the Territory, people want access. Major events are a huge part of living here. We are so proud to have brought international cricket to the Territory after 20 years. We are doing it all over again, so there will be more international cricket. We just had the rugby league game with Dolphins and the Panthers. Phins up, but one point down—not so good. It was great, though.

This weekend we have Gold Coast Suns and St Kilda at TIO Stadium. We are backing all the events that people love the most as well as our fantastic sporting lifestyle.

On top of all of the substantial debt reduction, record spending, frontline growth of 6% and turning around our economy and law and order issues, we have also allocated $100m to a flood recovery fund so that we can invest in building back better. That is on top of the $30m we have also invested just to get things moving.

Mr PATEL: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move an extension of time for the Chief Minister.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: To be in such a position so early in the term, where we can make a commitment for $100m, shows the value of living within your means. No-one knows what is around the corner. We have already seen the impact of the global fuel crisis. Anything could happen at any time, and when a government is too stretched and everything is on the credit card, it leaves no room to move. Evidence of that is how Labor was paying public service wages on the credit card. Can you think of any business that could do that? You would be broke and your doors would be shut. You just cannot do that.

This year we have been fortunate, through our hard work, to get back in a better position where we are not having to put wages on the credit card. That $100m is a testament to our ability to make big decisions and investments where needed. We have already articulated how some of that money will roll out, and people Territory-wide will see it. This is not a Darwin-centric approach; we recognise the flooding in Alice Springs, the people at Murray Downs and in the Barkly, not to mention Katherine and the Big Rivers region through to the Daly, Palumpa, Jilkminggan and everywhere in between, as well as Darwin River.

We have seen it throughout this year, out to the Tiwis and Nhulunbuy, and all the communities impacted by floods and cyclones. That flood recovery fund money is important and significant to our future. I am very proud to be part of a team that is focused on making Territorians' lives better, which is why this budget is for the everyday Territorian. It not only delivers huge reductions in our debt and huge increases in our front line, but it speaks to the things that matter most and the people who matter most to us, and that is our community. By continuing to focus on reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our unique Territory lifestyle, we are spending Territory taxpayers' money wisely. Those are the things they asked us to spend money on.

This is a sensible, responsible budget that has the community at its heart, delivering on the things that people care most about. In doing that, we have delivered a budget that not only has record spends in police, health, education, infrastructure and Corrections but also has meaningful output on the ground and will make people's lives better.

I commend this budget to the Assembly and to the people of the Northern Territory, and I say to every Territorian, we have your back. You entrusted us to do an important job, and that is not lost on us. Every day each of us wakes up knowing what an honour and a privilege it is to serve. In doing so we take that responsibility seriously to deliver on our election commitments, the things that people told us they care the most about, and not to be distracted by those who seek to distract us. Over the last 18 months, we have shown exactly that: we will not be distracted.

Our community matters most to us above everything else. By protecting our community with law and order investments and pulling all the levers of government to rebuild our economy and investing lifestyle and liveability that Territorians deserve, we know that work has already turned the Territory around and will keep moving the Territory forward. The days of trainwrecks are over. The Labor government trainwreck—the fire has gone out. The fire engine has arrived and put out the fire. We now rebuild and move forward. This budget for the everyday Territorian makes their lives better, because it focuses on them.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I support the 2026–27 budget and congratulate the Treasurer on handing down a responsible, disciplined and forward-looking budget for the Northern Territory. This budget is for the everyday Territorian; the everyday person will benefit. It builds on the foundations of our first budget: making the community safer, growing the economy and protecting our Territory lifestyle.

This budget understands the times we are in today, recognising global pressures, rising costs and economic uncertainty. It is a budget that responds not with panic, not with reckless spending or pet projects, but with stability, certainty and a clear plan. This is a year for growth.

The theme for this year's budget is simple: securing the Territory; enabling growth; and delivering certainty. That is exactly what Territorians expect from the government. They expect governments to manage their money responsibly. They expect us to continue to clean up Labor's debt mess, and that is what we will do.

We are proud to reduce the debt growth by 18% while delivering significant growth to frontline workers of more than 6%. We have reduced debt growth from 22% down to 4%.

The Labor government members left the budget with funding glitches all over the place. The pet projects they banged on about were not funded. Over the eight years they held the financial controls, the net debt increased from $1.8bn to over $12bn. That means they were spending more than $1bn of taxpayers money every year, which they did not have. That is over $1m a day to repay the debt.

You can just imagine the programs we could deliver with $1m each day. Imagine the benefits to the children and the community, the programs we could deliver in the Corrections system and the parks we could rebuild. Imagine what we could do with over $1m every day. We cannot spend that money, because the Labor government racked up nearly $12bn of debt from $1.8m.

That is a crucial bit of history which those on the other side try to forget. They say, 'It's not our problem; you have to deal with the debt', but how did we get that debt? It went from roughly $1.8bn to roughly $12bn in eight years because the previous Labor government did not care and spent taxpayers' money recklessly. That is exactly what our Treasurer will not do. He will make sure we have a reasonable budget that is focused on growth, certainty and safety.

This is a practical budget for everyday Territorians, safer communities, better frontline services, targeted cost-of-living relief, properly funded infrastructure and disciplined financial management. It continues our commitment to restoring our Territory lifestyle by supporting communities, protecting recreation, improving services and helping families through difficult times.

We would like to do more, but we are left with this huge debt by the previous government of about $12bn, which we are repaying. Imagine what we could do with $1m extra every day. Imagine how many children we could help, how many prisoners who could go through more extensive rehabilitation, how many houses we could build, the parks in our regional towns that could be developed, how many swimming pools could be built. Imagine how much we could do with that money, but no, we are cleaning up Labor's debt mess.

As the Minister for Corrections, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Mining and Energy, I am proud to speak about the investments that go into my portfolios.

I will start with Corrections, which is reducing crime—our number one priority. We came to the election with that as the number one priority, and we continue to fight hard to make the Territory a safer place. A safer Territory requires a justice system that works, from police on the streets to courts and Corrections. The Attorney-General will talk about the good work she has done in the court system, speeding things up. This year was the first time we had more sentenced prisoners than on remand. That is because the courts are clearing up that backlog of mess.

In Corrections we continue that work. That is why this budget commits $525m for the Corrections 2026–27 budget, including major investment to modernise infrastructure, expand capacity and improve rehabilitation outcomes. Most importantly, it makes up part of a total of $1.73bn spent on law and order. Strong investment in the police, the courts and Corrections ensures that people have the resources they need to do their jobs properly to keep people, workers and the community safe.

For far too long our Corrections system suffered from underinvestment. We inherited ageing facilities under pressure, outdated infrastructure and growth in prisoner numbers. What did the previous Labor government do? Instead of investing in infrastructure, it put literally hundreds of people into the watch houses. Services like the rehabilitation program were limited. We stopped that. We put people into Corrections where they have access to rehabilitation, industry, training and healthcare to break the cycle of reoffending. We give them every opportunity not to end up back in detention and to learn skills to make themselves better and have a better chance of not reoffending.

I can give you an example. I was talking to an Aboriginal gentleman in Alice Springs. He would have been in his thirties. He did not understand what the alphabet was. The Labor government had been in power for 19 out of 23 years. During most of this man's adult life, he was cared for by the previous Labor government and did not even know what ABC was. That is a classic failure of the Labor government.

The Labor government said, 'We're here to support workers and Aboriginal people', yet there are examples after examples of the Labor government failing the people they said they protected.

They talk about being at one with the unions and supporting the unions, yet Corrections officers were understaffed and under-resourced. We have given more staff to the Corrections system. We have improved the prison operations. We are working hard to make sure that prison officers, just like everyone else, goes to work and comes home safely, where the previous Labor government failed them as they were short-staffed and working in facilities that were falling down.

There is an additional $250m that will drive the next stage of the Corrections infrastructure master plan. We are delivering expanded capacity and upgraded facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs. That plan is already delivering results. Since late 2024, stage 1 has delivered over 1,000 beds through upgraded and repurposed facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs. That means a system that is better equipped to meet the demands now and, importantly, into the future.

The budget also commits $15m for the process of the new men's and women's facilities at Holtze and to prepare for the closure of the Berrimah Correctional Centre. We took a commitment to the election that Holtze will be the precinct for the prison, and we are delivering on that promise to make sure these detention services will be at Holtze.

After a decade of non-investment by Labor, these ageing facilities were not up to the future needs of the growing prison population. I have seen reports that the population we have now has been predicted for many years. For Labor to say that it did not know, it is because of its hard-on-crime approach. Two things: I do not apologise for being hard on crime; and Labor knew where prisoner numbers were heading and chose not to do anything about it. Labor did not invest in infrastructure, rehabilitation or training. It put prisoners into watch houses, in a room with limited resources. We are working hard to inject money into infrastructure for the Corrections estate to ensure prisoners have the best chance of rehabilitation.

This budget includes $238m to establish two new prisoner work camps in Darwin and Katherine. That is practical reform and smart investment. This is about turning those offenders into valuable members of our community. The 198-bed Katherine work camp and 192-bed Holtze work camp will expand correctional capacity while providing real pathways to rehabilitation, work-readiness and reintegration into the community.

If people leave prison ready to work, contribute and rebuild their lives, that leads to a safer community. It goes back to our number one commitment to make the community safe. That is why this budget also provides an extra $1.2m for Ready to Work programs that help prisoners build practical skills and prepare for employment upon release. The Ready to Work programs would not have worked in the watch houses, where Labor dumped these people and forgot about them.

The Ready to Work program launched earlier this year aims to deliver 350 prisoner programs in its first year. There have already been 165 referrals, showing there is demand for rehabilitation and why these reforms matter.

The budget also provides $4.9m ongoing in alternative-to-custody programs in Alice Springs and Groote Eylandt. These programs provide structured pathways outside detention while maintaining community safety. They reduce pressure on facilities, support better outcomes and ensure that consequences are matched with accountability and rehabilitation.

As of 30 March there were 2,887 prisoners in custody, including 1,220 remand prisoners. There are also just over 1,700 adult offenders supervised in the community through monitoring devices. These are high numbers and they reflect the challenges we inherited. These numbers were predicted by the previous Labor government, which made a conscious choice to do nothing about it other than shoving people into watch houses.

We are taking action. Our Rehabilitation and Reintegration Framework, launched in November 2025, is already producing results. Program suitability assessments have increased by 987%. Intensive program completions are up by more than 100%. Psychoeducational program completions have increased by 337%. That is what reform looks like with real, measurable outcomes.

When the flood struck Katherine and surrounding regions, Corrections officers and the prisoner work parties stepped up to help the community recover. That also happened in Alice Springs. We had prisoner work parties putting back into the community when these natural disasters struck this year. We will continue to work on our reforms and invest in Corrections and rehabilitation to make the community safe.

I now move on to the Agriculture and Fisheries portfolio, which is one of the great strengths of the Northern Territory. From cattle to crops and fisheries exports, it creates jobs, drives our economy and

supports our way of life. This budget strengthens and protects that by investing an additional $1m per year in strengthening livestock biosecurity and supply chain integrity.

Biosecurity is a special word. We must ensure that the cattle, live export and boxed beef industries do not have these incursions. The H5 bird flu is all over the world, but is not in the Northern Territory yet; touch wood, we can keep it out. The incursion of those diseases into Australia could be devastating. We are doing our best to keep those incursions at bay, and if there is an incursion we know how to reduce the damage and contain the incursion. That funding will support four additional frontline livestock biosecurity officers, increasing the front line.

The Territory is Australia's front line when it comes to exotic pests and diseases. Strong biosecurity is not optional; it is essential. It protects herd health, market access, producers and jobs. This funding will support a dedicated traceability and compliance unit, digitisation of NT waybills, stronger livestock traceability systems, improved emergency animal disease preparedness and enhanced support for police to investigate livestock theft.

Our livestock industry is worth millions of dollars to the economy, not to mention to the jobs and way of life that it brings. We saw a record number of cattle export last year, and I was proud to stand with Minister Burgoyne to announce the expansion of the Berrimah Export Yards earlier this year. Protecting this industry is protecting Territory families, businesses and Territory communities. This budget also continues to support innovation and growth across agriculture. The Agricultural Value-Add Grant program awarded $258,000 to eight Territory businesses in round 2, leveraging more than $830,000 in total project investment. That means better processing, stronger supply chains and more value kept here in the Territory.

We are also supporting emergency opportunities. The Ord River Irrigation Expansion project into the Territory has the potential to unlock about 25,000 hectares of irrigated land. The Wildman agricultural development has potential to create jobs and strengthen long-term resilience across the Northern Territory. The cotton industry continues to build momentum, with more than 11,000 hectares planted in 2024–25.

Most Territorians know that I like to get out in the water and flick a line. Fishing is not just an industry; it is a part of who we are. It is the weekends with the family, time on the water with your mates, staying overnight in your boats, catching the elusive metrey or just having a relaxing time on the water. I can tell you from personal experience that there is nothing better than waking up on your boat with the sunrise, the water flat and the wind blowing, it is a great lifestyle.

Mr Kerle: With the Thermacell running.

Mr MALEY: There might be a few mosquitos out there, but that is why you have mosquito nets.

We are here to protect the way of life in the Territory, and this is just another way the CLP government is doing that. It is a competition between family members and friends of who can catch the biggest barra, and unfortunately, I think the Member for Goyder has beat me in how many fish he has caught compared with what I have caught in a lifetime—not that I am counting.

Tourism and recreation represent a key part of our Territory lifestyle. I am sure the minister for Tourism will speak about what tourism brings to the economy. That is why this budget invested an additional $4m over two years to maintain and strengthen the Northern Territory Fisheries Compliance Unit. This helps preserve fishing opportunities now and into the future. Since April 2025 the unit has conducted 247 patrols, including joint patrols with Aboriginal marine rangers. It has interacted with more than 2,400 Territorians and detected 174 offences. Tomorrow's fishing starts today. The unit has secured successful prosecutions of people illegally fishing; that is strong frontline action which protects fish stocks and our way of life.

I recently went out with the Fisheries Compliance Unit in their boats. They let me have a drive of the boat, cruising around the harbour and seeing what they do and how passionate they are about their job, fisheries, the Northern Territory and the lifestyle.

The Territory's seafood industry contributes more than $300m annually and supports around 2,500 jobs, proving that healthy fisheries matter to us economically and socially.

The budget also provides $2.5m over two years for the development and implementation of the golden snapper recovery plan. We have had a fish stock assessment, and we know golden snapper numbers are down in the greater Darwin region. We had a Have Your Say. This is a serious issue, but no decisions have been made about the fishery. We recently received more than 1,300 responses and now look forward to

working with stakeholders in community to look at the next steps. Protecting the Territory's lifestyle means protecting our natural assets to make it possible to live in the Northern Territory and have this lifestyle.

This budget also supports fishing infrastructure upgrades, including an all-abilities access platform at Corroboree boat ramp and Point Stuart toilet facilities, creating safer access and a better experience for more Territorians enjoying the Territory outdoors. The all-abilities access platforms are a great initiative. It is where you can pull your boat up on dry land, walk up a ramp or some steps, jump in the boat and then put it in the water. You do not have to walk down slippery boat ramps or pontoons that float. This allows more people to enjoy our lifestyle, allowing a better experience for people who want to enjoy the outdoors.

I will move to Mining and Energy. If we are serious about long-term growth in jobs investment, we must be serious about energy. Reliable and affordable energy underpins everything we do in our modern economy. Homes, businesses and industry need it. In uncertain global times, energy security matters more than ever. That is why this budget invests an additional $2.8m over the next two years to accelerate activity in the Beetaloo Sub-basin. The Beetaloo is the most significant economic opportunity in the nation. It has the potential to power Australia for up to 200 years.

At full scale, it could deliver up to $20bn to $30bn economic growth for the Territory for the coming decades. That means jobs, contracts, royalties, regional growth and stronger security. Gas out of the Beetaloo comes at about 2% carbon versus about 18% of other gas facilities across Australia and the world. That means if you were serious about saving and protecting the environment, you would want to get Beetaloo gas out at 2% versus somewhere with 18% carbon.

This budget backs the Beetaloo because we back Territory jobs and opportunity. This is about making sure Territorians are front and centre in the benefits and Territory gas will benefit the Territory. It will power our generators. People want to do their hair, charge their electric vehicle, turn the lights on, cook a meal and turn the air conditioning on. People want the street lights to work. The list goes on of what gas will do. I emphasise the 2% carbon, and the jobs.

We will continue to administer approvals and regulation that supports responsible development while maintaining strong environmental standards. The first gas is expected from the Beetaloo later this year. Tamboran Resources and Beetaloo Energy are working hard. We have had some significant weather events which made it difficult to get around the Northern Territory in general, whether it was to do with gas, cattle or agriculture.

This is real progress. That supply is coming online this year. There will be gas molecules sold to the Territory, powering the Territory this year.

This budget supports continuing gas production at Amadeus Basin, where Central Petroleum and the joint venture partners will commence drilling new production wells in July this year under a new gas sales agreement, delivering up to 12 terajoules until 2034. This gas will power the Northern Territory. These projects matter because the Northern Territory deserves affordable, reliable energy. We have made a commitment to have the cheapest and most reliable electricity possible. We are not hitting imaginary targets. We just want to make sure we have cheap and secure electricity and energy for Territorians.

This will affect power prices. It affects investment decision. Investors want to see government support for their industry. I make it clear that this CLP government supports the gas industry and will support whatever we can do to make that industry thrive in the Northern Territory.

We will not cut corners in relation to the environment. We will protect the environment. We will send a clear message that the Territory is open for business. We are open for the gas industry and want your investors, workers and families to come here and make the Territory home—the place I grew up in—where you can go fishing and enjoy the lifestyle, but we need to deal with the crime issue.

This government will invest $1.7m into Territory gas roads to make it easier to get around and make the supply chains work better. Local businesses are employed in the gas industry. I have been there; there is a local business in my electorate that I have known for a long time. Simmo and his team are out there doing the civil works. That is real money coming to Territory families, particularly in the rural area.

We are creating the right environment by cutting the red tape. We are providing certainty, ensuring projects can proceed efficiently and responsibly. This budget takes a steady, responsible approach while still investing where it counts most. We are reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our Territory lifestyle, and we will continue to do that.

We are dealing with the leftovers from the previous Labor government's reckless spending, having these pet projects. It put out a media release saying, 'We will fix this', but it was never funded and would never be done. Labor literally tried to govern by press release. We saw this happen. It put us into debt …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move that an extension of time be granted to the member. He sounds so excited about his budget, so let us hear more.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MALEY: I love the budget too.

As a government we need to spend money wisely. The government does not make money; we simply spend taxpayers' money. We need to do that wisely because Territorians put their trust and faith in the parliament to do that. Thanks to the Treasurer and the whole CLP team who worked hard, this budget is a sensible budget. It continues to invest and make the Territory grow, but not in a way that is wasteful and spends on pet projects.

There are so many projects, like the signs on the side of highway that tell you not to look at the signs and not to look at your phone. There is project after project. This is a budget that supports private sector growth rather than relying on unsustainable government spending driven by pet projects and flash-in-the-pan ideas.

We are focused on growing the economy without passing bigger problems onto the next government, unlike what the Labor government seemed to do. Maybe it was planning to lose the election; I do not know. Labor left the economy and the Territory in such bad shape that, two years later, we are still trying to fix the mess. I spoke about putting people in watch houses, cutting programs.

There is one program for Corrections, Back on Track. I think Labor spent about $35m, and about 35 young offenders went through that program. I am not even sure they successfully completed it. That was $1m per kid. We are cutting those pet projects and focusing on the big picture to make the Territory a safer place.

In my portfolios we are talking about safer communities and a stronger economy in agriculture and fisheries, the cattle and cotton industries, and across the Territory. We are talking about boxed beef; I have been to stations throughout the Northern Territory in this and my past life, and I have seen the difference in the cows and how passionate the people are on their farms in how they live and what they do. I have sat around the campfire on many a night with them and talked about it, and their families come up—younger kids living life on the land. I understand some of the challenges they face. This government is backing that, making roads and infrastructure better and making the community safe.

This budget talks about growth through mining and energy development. I do not want to talk about gas again and again, but it is crucial. If we do not have cheap, reliable energy, we will not have people coming to the Territory. While I am the Minister for Mining and Energy, I will focus hard on continuing to drive the Territory to be a better place, not just now but into the future.

We want to make sure the gas, cattle and fishing industries are so advanced that no matter when the next Labor government is—whoever that might be, the trainwreck that comes through—it cannot undo it. It is done, fixed and working and will continue to grow the Territory and make it a safer place. We are making sure the Territory lifestyle is locked in so my children's children can have the same lifestyle I did growing up, as did many people in this House.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, this budget builds on the work already started, where we are making communities safer, growing the economy, protecting the Territory lifestyle and backing Territorians. This budget is for everyday Territorians. It is about putting money where it is most needed, making everyday life easier and cleaning up Labor's debt mess. It focuses on safer streets, better services, easing pressure on families and getting costs back under control. Most importantly, it backs Territorians now while helping to build a stronger future for the Territory.

We know that high-cost, one-off vanity projects do not turn the dial when the economy needs to be stimulated. We know this after nearly a decade of going backwards under Labor. We saw projects with budget blowouts, such as the Acacia IT system in our hospitals, a half-finished art gallery with no plan or budget to operate it, a Tiger Brennan overpass that was more than $100m over budget, and a shadeless shade structure wasting hundreds of thousands of Territorians' dollars.

We cannot forget the MXGP, announced with just a headline before the election, with only $1.65m allocated to build a new track that actually costs over $8m. Labor had no contingencies, no planning and no regard for delivery, just left us to clean up the mess.

This budget is about creating more jobs and backing businesses to invest in the Territory. With fuel prices, global uncertainty and rising costs putting pressure on everyone, we are taking a sensible approach with the Territory's finances. We know lasting growth comes from strong businesses and private investment, not short-term spending splashes.

Our five key pillars are mining, gas, Defence, agriculture and tourism. That is what will rebuild our economy.

Mining and gas continue to underpin our economy. The Beetaloo project is projected to transform the Northern Territory into a global energy hub, creating more than 13,000 jobs by 2040 and adding more than $17bn to our economy.

Defence remains critical, with Exercise Pitch Black bringing countries from across the world into the Territory, injecting millions into our economy and activating our regions. It builds on a long history from Darwin's role in defending our nation during World War II to today when the Territory remains strategically important for Australia. We are leveraging that history and presence through military tourism, sharing our unique Australian story. That is our point of difference offered to visitors, and we are using it to our advantage.

Agriculture continues to deliver. The Territory's live cattle export industry alone has delivered its strongest performance in more than a decade under the CLP, with an increase of 18%. Our mango industry has just delivered another standout season, with 4.3 million trays produced this year; that is up by 7.5% on last season.

In tourism, which I am most proud to represent as one of the most important drivers of our economy and our lifestyle, we are already seeing visitor numbers up by 19% and visitor spending up by 13%. We are leading the nation. Following worldwide interest, we were ranked number one in Australia by the *New York Times* as the best place to visit in 2026. That means full hotels, busy restaurants and Territorians in jobs.

Richard and Trisha Hartshorn of Quest apartments in Parap tell me that even with current headwinds like fuel uncertainty, their forward bookings for the season are looking strong. That is exactly what we want to see: businesses planning ahead, investing and growing. That is the Territory moving in the right direction.

We are not naive to the challenges ahead; the tourism industry is facing headwinds—that is, global uncertainty, fuel costs, aviation access and the major flooding and cyclones we experienced this Wet Season. That is why the Northern Territory is taking a leadership role nationally. At the recent Tourism Ministers' Meeting in Sydney I secured an agreement that the Territory will coordinate a national effort to strengthen drive tourism across northern Australia, because this matters for us.

More than 40% of our visitors travel by road. If people do not feel confident getting behind the wheel, they do not come. That is why we are pushing for fuel certainty, better road access and a coordinated approach to give travellers confidence to explore northern Australia. We are also advocating for improved aviation access because affordable and reliable connections are critical to growing visitation, particularly in our regions.

We are ensuring that our priorities are front and centre for our federal counterparts, including the flood recovery for key assets like Kakadu, ensuring sites are open, accessible and ready ahead of the peak season. In my ministerial portfolio I have also unlocked the Tourism Business Restart Fund, providing fast, practical grants of up to $5,000 to help operators recover, reopen and get ready for the 2026 season. Our tour operators need that certainty.

This is our second budget, and I cannot understate the position we inherited. When Labor came to office, net debt was about $2.3bn. By 2023–24 it had risen to more than $9bn, and under Labor's projections it was heading towards $15bn. Let me tell you what that meant: the Labor government was relying on borrowing to pay wages. No small business could operate like that. It is like putting everyday expenses on the credit card and never paying it down.

No family household could ever operate like that. It is like taking on a mortgage that keeps growing while your income stays the same; more goes to interest and less goes to what matters. Every dollar spent on interest is a dollar not spent on the things the Territory actually needs like police, courts or hospitals. That is what significant debt means; that is the reality.

Territorians expect their government to live within its means, just like households do. This budget takes a steady, responsible approach while still investing where it counts the most. We are managing debt carefully, keeping spending sensible and planning for long-term growth.

We have lifted the payroll tax-free threshold from $1.5m to $2.5m, saving eligible businesses up to $68,750 each year and encourage them to invest that money to employ and grow. We have exempted wages for apprentices and trainees, backing our local workforce. We are reducing red tape, streamlining approvals through our Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce and making it easier for businesses to get on with the job.

Next week I will deliver practical reforms to the *Liquor Act* to cut red tape and support hospitality businesses without compromising safety. Hospitality NT supports these reforms because it knows they strike the right balance and back local businesses. Our government wants to grow investment because when someone wants to build, invest or develop we should be backing them, not blocking them.

It is starting to work. Payroll tax collections are already exceeding forecast, which is up 14% year to date. We are seeing more businesses hiring, more activity and higher confidence. We have also delivered real cost-of-living relief, including the Sport Vouchers, Learn to Swim Vouchers, community programs, the vaccine program and one of the most competitive home build schemes in the country.

In fact, it is the most competitive home build scheme. It gives people $50,000 or $30,000 to build a home they will live in. More than 1,400 HomeGrown Territory Grants are underway and already injecting over $217m into the Territory economy. That is hundreds of families achieving their dream of owning their own home. We want more of that, which is why we are extending the grant until September 2027. Every dollar spent on construction cycled through our local economy numerous times is creating the conditions for private investment. We are starting to see it flow through.

When you reduce crime and red tape, confidence follows, as in tourism and hospitality where we are seeing real confidence returning. IHG is opening the voco™ Darwin Suites in a matter of weeks, an 88-suite premium hotel in the heart of Darwin, on Mitchell Street. The former Ducks Nuts has been transformed into an exciting new entertainment venue with Sweethearts and Flick's, with even more development happening.

Global company Journey Beyond has recently acquired Voyagers at Yulara. Their footprint is now expanded with the Ghan, Outback Spirit Touring and SeaLink added to their portfolio. We have hotels on The Esplanade and Cavenagh Street that are refurbishing. That is confidence in the Territory.

At the same time, our reducing crime strategy is starting to work. When comparing 2025 numbers with 2024 numbers Territory-wide, house break-ins are down by 31%; assaults are down by 6%; alcohol-related assault offences have decreased by 4%; and domestic violence assaults are down by 3%. That is what reducing crime looks like.

None of this happens without fixing the justice system. When I became the Attorney-General, I inherited a system in crisis. We acted immediately. We introduced the strongest bail laws in the country. Since then, thousands of repeat and violent offenders have been refused bail and kept off our streets. We gave police wanding powers which have now been used more than 20,000 times. That is crime prevention, because we are taking hundreds of weapons out of our community. We strengthened sentencing and ended the revolving door of bail.

There is still more work to do. We have said that from day one. I said it again today. Reform alone is not enough; you must also resource the system. Last year, we delivered the largest law and order budget in the Territory's history. This year we are building on that with a record law and order budget and spend of $1.73bn, because community safety is the number one priority for Territorians.

This budget puts an end to Labor's soft-on-crime, offender-led justice system. It continues strong investment in police, courts and Corrections so they have the people and resources needed to do the job properly. This includes record funding of $654m for police, with 150 recruits budgeted to go through the police college in 2026–27.

The government is also investing in a new 212-strong police public safety officer workforce, backed by $48m over four years and $15.8m ongoing. We are also investing in the justice system with a further $250m to construct new prisoner work camps in Darwin and Katherine and deliver upgrades to the Alice Springs Correctional Centre.

We will keep strengthening the laws, boosting frontline services and investing in the things that help break the cycle of crime. That includes putting victims first, community safety ahead of offenders and redoubling our efforts in delivering our NT Crime Reduction Strategy. When people feel safe, families thrive, businesses grow and communities move forward. That is what we want for the Northern Territory.

We are investing in our record of 19 Local Court judge positions that commenced last year. The results have been clear: the ABS just reported that the Northern Territory now has the highest rate of defendant cases finalised in the country. Case finalisations are up by 29% in the NT compared with just 1.2% nationally. Nearly 25,000 matters have already been resolved this financial year, and more than 70% of those within six months.

The backlog has reduced by 14%, remand is down by 13% and even adjournments are down significantly. It is extraordinary when you think we have only had just over 18 months to try to turn a disastrous Labor mess of a justice system around. You can see, with those numbers, it is starting to move forward. Even with the increased pressure from our law and order focus, things are starting to turn around.

Our TIG-ER Taskforce has progressed more than 1,200 matters and has finalised 878 of those. More than 60% have resolved through early guilty pleas. That means less delay, less pressure on the courts and faster justice for victims.

In this budget we allocated $2.4m per annum ongoing to support Supreme Court operations. This is our government repairing a justice system that was under-resourced for many years under a former Labor government.

We have also increased the victims levy, with collections expected to reach a whopping $3.82m. That reform has delivered an increase of 142%. When we came to government, victims were waiting years for support and they were not prioritised. That is not acceptable, and we are fixing it. There is a lot more work to be done in this space, but the rights of victims will always be above the rights of offenders under our government.

I turn to Parks and Wildlife. Our government understands that this is central to our unique Territory lifestyle. If you stop and think about why we all love living here, one of our parks is probably central to that story. That is why the CLP added another park to its list of achievements by securing Silkwood last year. That is 30,000 hectares, the largest expansion of our parks estate in a generation. This budget will build on that. We are investing $10m into parks upgrades, a further $5m towards maintenance of our parks access and facilities, and $1.2m to begin unlocking Silkwood.

Parks and Wildlife was once an agency ignored and left under-resourced by Labor. Under a CLP government, families can cook up a storm as we upgrade barbecues at Charles Darwin, Berry Springs, Nitmiluk and the West MacDonnells. Adventurers will benefit as we upgrade walking paths in Kings Canyon, bike paths in Simpsons Gap, footpaths at Casuarina Coastal Reserve and roads for four-wheel drive enthusiasts in places like Limestone Gorge. Campground upgrades, interactive signage, trail markers and fast-tracked maintenance works will open the door to locals and visitors across our regions. Parks are something that Territorians wants to access and enjoy, and it is why we have our unique Territory lifestyle.

Events are also part of that story. We have allocated $1.5m to support more than 26 events through the Event Funding Program, and $4.4m has been secured for 20 events across the Territory that drive visitation, support local businesses and create local jobs. From Supercars to MXGP, regional festivals and community events, we are backing what works and what Territorians enjoy.

Last month we saw record crowds at the opening of Parrtjima in Alice Springs and a sellout Dolphins game in Darwin. That shows Territorians enjoying the lifestyle before the peak tourism season begins. That is because of the changes made to tourism and major events, bringing it all together under the one roof so that they can mark us as a destination of choice for events and lifestyle. It is working.

Under my portfolio of Racing, we are investing in this $160m industry, supporting around 1,000 jobs. It is more than a sport; it is in our DNA, and it supports our economy and visitation across our regions. I look forward to finalising Racing NT to drive opportunities further for this industry this year.

All these things that I have talked about—parks, events and racing—are guided by our Northern Territory Visitor Economy Strategy 2032, which I launched in Alice Springs several weeks ago. It is a clear plan to grow the economy to $3bn and 1.7 million visitors, and we are already seeing the results. The Territory is leading the nation in economic growth forecasts over 5%, and population growth has returned with the latest stats showing a 1.4% increase.

Jobs are growing and investment is returning. I cannot believe it, because we are only just getting started. There is more work to do and there are many challenges ahead of us that we need to rectify, but we will always put Territorians first. We will do that work to make this place the best place to visit, work, live and invest. The 2026 budget is about continuing that work. It shows that our government is focused on practical priorities, steady management and delivering for Territorians, but most importantly, it is a budget that backs Territorians now while building a stronger future for the Territory.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Mr Deputy Speaker, in Budget 2026–27 we are continuing to focus on our plan to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the unique Territory lifestyle that we all love and value. The 2026 budget builds on the solid foundations of our first budget, while adapting to a more challenging global environment. This is a disciplined budget, squarely focused on delivery and our core priorities.

This is a budget for everyday Territorians, putting money where it is needed most, making everyday life easier. This includes my portfolios of Health; Mental Health; Alcohol Policy; Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Aboriginal Affairs; and Essential Services.

From remote housing to stronger health services and empowered local councils, we are focused on better services and easing pressure for families. We are staying focused on what matters. This budget is giving families confidence in our health services, giving businesses certainty and giving communities security with investment in our community infrastructure.

When it comes to health, this budget builds on the foundations laid last year and reflects our government's ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible and sustainable healthcare across the Northern Territory. We are boosting frontline healthcare by delivering more beds and upgrading health equipment in a record $2.56bn NT Health budget; an increase of $231.8m compared with last year. In 2026–27 we are allocating $1.75bn to hospital services and support, an increase of $69m on last year. This investment ensures that our hospitals continue to deliver safe, high-quality and accessible care while addressing the growing pressures across emergency departments, inpatient wards and specialist services.

The Chief Minister also signed the National Health Reform Agreement earlier this year for Northern Territory hospitals, with an uplift of $152m in 2026 towards running our hospitals. This five-year funding agreement locks in the single biggest contribution by the federal government to the Territory's hospitals. We will continue to work with the federal government to improve our position, which has traditionally trailed the rest of the nation.

We are still paying about $200m for things the Commonwealth should be delivering. NT Health spends Territory dollars because the necessary services and facilities are not being provided by Canberra. These include aeromedical retrievals in the Top End, which cost more than $50m per annum. Aged care is costing the NT health system $40m per year. We are roughly $95m short for primary healthcare. Labor has been silent on these things for a long time.

The CLP government is delivering more beds to improve capacity and reduce the demand on our health system. Having a strong health system is an important part of restoring or unique Territory lifestyle. The new 32-bed multipurpose ward is coming online around mid-year, and the 24-bed mental health inpatient unit will be ready later in the year, sometime around quarter three.

We are providing additional funding of $18.3m in the health budget this year to open and operate the new 32-bed ward. That also supports recruitment of the additional nurses, doctors and essential support staff we will need to operate the new ward. Unlike Labor, we make sure there is a budget to operate new wards, as we did in last year's budget for the mental health unit. This investment will alleviate bed block pressures and improve patient flow across the hospital system.

Construction works on the new mental health inpatient unit building are progressing well, with the internal fit now underway. The mental health inpatient unit will improve acute mental health service capacity in the Top End. The new facility will provide 18 inpatient beds, support services and a six-bed stabilisation assessment and referral area (SARA), which will provide short-term care in a therapeutic environment for mental health clients who present to the emergency department and may benefit from detailed assessment, management plans and referral to other providers for ongoing mental healthcare.

In the 2026 budget there is an additional $10m for new equipment in our hospitals, which includes a CT scanner for Tennant Creek. It has been a long-term goal to get this to Tennant Creek. For eight years Labor failed to deliver, constantly sending patients from Tennant Creek to Alice Springs for a CT scan. Enough is enough; this has been going on far too long. Our government is committing to delivering that CT scanner.

As part of a renewed radiology contract with Dr Jones and Partners until April 2031 to deliver high-quality imaging services, our government has ensured new imaging equipment is secured for Alice Springs. This includes magnetic resonance imaging and the bone density scanner, which means faster diagnosis and treatment for many conditions, including osteoporosis.

For Alice Springs Hospital the 2026–27 budget includes funding for 45 replacement beds and an MRI ventilator that provides breathing support and stability to critically unwell or sedated patients during MRI scans.

The 2026 budget also includes a further $500,000 project to improve the air-conditioning system at Royal Darwin Hospital. The funding will be used to remove and replace air-conditioning coils across several hospital floors, including the maternity ward. This is in addition to work already being done to install a replacement fan for the air-conditioning unit. While the air con in the birthing suite at RDH remains at expected temperature, the CLP will complete upgrades to replace air-conditioning coils in the maternity ward and other floors.

RDH is an ageing hospital and these works will help ensure all patients, including women giving birth, are in a comfortable environment. Work to replace the fan and install the air-conditioning coils will occur during the Dry Season, when the temperature is cooler overnight, to minimise disruption.

In this budget our government is boosting security in protecting our frontline health staff with personal duress alarms to roll out at Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional Hospitals. The safety of our frontline staff is a top priority for our government. Violence against our nurses and any frontline workers will simply not be tolerated. The CLP will bring in these alarms that the last Labor government failed to do. NT Health will purchase 150 duress alarms for emergency department staff at Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional Hospitals to keep on them at all times.

We have announced the $10m funding boost for St John Ambulance for immediate operations while a five-year funding agreement is being finalised. Our ambulance service has faced uncertainty since 2022 after the former government failed to secure a long-term deal. That uncertainty is ending under the CLP government. Negotiations on the five-year deal are well advanced and expected to conclude within months.

This government is planning for current and future demand to ensure the right staff and resources are in place. In 2023 Labor provided just $36.1m in its budget for St John, yet our current funding is $68m, which is almost double that amount from 2023. St John Ambulance has served Territorians for decades and remains a trusted frontline service. The focus is delivering certainty and security for St John Ambulance and Territorians.

Primary healthcare remains the cornerstone of a strong and sustainable health system. The 2026–27 budget provides $314m for primary healthcare services. This funding supports care closer to home and plays a critical role in preventing avoidable hospital admissions. It includes support for 51 government-run primary health clinics, grant funding for Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations and the continued operation of urgent care clinics.

There remains a significant gap in Commonwealth funding, particularly in remote and high-needs communities. This government continues to step in to cover the shortfall, ensuring that essential services remain available while we advocate strongly for increased Commonwealth funding to better support these vital services.

This government has committed $135m to improve mental health services. We are collaborating with the community-based mental health sector to ease pressure on our hospital beds and increase early intervention services for Territorians.

Alcohol and other drugs also remain a priority for our government. The CLP government has strengthened the Banned Drinker Register pathway by passing legislation to increase the duration of seven-day police banned drinker orders to 28 days. This government is committed to increasing rehabilitation options for problem drinkers and is progressing negotiations with service providers to deliver expanded specialist alcohol and other drug rehabilitation. This budget supports prevention, treatment and rehabilitation initiatives, including community-based programs and recovery pathways that assist individuals and families impacted by substance misuse.

Aged care continues to present challenges particularly where long-stay patients occupy hospital beds due to a lack of appropriate facilities. While the Commonwealth has committed to a new residential aged-care facility

in Darwin, we will continue to advocate for additional funding to address the immediate and ongoing pressures while a new facility is built to ensure older Territorians receive appropriate care.

I also call on the Labor opposition to join us in advocating for money to support these services. It is costing the NT health system $40m per year to support long-stay patients who should be in aged-care facilities. Again, all we hear is crickets—silence from the Labor opposition. It is as if they do not want to bother their Labor federal counterparts. This is money that is needed in the Northern Territory, and it is high time the Labor opposition joined us in calling for this additional funding.

In relation to maternity funding we are ensuring safe, accessible and reliable care for mothers and babies. This remains a priority for this government. We have asked the Commonwealth Government for $10m in infrastructure upgrades for Royal Darwin Hospital, further strengthening and enhancing our maternity services. I met with the federal minister in Alice Springs last week and again advocated for that $10m we have asked for. I hope in next week's federal budget we receive some funding for the Territory from the Commonwealth Government, which provided some money to the central coast and Tasmania well over 12 months ago. We have lost our private maternity services. Unfortunately, there has been no funding forthcoming for the Territory. Territorians deserve nothing less.

Healthscope has had its leadership changes. I have reached out to the new CEO and will be meeting with Healthscope in the coming weeks to ensure our expectations are well known. I want to assure all Territorians that the CLP government remains committed to the restoration of private maternity services as part of our new ownership arrangement at the Darwin Private Hospital. We continue to focus on making sure expectant families are well supported. This budget is for everyday Territorians, putting money where it is needed most, including better frontline health services.

Today is International Day of the Midwife, so while I am on the subject of maternity, I thank all our midwives across the Territory who are on the front line delivering babies 365 days a year, providing incredible service for Territory families, working with mothers and delivering babies in the most caring and safe circumstances for Territorians. Thank you to all our midwives for the work they do, and happy International Day of the Midwife.

I turn to Housing, Local Government and Community Development. In the 2026–27 budget, we will be supporting continued momentum and focus on key reform agendas across this portfolio. This includes tenant accountability, Empowering the Bush and local government reform. The department's 2026–27 operating budget increases to $993m, from $952m in 2025–26.

The new initiatives for the 2026–27 budget, including capital works, are $238m for the 10-year remote housing agreement in partnership with Commonwealth funding and $41.5m for remote housing investment package allocated for improvement and upgrades in government employee housing. I will speak more on remote housing later.

When it comes to tenant accountability, we remain focused on cracking down on antisocial behaviour in public housing in this budget. Following the release of our new tenant accountability policy statement earlier this year, the policy statement strengthened tenant accountability for basic responsibilities. That is to pay rent, look after the house and be a good neighbour.

In greater Darwin alone, 36 tenants who have repeatedly caused disturbances or breached their lease have now been evicted or handed back their properties. The 2026–27 budget enables the department to implement a new suite of policies designed to operationalise this approach. This includes a simplified approach focused on strikes rather than red card points and strengthened termination processes for serious breaches.

In the budget there is $1.65m funding to extend 14 antisocial behaviour case management positions for 2026–27. These positions will ensure continuity of critical tenancy compliance and community safety functions during the transition to the police public safety officer model.

Great work by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development is underway to bring homes back online. In urban areas across the Territory this government has allocated additional funding to clear the backlog of vacant public housing properties that we inherited from the former Labor government. Included in this budget is an additional $16m for repairs and maintenance.

I highlight that the Finocchiaro CLP government is rolling out rapid repairs to bring public housing back online and tenants off the waiting list and into homes in Central Australia. We set a target to have 70 vacant public housing dwellings in Alice Springs back online and tenanted by 30 June 2026. I can announce that good

progress has been made. There have been 59 homes repaired, with 11 dwellings remaining to complete the program. All of those are expected to be completed by 30 June.

Vacant homes place pressure on housing supply, and bringing them back into action means that the people who need a home can get into one faster. Work to the homes includes essential repairs, maintenance and safety upgrades to ensure they meet tenant-ready standards. The works also support local jobs, with local contractors in Alice Springs contributing to the local economy. This work will continue through the 2026–27 budget.

As part of the budget we are delivering funding of $22.8m towards the construction of more than 200 social housing properties across the Territory. This money will support applications that are successful under the currently open third round of the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF). We will provide $12m towards capital costs for building social homes on the St Mary's site along the Stuart Highway in Alice Springs.

As part of the Finocchiaro CLP government's year of growth, certainty and security, we are proud to be doing our part to deliver more social housing across the Territory. The 2026–27 budget is all about delivering certainty and more social housing for people who need it. Social housing is important to help people live better lives and to improve outcomes in education, employment and health. This funding is the CLP government's contribution to the capital costs for the construction of homes and is in addition to the $14m in last year's budget for headworks. The CLP government is providing $10.8m for other social housing projects across the Territory, including in Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Berrimah.

When it comes to remote housing and homelands our government is delivering for the bush with 119 homelands to have housing upgrades and repairs as part of the 2026 budget. Under the Northern Territory Government's Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program, 119 homelands will have works delivered. We are proud to be delivering upgraded homes for residents of homelands across the Territory. We are delivering upgraded houses and infrastructure for the bush, helping residents of homelands to lead better lives, with better housing driving better outcomes in health, education and employment. Forty-five homelands across the Territory had housing upgrades completed last financial year, with a further 23 homelands undergoing improvements and a further 90 planned to commence in 2026–27.

The Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program is a joint initiative to improve living conditions in remote homelands across the Northern Territory. The federal government is also investing $220m through the HHIP while the Finocchiaro CLP government contributes $40m annually to support essential services in Aboriginal homelands, including clean water, reliable power and sanitation.

New and upgraded homes are also being delivered in remote communities under the joint $4bn remote housing partnership agreement between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments. In the Top End, 66 new homes are planned to be built this year with 12 upgrades; in East Arnhem 90 new homes are planned with six upgrades; in Big Rivers, 34 new homes are planned with 18 upgrades; in the Barkly, there will be six new homes and six upgrades; and in Central Australia, the plan is for 17 new homes and 16 upgrades. Both governments work alongside the joint steering committee for remote housing NT, which includes all four land councils and Aboriginal Housing NT, to deliver better housing and improved outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians living in remote communities.

The Empowering the Bush reform is the Northern Territory Government's approach to strengthening community-based decision-making, enabling place-based community development and improving the delivery of services in regional and remote communities. This important body of work will focus on three core elements: empowering self-determination; strengthening local government; and enabling community decision-making to take a greater role in setting priorities and shaping service delivery. This includes delivering consistent essential services effectively, to build trust and reinforce community capability and to embed opportunities for cultural authority to play a role in community development activities.

Progressing community development will involve advancing community-led planning, development and delivery of services and programs that address local priorities and harness cultural, social and economic opportunities. We will align government investment and infrastructure planning with community development priorities to drive sustainable regional economic growth. This will ensure investment decisions are transparent and improve life outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

The Empowering the Bush reform will be implemented through place-based community development, strengthening local government and enabling local decision-making. Community engagement about the future shape of local government in the Barkly is well underway. I have received expressions of interest from

Territory communities that are enthusiastic to participate in the Empowering the Bush agenda and the 2026–27 budget allows us to make further progress in this area.

This government is committed to strengthening local government to deliver better outcomes for communities through a program of targeted, practical reforms focused on governance, transparency and capability. These reforms are designed to support councils to operate more effectively, make sound decisions and maintain community confidence while reducing unnecessary administrative burden.

Parliament passed the Local Government Legislation Amendment (Code of Conduct and Other Matters) Bill 2026, so the 2026–27 budget allows the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development to continue working with the sector to develop new policies and procedures to support the rollout of those amendments.

The budget has $43m for the National Water Grid Fund, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. The NT Government has jointly invested with the National Water Grid Fund in the Better Bores for Communities program. This will improve water security across 10 remote Aboriginal communities through investigating, drilling and equipping new groundwater bores. In the next year we are connecting new water sources in Wugularr, Haasts Bluff and Ntaria through essential pumps, pipes and equipment.

I will now touch on my electorate of the Barkly, the land of opportunity. We are delivering for the Barkly in this budget, and I am pleased to talk about some of the investment that will be going into the Barkly.

We are delivering a CT scanner for Tennant Creek. It will reduce the number of people who have to travel outside of Tennant Creek for a scan, because that diagnostic equipment will be on hand. It will pay for itself in about four years, so I am unsure why Labor failed to deliver this important equipment for Tennant Creek over its eight years in government. This will mean that Barkly residents can be diagnosed and undergo treatment sooner and will not have to travel to Alice Springs to get their scans.

There is also $1m in the 2026 budget to develop options for recommissioning the theatre suite and to upgrade the emergency department at Tennant Creek Hospital. This will provide more day surgery options and deliver better healthcare for Tennant Creek and Barkly residents.

The 2026 budget also includes $8.3m to construct a new boarding facility at Tennant Creek High School as part of the Barkly Regional Deal. The roads repair package encompasses $6.5m for Barkly roads, including Murray Downs Road, Elkedra Road and Kurundi Road.

I am also pleased that we announced $3.5m in the 2026–27 budget for the remote school of Alekarenge—the upgrades that Labor never delivered. Labor had eight years to deliver at Alekarenge, but it failed. Labor failed to deliver and invest in education for students in the bush. This is what it comes down to: failure to invest in education in the bush. We are getting on with it and delivering a $3.5m upgrade for Alekarenge School.

Funding will provide a new administration block, give teachers an upgraded space and turn the current administration building into a classroom. The early learning centre proposed improvements include replacing the ceiling, new lighting, upgrading of the kitchenette and dining area, and upgraded outdoor learning areas. The improvements will support early learning with the upgraded facility available for use by the preschool and the FaFT program. We are correcting all of those Labor failures over eight years and investing in the bush and education. Sadly, Labor did not see a future for education in the bush.

We are supporting teachers at Alekarenge with better facilities so they can provide the best education possible for students. Increased participation in early learning with improved facilities supports and encourages school attendance from a young age. This is a wonderful investment that will encourage children to attend school more and get a better education. I thank Chris, the principal there. Minister Hersey and I have both been out to Alekarenge. Chris and his team are doing a magnificent job at the school. I thank Chris and his staff. These upgrades will make a difference to their working environment.

Mr PATEL: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move that the minister be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON: The Finocchiaro CLP government is driving growth in Central Australia and the Barkly, investing $1m across the next two years to support timely industrial and residential subdivisions in Tennant Creek. We are delivering more reliable power for Ali Curung with a new $1.35m standby generator

installed to assist during outages, supporting residents, businesses, the school and the health centre—another Labor failure. It was only three years ago that the community had no generator. Labor failed to turn it on in 40-degree heat, leaving the community with no power in extreme conditions. I had to call the minister and ask them to switch on the generator after 24 hours of no power in the community, and they eventually did.

That is how Labor members treated people in the bush. It is an absolute disgrace what they did at Ali Curung. They should be ashamed of themselves.

I am pleased to say there is also $1.2m in several minor works at the Tennant Creek Hospital, and this budget includes $400,000 to upgrade the security system; $2.7m in minor works that will help improve infrastructure in communities across the Barkly; $800,00 to install a new boundary fence for the Ali Curung Police Station; $100,00 for the Murray Downs School to get a new double-bay storage shed; and $100,000 for the design of an upgraded preschool bathroom and outdoor space at the Elliott School.

Our investments in the Barkly are all part of improving lifestyle in the Barkly. Budget 2026–27 is a measured and responsible investment in vital services that Territorians need in health, housing, essential services and all the portfolios I look after.

This budget shows a government focused on practical priorities, like in health and housing, steady management and delivering for Territorians.

I commend this budget to the Assembly.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 61

Continued from 18 March 2026.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time. I will now make my contribution to the second reading.

I will address the recommendations of the scrutiny committee. I thank the scrutiny committee members for their work and for recommending that the Bill be passed without amendment. I also note that recommendations 2, 3 and 4 seek further information. These recommendations request amendments to the explanatory memorandum, which has already been tabled in parliament. Instead, I will address the matters that the committee has raised by way of explanation.

In relation to recommendation 2, concerning the timely processing of licensing applications and renewals, the Bill sets clear parameters for how long a licence may remain in force beyond its expiry where a renewal application has been lodged. A licence will cease to be in force if it is revoked, or once an application is granted or refused. Consideration was given to establishing a statutory processing timeframe; however, processing times vary depending on application volumes and operational factors. For this reason, a fixed statutory timeframe is not considered appropriate.

In relation to recommendation 3, which seeks a general outline of the Bill, I will deal with that in a moment.

In relation to recommendation 4, concerning changes to the penalty provisions in section 68, these amendments are necessary. At present, there is no clear prohibition on destroying a firearm or rendering it inoperable. The Bill addresses this by making it an offence to alter a firearm in a way that destroys it or renders it inoperable, unless authorised to do so. The increase in penalty reflects the seriousness of the offence, it also brings the Territory into line with other Australian jurisdictions.

In respect to recommendation 3, the Bill extends the maximum duration of firearm, corporate and employee licences for up to 10 years or a shorter period where appropriate. This provides greater certainty for legitimate operators, reduces unnecessary administrative burden and allows businesses to focus on their day-to-day operations, whilst maintaining appropriate oversight. This reform implements a recommendation of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce and responds directly to feedback from industry.

The taskforce comprises industry experts from across the Territory engaged extensively with peak bodies, businesses and senior representatives to identify practical reforms that support economic activity, including for small businesses across construction, hospitality, agriculture and aquaculture.

It found that current renewal settings create unnecessary delays and avoidable administrative touchpoints, particularly in agriculture and aquaculture. Extending licence durations addresses these issues. This reform also aligns with the government's broader work to modernise systems, including the National Firearms Register. More importantly, the Bill also ensures continuity by allowing a licence to remain in force while a renewal application is being considered, provided it is lodged before expiry. This is a practical change that allows lawful activities to continue without unnecessary interruption.

To support this, the Northern Territory Firearms Policy and Recording Unit will provide licence holders with confirmation once an application for the same licence type has been lodged, which will serve as proof of currency until a decision is made. The Bill strengthens the powers of the commissioner by enabling licence and permit conditions to be varied, revoked or added during the life of a licence. This ensures conditions remain current and appropriate and allows police to respond to risks as they emerge. These powers will be exercised on a case-by-case basis having regard to the individual circumstances of each licence or permit holder.

They may be used following a compliance check in response to intelligence or complaint, or where there are concerns about a person's continued suitability to hold a licence. They may also address specific issues such as storage arrangements or relevant medical considerations. More importantly, these decisions will be subject to appropriate safeguards.

Decisions to vary, revoke or impose conditions will be reviewable by NTCAT, consistent with existing processes under the Act. This ensures licence and permit holders are afforded natural justice through an established and transparent avenue of administrative review. Further reforms strengthen governance arrangements, including changes to the Firearms Advisory Council. The council will operate under an independent chairperson and report directly to the minister. A key function of the council is to review the operations of the *Firearms Act* and provide advice and recommendations. These amendments respond to feedback of the current structure to better reflect a broader range of perspectives and strengthen transparency.

At present, recommendations are provided through the chairperson by the commissioner before being considered by the minister. These changes streamline that process, enable more direct reporting and reinforce the independence of the council. They also expand the council's composition and governance setting, supporting more balance, input and strengthening confidence in the advice that informs decision-making.

The Bill also introduces new offences to address emerging risk and close the gaps in current framework. These relate to the destruction of firearms and the possession of digital blueprints used to manufacture firearms or firearm components. They reflect developments in technology and align the Territory with other jurisdictions, responding to the growing risk of elicit firearm manufacture. There has been some community interest in how these provisions will operate in practice. Let me be clear, these offences are targeted. They are designed to capture the intentional possession, creation or distribution of digital blueprints that can be used to manufacture firearms or firearm components using technology such as 3D printers or electronic milling machines.

They are not intended to capture ordinary or incidental material, such as manuals, historical documents or general imagery that cannot be used for that purpose. The offence requires intent. A person must knowingly possess or deal with a digital blueprint for the purpose of manufacture. There are also clear and appropriate exemptions, including for law enforcement purposes, the use in legal proceedings, or where a person is authorised under a licence or permit to manufacture a firearm or component. These provisions are proportionate and enforceable, and they respond to a real and emerging risk.

The Bill strengthens recordkeeping and accountability requirements. It introduces a requirement for licence, permit and registration holders to notify the commissioner where a firearm has been destroyed, rendered inoperable, disposed of, damaged or defaced. This ensures records remain accurate and up to date, supporting compliance, enforcement and the safe management of firearms across the Territory.

The Bill also amends existing offence provisions, including strengthening penalties for altering firearms to bring them in line with other Australian jurisdictions. In addition, the Bill provides for the temporary recognition of interstate firearm licences. This allows visitors to lawfully possess, use and purchase ammunition while in the Territory, for approved activities.

This Bill is on existing arrangements and ensures visiting licence holders can participate in firearms-related activities, such as sporting events, safely and lawfully while in the Territory. These reforms support legitimate participation in firearms-related tourism and events which form part of the Territory lifestyle and contribute to the economy.

Taken together, these reforms modernise the Act and improve how it operates in practice. They reduce unnecessary red tape, provide greater detail, clarity and certainty and ensure the system is responsive to operational needs and emerging risk. At the same time they strengthen the regulation and management of firearms, supporting police, reinforcing safeguards and reducing the risk of firearms being diverted into the black market or falling into the hands of organised crime.

This is about getting the balance right, supporting responsible firearm ownership, recognising its place in the Territory lifestyle and economy while backing police to keep the community safe. This Bill is another step in delivering a safer, stronger and growing Northern Territory.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, guns have a legitimate and enduring place in the Northern Territory. They are an essential tool for primary producers managing land and pests. Our rangers use them to manage feral animals that pose environmental and community risks. They are used by Aboriginal Territorians for hunting on traditional lands, and we have many avid sporting and recreational shooters across the Territory who enjoy getting out on the weekend to hunt magpie geese and feral pigs or spend time at the firing range.

Our Territory Labor opposition supports Territorians' right to access and responsibly use firearms for lawful purposes, but that right must be balanced with a clear priority: community safety. That means a regulatory system that is robust, actively maintained, responsive to change and continuously improved to match community sentiment.

This Bill makes some sensible and necessary updates. However, it is yet another example of the CLP government tinkering around the edges and reacting to issues rather than tackling meaningful reform that would make a difference to Territorians' lives.

Our team largely supports the changes proposed, particularly measures addressing the emerging threat of 3D-printed firearms, also known as 'ghost guns'. As with most things that we have seen in this House under the CLP government, these amendments are piecemeal, minor and lacking any real vision of what the future of the Territory will look like.

The minister had an opportunity ahead of the National Firearms Register coming in, in the wake of the horrific Bondi massacre, to step back and consider whether our gun laws needed a more comprehensive review. That is something the shooting industry and gun control advocates have called for. They may not all agree on all aspects of gun control, but they share the view that our laws are beyond their use-by date and in the Territory do not meet current community needs or expectations when it comes to firearms management.

For example, the maximum penalty for the unlawful possession of a firearm in the Territory is around one to two years. This is significantly lower than other jurisdictions where maximum penalties are up to 13, 14 and even 20 years. Surely it is time to look at that so we are not out of step with the rest of the country.

Again, the CLP chooses to tinker around the edges rather than do any heavy lifting when it comes to legislative reform. The community is left with more questions than answers because the CLP refuses to engage meaningfully when it comes to consultation. Meanwhile, our hardworking public servants are forced to operationalise these changes in short timeframes and under great pressure. As usual, the CLP government is more interested in looking like it is doing something, rather than actually doing it well and with real purpose or planning.

I acknowledge all the work and effort that went into pulling this Bill together, particularly by the NT police, and for the briefing they provided my team last week. They were incredibly informative and helpful, given the CLP government allowed them only 20 minutes of briefing time. We are reduced now from half an hour or an hour, depending on how complex legislation is, to a mere 20-minute fly-by briefing.

Everyone knows we do our homework, but sometimes we have reduced time to ask important questions about legislation introduced by the CLP government. There are important questions about this Bill that have not been fully addressed or ventilated because the CLP has not allowed any genuine time for scrutiny of any of its Bills.

Expecting Territorians and industry stakeholders to put in submissions in the space of a few weeks and then holding short public briefings rather than actual hearings with scrutiny is not, according to any definition, a scrutiny process. Scrutiny literally means the careful, critical and detailed examination or investigation of something. Have a think about that. Consultation is about sharing information, views and informed advice to make better decisions on behalf of the community, particularly when it comes to making or amending laws in the Northern Territory.

The constant habit of the CLP government is to wilfully avoid both. The CLP continues to shut Territorians out of its decision-making processes and shows contempt for people with expertise and lived experience. Avoiding scrutiny and consultation ultimately weakens and undermines confidence in our systems and laws, and Territorians pay the price.

Turning to the Bill, the extension of licence periods for corporate and employee licences is a practical measure to reduce administrative burden, and we support that intent. However, reducing administrative checks inevitably introduces additional risk. That risk must be matched by stronger compliance and monitoring. This Bill does not outline how that will occur. There are no guidelines about the frequency of compliance checks, what those checks look like and how red flags are raised and notified in the system.

I am sure the Police minister agrees that community safety must always be paramount in any gun regime. In fact, I have heard her say that. However, we do not know what it looks like in practical terms, particularly in relation to this licence extension, because we have not been given the detail. Has this change gone through a risk assessment to give the community assurance that it has been considered? If community safety is the priority, safeguards must be explicit, not assumed. I hope the Chief Minister can give answers to these questions in her wrap-up speech.

This brings me to a broader issue about firearms data and how well it is being captured, stored and made publicly available. I understand that NT Police has done a significant amount of work to improve the accuracy of firearms data ahead of the rollout of the National Firearms Register, an important national reform the former Labor government signed up to in December 2023.

A centralised real-time register of all legally owned firearms in Australia will significantly enhance community and police safety. I commend the CLP government for continuing Labor's commitment to the national register.

I believe there have been concerns raised by licensed shooters in relation to data collection ahead of the register coming online, but I understand from my briefing provided last week that the police are working on this. My team and I commend them on taking on board and addressing the concerns. I understand NT Police has taken on board feedback in relation to improving communication with gun owners. We believe this is a positive step.

What does not appear to be on the cards is strengthening of transparency and accountability when it comes to firearms data. Currently the only information the community is given about guns in the Territory is the number of guns registered. There is a strong case for ensuring a more transparent approach to firearms data to inform the public and give confidence in the way our firearms regime is being managed in the Territory.

This is not about giving away people's personal information; this is about transparency and accountability on the issue of significant community safety.

New South Wales publicly releases monthly data on firearms, including data on permits to acquire firearm dealer transactions, firearm licences and firearms across categories. There is no reason the Northern Territory should not look at a similar transparency measure as part of the work undertaken to get ready for the National Firearms Register.

The minister has had very little to say about the National Firearms Register, so it would be good to hear her address this in relation to whether the Territory is on track to meet these commitments and deadlines as part of that national reform work.

The Bill seeks to reform the Firearms Advisory Council by introducing an independent Chair appointed by the minister, revising the membership structure and enabling direct reporting to the minister. What is not clear is the criteria or skills matrix that will be used to choose the Chair or other members appointed by the minister to ensure we get the best mix of Territorians with the right experience and expertise to give balanced advice to the government on matters of gun control and safety.

It is incredibly important for the government to make the appointments transparently and in the best interest of all Territorians at the centre of the decision-making, not just for some.

The Territory Labor team is supportive of the amendments that bring us in line with other jurisdictions in dealing with emergency risks of 3D printing of illegal guns and gun parts. We know there have already been cases of this occurring in the Territory. This is an important step to help address a risk that simply did not exist a few years ago. This is what contemporary legislation should look like. This reform highlights a broader issue: what other emerging risks are we not yet addressing?

Without a proactive, strategic review of gun laws we risk constantly playing catch-up and introducing patchwork, piecemeal changes to our Territory laws. This is a small but reasonable change when it comes to ammunition and interstate licence holders. We know interstate licence holders come to the Territory for sporting shooters events and hunting, so this is also a good tourism batch.

Historically there was a concern with the interstate licence holders having to bring their own ammunition because it was illegal for them to purchase it the Territory. Our Labor government acted to address this by placing an amnesty on interstate licence holders, allowing them to buy ammunition in the Territory. This was an immediate fix and the former Labor government always intended to enshrine this in legislation. It is good to see the CLP following on a Labor initiative.

I want to put a final point on record and remind the CLP of its election commitment to strengthen the Northern Territory *Trespass Act* to deter illegal hunting. This is a significant issue particularly on Aboriginal land and in our national parks, but we have not heard a single word by the CLP since it came to government nearly two years ago. It is about time the CLP government provided an update on whether it intends to honour its election commitment. I seek the minister's indulgence to address that in her response.

In conclusion, these are largely sensible changes to our Northern Territory gun laws, but as I said earlier, this represents routine business of government without any real forward planning for contemporising gun reform. I look forward to the Chief Minister addressing the following points:

- whether the government intends to undertake a more comprehensive and consultative review of our gun laws to ensure they are contemporary and meet community expectations

- whether our current compliance and monitoring regime is proactive and preventive enough when it comes to gun control and community safety

- whether the government intends to strengthen transparency of firearms data

- how decisions will be made about members of the Firearms Advisory Council

- whether the government intends to honour its election commitment to strengthen laws on illegal hunting.

Territorians deserve more than incremental changes; they deserve a system that is modern, transparent and built with purpose. Unfortunately, the CLP government has again proven it is incapable of delivering genuine reform that improves Territorians' lives and involves them in the consultation of those decisions.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I support the Firearms Bill 2026. This is a practical, sensible and modern piece of legislation. It improves the integrity of the firearms register, cuts unnecessary red tape and recognises the legitimate role that firearms play in the Territory lifestyle. It is another example of how the Finocchiaro CLP government is getting on with the job of delivering practical reform that balances public safety with common sense.

The Territory is different from other jurisdictions. We have pastoral stations larger than some countries, remote communities, feral animal management challenges, recreational hunting, sport shooting and businesses that lawfully trade in firearms and related equipment. We also have people who rely on firearms for pest control, primary production and safety when living and working in isolated parts of the Territory.

We have families who regularly go hunting or target shooting; it is a family thing here in the Territory. I know people who have had guns passed down from grandfather to father to son or daughter. It is part of our lifestyle, so when we make firearms laws in the Territory they must be fit for purpose. They must be strong, responsible and reflect the realities of living in the Northern Territory, and that is what this Bill does.

A key reform in this Bill is the implementation of recommendation 5A of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce. It extends the period of corporate firearms licences and employee firearms licences for up to 10 years, and that is a sensible change. In the interests of full transparency, I have an employee firearms licence, so I will be a beneficiary of this.

Businesses that are already licensed, compliant, subject to oversight and operating responsibly should not be tied up in repetitive administrative processes that add no value. If we can maintain safety standards while reducing bureaucracy, we should do so. This reform makes it easier to do business in the Territory. It gives certainty to Territory firearms dealers, businesses and employees. It reduces unnecessary paperwork and allows police resources to be focused where they are most needed: on compliance, enforcement and risk.

It will also provide that where a person has lodged an application for the same type of licence before expiry, their licence can remain in force while that application is being considered. This is a practical change because it prevents people who have done the right thing by lodging an application on time and complying with the law from falling into limbo because of administrative processing timeframes. It ensures fairness and common sense while preserving the commissioner's power to refuse or revoke where appropriate.

I know from speaking with lawful firearm owners and business owners over many years that certainty matters. Delays cost time, money and productivity. Also, some rural people come into town only once or twice every so often. Whether it is a dealer trying to run a business, a station owner managing feral animals or a sporting shooter participating in competitions, people need a system that works efficiently and fairly. This Bill delivers that.

Importantly, none of the reforms weaken safety checks, remove licence requirements or undermine police oversight. The same checks and standards remain in place.

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, please pause. It is now 6 pm and in accordance with the Assembly's resolution this morning, business is interrupted for the Member for Nightcliff's maiden speech.

Debate interrupted.

VISITORS
Family and Friends of Member for Nightcliff

Madam SPEAKER: I welcome family, friends and colleagues to this evening's first speech by the Member for Nightcliff. In particular, I also acknowledge Hon Mark Dreyfus, who is here tonight, and Hon Natasha Fyles. Welcome to the Assembly.

Members: Hear, hear!

INAUGURAL SPEECH
Mr Smelt – Member for Nightcliff

Mr SMELT (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I acknowledge that we are meeting here today on beautiful Larrakia country. I pay my respects to Larrakia elders past, present and emerging who have looked after this country for millennia. I also commit to working in partnership with Larrakia people to care for this land and sea for future generations.

I am grateful for First Nations leaders in our community, including my new Labor colleagues and my former council colleagues. They have all taken the time to share their stories and perspectives on how we can work together for a better future.

Our family migration occurred with Charles Francis Smelt who paid passage to Australia from England, arriving in Adelaide in 1853. Subsequent generations worked as farmers and mechanics around Yongala in the mid-north of South Australia.

My formative years were spent growing up in Bendigo, in country Victoria. It was long school holidays spent at the local pool, school camps, visiting mates on rural properties, Air Force Cadets, cricket and fire brigade running. So much space to roam and be free, and nowhere more than 10 minutes' drive away.

I was incredibly fortunate to enjoy a loving and supporting home life that revolved around school, sport, community, family and friends. Both my parents are engineers and worked as committed public servants for

the state road authority. With their support, I followed in the family line to study civil engineering, and I made the big move to the bright lights of Melbourne.

Living at Queen's College is where I formed many of my greatest friendships and experiences. It was also there, through friends, that I had the great fortune to meet Susannah, who was living even further away from her home of Darwin. Working busy jobs, we loved our life in the big city, but when we had kids we knew the time was right to find a place where we felt at home.

Moving to Darwin, we found a lifestyle, careers and a new network of friends. I was proud to join the NT public service and enjoy the challenges of planning for our future infrastructure needs. This passion for infrastructure led me to put up my hand at the local government elections in 2021. For four-and-a-half years I had the great honour of representing the Chan Ward. I am proud of what I achieved in delivering much-needed capital works and standing up for our local community. Thank you to all the elected members and staff at City of Darwin who I had the pleasure of working with.

Incredibly, this is not the first time my family has been involved in building roads in the NT. During World War II my great-grandfather took a break from his dairy farm in Victoria and volunteered for the Civil Constructional Corps. This took him to Daly Waters, where he drove trucks and supported the construction of the Stuart Highway as part of the war effort.

Moving north, I achieved every kid's dream of becoming a firefighter with Bushfires NT. I hope to continue to serve as an active member of Berry Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade while being a member of parliament.

Many years ago my brother visited the United States and brough me back a coaster from the library of former US President John F Kennedy. A quote often attributed to him but actually written by First Lady Jackie Kennedy reads:

One person can make a difference, and everyone should try.

I believe that we can all make a difference, and I am here to try.

Joining parliament today as the new Member for Nightcliff is one of the greatest privileges of my life. For Susannah and me, Nightcliff is more than somewhere we live and raise our kids; it is our forever home. It is a place where we can relax, unwind, enjoy the sunset and a pizza on the foreshore, take the kids to cast a line at the jetty, cheer on the Nightcliff Tigers at the footy oval, swim in one of the greatest outdoor swimming pools in the world, pick up a book at the library, catch up with friends for coffee, and enjoy a laksa and juice at the markets.

Intertwined throughout is a deep sense of connection across our neighbourhood. This is a place where people know your name at the local shops, where kids are encouraged to ride and walk to their thriving school communities and families catch up at sport, dance and art events.

It will be on full display this weekend, with the annual Seabreeze Festival on the foreshore, which supports hundreds of local artists.

We are also incredibly fortunate to walk among the mangroves and watch the beautiful birds that migrate annually to our shores.

It is this set of experiences uniquely all in one place that sets our community apart from anywhere else. The thing that struck me most during the recent by-election was the incredible diversity of the people who form our local community. In our electorate, there are people going through some really tough times, and others are getting ahead in life. This occurs side by side in the same street.

The conversations I have had in our community have traversed all political, social, cultural and economic backgrounds, from discussing the construction of 1960s Darwin with long-term Greek families to stories of people who planned to stay for six months and are still here 40 years later. On the campaign, I also heard the experiences of our newer migrant families who moved to Darwin for the opportunity of a better life for their children. All these stories are part of the rich tapestry of our local community.

I thank the previous member, Kat McNamara, for serving our community and generously sharing the stories of so many constituents so that I could continue that important work. I am passionate about standing up for the views and values of the people of Coconut Grove, Nightcliff and Rapid Creek. As such, I made a number

of commitments, including advocating for a community battery to help reduce power bills, joint patrols to increase community safety, and to upgrade the Nightcliff jetty to ensure it is there for future generations.

I have already started work on these commitments, and I hope the government is prepared to work with me in delivering these projects for the people of Nightcliff.

When I think about why I put up my hand to run for parliament and why I joined the Labor Party, I think about my family, particularly my grandfather, Harold Heathcote. Growing up, his family were essentially subsistence farmers living on a leased property without electricity or running water, where as a kid, pop carried the responsibility of shooting rabbits for their evening meal. From a humble background, he served his country, raised the family and played cricket into his sixties. He was a life member of Legacy and secretary of the 52nd Battalion reunion group for over 50 years until he passed away at age 96.

It is these core values of service, opportunity, family, hard work and supporting others that have flowed through both sides of my family. Fundamentally, I believe as former Prime Minister Julia Gillard reflected, that for no part of our nation should demography be destiny. As such, every Territorian, whether old or new, deserves a chance to fully participate in community life, to receive good healthcare and a great education and live in a sustainable environment.

Too many people are held back and left behind in our community, and I feel a great sense of responsibility to stand up and represent them. This particularly occurs with increased pressure on Territory households, where cost-of-living increases are making it harder to make ends meet every fortnight.

The status quo does not work for a growing number of people in our society. We need new ideas, critical thinking and creative solutions to complex problems. To do that it is vital that we work with, acknowledge and celebrate our First Nations people. We are a proud country with a long historical legacy. In doing so, we need to work tirelessly to close the gap of economic and social outcomes.

We need to properly value, respect and protect our natural environment. That means we need to accelerate the energy transition with a boundless, free and sovereign energy source—the sun. If we do this we can build the infrastructure that connects our community, reduces the impacts of climate change and drives economic development.

We face many challenges here in the NT, but this has always been a place of great opportunity. That is why we need a justice system that provides rehabilitation and a pathway back to being a valued and productive member of society. We need a renewed focus on primary healthcare, public education and housing for all. We need policies that foster unity rather than entrench division. We need more jobs that pay a fair wage for a fair day's work. We do this so that our kids have a bright future and are proud of where they call home.

It is my personal goal to make a difference by building a fairer society where each generation has access to greater opportunities and enjoys a better quality of life, not just for some but for all. My grandfather grew up with very little and built a wonderful life through hard work, community involvement and government policies that lifted a generation into unmatched prosperity. We have the responsibility to gift our children the same opportunities. These are my values. They are Labor values, Australian values and Territory values.

In coming to this place, I stand on the shoulders of giants. I am incredibly grateful to former Members for Nightcliff Natasha Fyles and Jane Aagaard. Living in Nightcliff you have been such great role models and guides on how to be excellent local members and advocates for our community. To former Labor Chief Ministers Paul Henderson, Michael Gunner and Eva Lawler, thank you for your wise counsel and support.

From my very early days of meeting Susannah, I met Mark Dreyfus, former Attorney-General and current Member for Isaacs. Mark has been both mentor and friend to me and our family, and a great advocate for the Territory. It is terrific to see you here today.

As a proud member of the Labor Party, it is one of the greatest honours of my life to be elected to this place to represent our values, our history, our members and the broader labour movement. I thank Party President Clare Martin, Territory Labor Party Secretary Karlee Dalton and the executive committee for their faith in me.

To my incredible campaign team, I owe you a great debt of gratitude. The sacrifices made to run the by-election campaign in just three-and-a-half weeks were immense. I was given the great benefit of having a team that are exceptionally good at what they do and who worked incredibly hard every day. To my campaign manager extraordinaire, Jarryd Evison-Rose, you are the best.

Thank you, Leader of the Opposition, Selena Uibo, and deputy leader, Dheran Young, for being my sponsors today. You provided me with great support and guidance during the by-election and finding my feet in this office. Member for Arafura, Manuel Brown, and Member for Gwoja, Chansey Paech, thank you for your words of advice and encouragement. I am so grateful to be joining such a fantastic Labor opposition team in parliament.

Having a strong working relationship with the Commonwealth is a fundamental part of governing in the NT. I am grateful for the support of my new Labor colleagues, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy; Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling; and Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour. I also greatly appreciate the backing of your dedicated and tireless staff.

As a proud union member, I thank the members of the trade union movement for their solidarity and support during the recent campaign. Activating membership shows what we can achieve as a unified movement. I look forward to working with them all to advance the cause of all workers in the Northern Territory.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time on the campaign, who stayed up late and got up early; I will never forget your personal support and the hours in the sun and rain for a better future for our community.

I also appreciate the spirit in which the by-election campaign was fought by my fellow candidates and their supporters who put in so much effort. I acknowledge Anjan Paudel, the CLP candidate.

Being an engineer, a dad and the Member for Nightcliff is not possible without the love and support of family and friends. I thank my mum and dad, John and Elizabeth, who are watching online, for raising me and shaping my core values and sense of optimism for the future. You have always encouraged me to believe that I could do or be anything, and that your commitment to community and kindness to others has inspired me to run for public office.

My siblings, Lindsay and Fiona, are such fantastic companions on our life journey. I look forward to seeing you back in Darwin with your families soon.

To my in-laws, David and Janet, who are here today, you have been with us on this whole journey, from moving back to Darwin to the arrival of our twins and subsequent election campaigns. Thank you for being there for Susannah and me at every turn and providing valuable insight into the history and complexity of this unique place we all call home.

A special mention goes to my late mother-in-law, the incredible and wonderful Mickey Dewar, who worked in this place many years ago. She was a true believer in the Labor cause; this is also for you.

Saving the best until last, a special thank you goes to my wife, Susannah, and our four boys. To see the world through your children's eyes is one of the most special gifts of parenting. To our boys, thank you for inspiring and humbling me. Being your dad will always be my greatest achievement. Susannah, you have championed me throughout my career, including my time on council and the intensity of the recent campaign. Everything we have done, we have done together as a family. We support each other's career and life goals. Words cannot express the gratitude and love I have for you and our family. Susannah, you are always the one who lights up the room; you are my sunshine.

Ultimately, for as long as I have the privilege of being in this role, it is my commitment that I will faithfully serve the people of Nightcliff and work to advance the success and prosperity of the Northern Territory every day. This role will always be about our Nightcliff community and our shared future.

As a father of four boys I have watched a lot of *Bluey* over the past decade. From this experience, I feel that nobody could sum it up and conclude my first speech better than the one and only Bandit Healer. This is for Teddy, Clancy, Henry and Frank, and to all of you in the Chamber and the gallery. For the record today, ladies and gentleman, I am doing this for my kids.

Members: Hear, hear!

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 61

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, it is hard to follow such a powerful speech. Congratulations, and well done.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, congratulations.

Mr MALEY: This Bill does not change any checks; all the same standards remain in place. What changes is the efficiency of the system.

The Bill also improves reporting obligations relating to firearms that are destroyed, disposed of, damaged, defaced or rendered inoperable. That might sound technical, but it is extremely important; accurate records matter. The National Firearms Register is only as good as the information it contains. If firearms are no longer operational or have been destroyed or disposed of, police systems should reflect that. That helps law enforcement, improves intelligence, reduces confusion and supports compliance activity. It also gives the community confidence that records are current and accurate.

One of the most significant modern reforms in this Bill deals with digital blueprints for firearms manufactured through 3D printing or electronic milling machines. Technology is changing quickly, and criminals adapt quickly, so governments must do the same. This Bills creates an offence for possessing, producing, selling or distributing digital blueprints for the manufacture of firearms or firearm parts, which appropriate exemptions for lawful purposes, official duties and properly authorised manufacturers.

That is necessary reform. It targets emergency risks before they become entrenched and protects the integrity of our licensing system. It helps untraceable weapons from being manufactured outside the legal framework. This is exactly the sort of forward-thinking legislation that Territorians expect from a government that is serious about community safety.

The Bill also recognises interstate licence holders who come to the Northern Territory for lawful firearm activities, including competitions and sporting events. It clarifies possession, use and purchase of ammunition arrangements for visiting licence holders. That supports events, tourism and participation whilst maintaining lawful controls. I also welcome reform to the Firearm Advisory Council.

I mentioned before in this Chamber that firearms are part of many Territorians' lives. It is particularly true in the rural area, on stations, in remote regions and amongst sporting clubs. Those people deserve laws that are fair, workable and clear and assist with understanding their responsibilities. Lawful firearms owners overwhelmingly want strong standards because they know irresponsible behaviour affects everyone. This Bill respects lawful users while targeting risk, inefficiency and emerging threats; it has the right balance. It restores common sense and supports businesses, which is what Territorians voted for. They voted for action, certainty and security.

I commend the minister for bringing this legislation forward, and I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, getting firearms regulation correct matters, and I believe this Bill raises questions that we should not ignore.

Allow me to be clear on what I am not saying. I am not arguing against firearms ownership in the Territory. I understand there are station workers managing stock, farmers dealing with feral animals, recreational shooters and Indigenous Territorians who manage connection to country through hunting. There are so many legitimate needs, and any sensible firearms framework must accommodate them.

I have no interest in making life harder for people going about their lawful business in the bush, but I am interested in and committed to making sure that the laws we pass are the best they can be and do what they are intended to do. That is what the scrutiny committee is there for and why we should listen to it on this. I thank the Chief Minister for responding to the recommendations of the committee, but I am disappointed that she has not responded by accepting them.

Last week Commissioner Virginia Bell tabled the interim report of the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion following the Bondi Beach massacre, in which 15 people were killed with weapons that were legally owned. That report calls for nationally consistent firearms regulation and a national gun buyback scheme; the Prime Minister has committed to the implementation of this. Across Australia there is a serious conversation underway, and it is not a conversation about loosening oversight.

We often talk about the NT being different, which is true, but the Territory being different is not an excuse to move in the opposite direction to a royal commission recommendation. The question before us is not whether each provision of this Bill can be defended in isolation; the question is whether this is the right Bill for this moment.

In this Chamber we have heard that it is a missed opportunity for this parliament in light of what is going on in Australia. Are we comfortable being the jurisdiction that extended licence periods and loosened renewal scrutiny in the same week as a royal commission told governments to tighten up? Because that is what this Bill does. It extends corporate and employee firearm licences from five years to 10.

We talked about this in the scrutiny committee and in briefings. When asked why, the answer was simple. It came from the Saying 'Yes' To Business report. Reducing red tape is a legitimate goal, but reducing the frequency of licence scrutiny is a public safety question, not a business convenience question. When the committee asked what evidence shows that longer licence periods do not increase risk, the answer was about administrative efficiency. That is not an answer to the safety question; it is a restatement of the commercial case. We should know what the evidence is and that this does not increase risk.

The more serious issue is what happens at renewal. Under this Bill, a licence continues in force beyond its expiry date while a renewal application is being processed with no statutory timeframe on how long that can run. A licence expires, an application is lodged, the unit is under pressure, applications are backed up and the licence legally remains in force. For how long? Until the application is decided. When will that be? We do not know.

The Northern Territory Police Force told the committee that statutory processing timeframes are not suitable because processing depends on volume and operational availability. I understand the operational reality, but the result is that licences can, in practice, run indefinitely once expired. That is not hypothetical; that is what this legislation creates.

The committee recommended the 12-month reviewal processing times—which does not sound like it has been accepted by the government—so that we could get the information we need and find out what those processing times are.

A review recommendation without any mechanism to act on its findings is not a safeguard; it is an aspiration. Territorians are entitled to expect more than aspirations when it comes to ensuring that our community is safe. In this Chamber we know that everyone is committed to making sure we have a safe community.

Clause 11 increases the maximum penalty for altering a firearm from four years to 14, which is a more than threefold increase. As we heard from the committee and the Chief Minister, the rationale for this does not appear in the explanatory statement, nor does any reference to it. I raise this not to relitigate the drafting process but because it illustrates exactly why adequate time for scrutiny matters. Courts use explanatory statements. Practitioners use them. When something of this significance is missing it undermines the integrity of the document and the process. The committee recommended it be corrected, and I believe it should be.

I do not oppose this Bill. Much of what it does is worth supporting, but I ask the government four things. First, my request would be to implement the committee's recommendations in full. The committee has done its job as asked for by this Chamber, and we have given you recommendations about what should happen to strengthen this Bill.

Second, ensure that the processing time review happens and that its findings carry weight.

Third, correct the explanatory statement so it is clear, as time goes on, exactly what this Bill is intended to do and why.

Fourth, come to this Assembly with a clear account of how the Territory will respond to the royal commission's call for a nationally consistent firearms regulation.

The Territory has different needs from the southern capitals, but 'the Territory is different' is a phrase which ends conversations that should continue. It cannot mean that administrative convenience substitutes for keeping our communities safe. We can recognise our unique circumstances here and we can still take public safety seriously. In fact, the Territorians who rely on firearms for their work and their way of life are best served by a framework they can trust which is built on evidence, transparency and genuine scrutiny. That is the standard we should be setting in every piece of legislation we pass in this House.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I support the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026. Let us talk about what this Bill does. It acts on the work of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce, represents another step in reducing red tape and ensures the Territory is a great place to live, work and run a business. It acts on the work of the Firearms Advisory Council, ensuring the changes make sense to those who deal with firearms every day.

This Bill is in line with community expectations of keeping Territorians safe and respecting responsible firearm users and their ownership in the Northern Territory. This Bill extends the maximum period for firearm corporate licences to 10 years, and the continuation of licences during the renewal period so that businesses are not caught out and unable to operate while trying to abide by the rules because of delays in processing the application. They can spend less time in government offices and more time rebuilding the Territory economy.

It updates the membership of the Firearm Advisory Council. This includes the requirement that the chairperson cannot be a member of the NT Police Force or an employee of the NT Firearms Council to ensure their independence and balance within the council.

This Bill creates new offences for the possession of digital blueprints for the manufacture of firearms if they do so intentionally to produce, sell, distribute or possess a digital blueprint for the manufacture of a firearm, or part of a firearm, on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine. This change reflects the modern world we live in and the fact that times have changed.

This Bill amends the *Firearms Act 1997*. The Bill for that Act was introduced and passed before I was born. Much like how I have changed since then—I have gotten a lot bigger—the world has, too. The idea of 3D printing silencers and guns probably was not on the radar when this Act was first drafted, and despite the Bill having been amended a few times since then, today this CLP government is ensuring it reflects the modern world.

This Bill ensures that visiting shooters can access, purchase and possess ammunition in the Territory. It may seem silly, but these tourists spend lots of money to come here to compete in competitions, go hunting, go for a shoot and spend time in the Territory. There were barriers in place preventing them from purchasing ammunition. Territory businesses will benefit and it will encourage more shooters to come up to our guaranteed goose season.

This change makes sense and shows that we are listening. It recognises interstate licences for those competing in shooting competitions in the Territory, because why should you have to register again for a two-day event if you are shooting under supervision?

This Bill requires people who accidently or intentionally destroy or dispose of a firearm to tell the police about it within two working days. This tightens controls and ensures that the commissioner and the NT Police Force know what firearms remain in circulation. It is not just about record-keeping; it also informs police responses and the tracking of firearms.

This Bill allows the commissioner to vary licence conditions without requiring the revocation of existing licences, reducing red tape. With built-in natural justice provisions already in the Act, including the ability to take decisions to NTCAT for resolution, this change will reduce the red tape and timelines in making changes to licences.

This Bill is about sensible changes and cutting red tape, not kneejerk reactions. The changes in this Bill are reflective of this Finocchiaro CLP government's commitment to restoring our Territory lifestyle, cutting red tape and backing our shooters, hunters and firearms industry. This government respects your hobbies and responsible gun ownership.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I will keep my remarks short. I thank everyone who has contributed to the Bill. As I said, this is a small component of the work being done as part of the *Firearms Act* rewrite.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

PAPERS TABLED
Government Response to Public Accounts Committee Report on the Inquiry into the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 201, I report that the government response to the Public Accounts Committee Report Inquiry into the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum was deemed tabled on 27 March 2026.

Government Response to Public Accounts Committee Report on the Inquiry into the Darwin Ship Lift Facility

Madam SPEAKER: The government response to the Public Accounts Committee Report on the Inquiry into the Darwin Ship Lift Facility was deemed tabled on 30 April 2026.

RESPONSE TO PETITION
Petition No 20 – Immediate Pause on the Closure of the Pine Creek Police Station

The CLERK: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 123, I inform members that a response from the Chief Minister to Petition Number 20, calling for the immediate pause on the closure of the Pine Creek Police Station, has been received and forwarded to the member for distribution to petitioners:

Dear Mr Keith

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Petition No. 20 that was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 11 March 2026, calling for a pause on the closure of the Pine Creek Police Station. I can confirm there will be no closure to the Pine Creek Police Station.

The Northern Territory (NT) Government (NTG) acknowledges the concerns raised by the Pine Creek community and the importance of police presence.

Resource allocation and service delivery are operational matters for the Commissioner of the NT Police Force (NTPF). The NTPF is reviewing arrangements to ensure policing in remote communities remains sustainable, equitable and responsive to demand.

The Pine Creek Police Station currently operates as a two-member station, which creates challenges in meeting community expectations, response times, service continuity and sustained presence. Staffing remote stations across the NT continues to be difficult due to limited workforce availability, ageing infrastructure and changing expectations around remote deployments.

An analysis of calls for service indicates Pine Creek experiences comparatively lower demand than other remote locations with a review identifying an alternative model to improve flexibility, sustainability and regional response capability. Under the proposed model, police presence in Pine Creek will continue, with community safety the priority.

The proposed model transitions Pine Creek Police Station to a consolidated, flexible service post to support sustainable staffing and improved responsiveness. The service delivery under the proposed model will include 24/7 emergency response from Katherine General Duties, scheduled patrols, follow-ups, community engagement and proactive policing while targeting operations with specialist units to address seasonal demand and emerging issues.

The NTPF has communicated the proposed model to the Pine Creek community at a meeting held on 18 March 2026. During this engagement, police addressed misconceptions and reinforced to the community that there will be no closure to the Pine Creek Police Station. Police also advised that, due to uncertainty regarding Daly River, additional resources for Pine Creek, Batchelor and Adelaide River are being considered to maintain regional coverage.

The NTG remains committed to working with the Pine Creek community to ensure appropriate policing services are maintained and changes support improved service delivery across the region.

Yours sincerely

Lia Finocchiaro

MOTION
Note Petitions – Petitions No 21 and 22

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I move that the petitions be noted.

I speak in support of the two petitions, and I thank the members of the Public Accounts Committee for sending these petitions back to the Assembly.

Since I started campaigning to win the seat of Blain, antisocial behaviour around public housing has consistently been the number one issue and since I have been elected, it has continued to be the number one issue, both in terms of the impact on my constituents and the number of constituents requesting help.

This petition requested the government to address problem tenancies. I will not name the person who authored this petition because that person has preferred to keep their identify private for their own safety. The story is quite traumatising. For over two years, their family and neighbours were trapped in a nightmare. They felt, under the previous government, that there was complete inaction on problem tenancies and it caused a wave of unsafe and antisocial behaviour throughout our communities.

The person who drove this petition felt their once-peaceful neighbourhood had been shattered, with incidences of vandalism, noise disturbances and aggressive behaviour becoming an almost daily occurrence. They felt the situation reached a point where residents felt unsafe in their own homes. That was a sentiment that I heard all too many times on the campaign trail.

The NT Government has a responsibility to ensure that all its citizens can live in safe and secure environments and have the quiet enjoyment of their property.

They call for various actions as part of the petition. This poor person suffered with—I do not want to name the group, but the tenancy over the back fence was linked to a well-known criminal gang, and they engaged in many incidents. The petition author alleged they engaged in many incidents of behaviour over the years. When I met the author, they were at their wit's end. They were frustrated from lack of sleep, hypervigilance, constantly worrying what would happen—would someone jump the fence or would they wake up to vandalism or their house broken into? Sometimes it was just the noise of people drinking and partying all night long.

Under the previous government they felt like no-one was listening. I tell you, we are listening. I am listening, and I care. I have fought every day since I came to this House so that people can have the quiet enjoyment of their home, as is promised to them under law in this Territory. Honestly, that is the least people could expect to have.

The number of times I have been pulled over driving through my electorate by people at their wit's end—one lady waved me down while I was driving past the local shops, and she was bawling, totally at her wit's end and frustrated. She was crying because of the behaviour that was happening. Having doorknocked my electorate multiple times and walked every street, letterboxing more times than I care to think, I have to admit that there are areas where more needs to be done. There are hotspots in my electorate. Emery Avenue has been in the news and on social media a lot more than I would prefer it to be.

This government has taken strong action to remediate those issues. There is still more to do, and I look forward to working together as we bring peace. I can never forget in the lead-up to the election in 2024, people on Emery Avenue said, 'Come over here and watch this'. I sat in their front yard or in their garage and I watched, late at night, the lawlessness in public housing over the fence. With this government, the days of inaction are no more. The days of tin ears are no more.

I will work—we will work—for the safety of Territorians. Altair Court, I promise you, the residents, that I will keep working until it is safe and you can park your car in the car park without fear of broken, smashed windows, antisocial behaviour and needing a police CCTV trailer parked outside just to have a quiet night's sleep. Pollux Court, I make you the same promise.

The Member for Drysdale has spoken quite strongly in this House about the place colloquially known as 'Sin City', and we look forward to the day we can call it Victoria Gardens. We will keep working until that day comes. People say that housing is a human right, but people also have the right to quiet enjoyment of their home, so we have to balance competing rights.

We have finite resources and long backlogs of people who are currently homeless sleeping in cars and on couches and in temporary women's shelters. Just recently at a school assembly, a lady came up to me

raising the issue of a friend of hers who was there, who had nowhere to live. She was being forced to stay at a one or two-bedroom apartment a long way away from Palmerston that belonged to her ex-partner's sister. That was the only option she had because she had nowhere to live.

Meanwhile, we have people who cause significant damage to property and stay up all night drinking when somewhere in the backlog—we have four, six, eight and sometimes 10-year waiting lists—there are people who have a higher claim to public housing than those people who would cause property damage and torture their neighbours. We can rebalance those rights and find a balance between competing rights so that the privilege of public housing, paid for by the hardworking taxpayers of the Northern Territory, goes to people who can enjoy their home, raise their children and have good relations with their neighbours.

I thank the minister for Housing, Hon Steve Edgington, for his continued support of the Member for Drysdale and me. We have been at his door constantly since we were elected, raising issues, and he has been responsive and working with us to the extent that he can, for the betterment of all. In January this year he announced that public housing reforms are working to hold tenants accountable for bad behaviour and 25 tenants had been evicted or had handed back leases, and more than 70 had been taken to NTCAT.

Since launching its public housing reform agenda in March 2025, this CLP government has significantly stepped up compliance and enforcement, cracking down on antisocial behaviour, pursuing unpaid rent and fast-tracking consequences for those who do the wrong thing. To curb alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour we have declared common areas of most public housing complexes alcohol-restricted premises. I thank the minister for taking that strong action because it has had a large impact.

All Territorians have a right to be safe in their homes and community, so they can fully enjoy the Territory lifestyle. The system should place victims' rights and needs above those who continually offend.

I thank Minister Edgington and the staff in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development for their efforts in getting the public housing reform up and going. Territorians were forced to endure neighbours from hell for far too long under Labor, but it is clear that our plan is to create a safer and stronger Territory and get it back to a place where more people want to live, work, visit and invest.

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Blain for tabling this petition on behalf of his constituents in his electorate and other residents of the Northern Territory. From Labor's eight long years of failure we inherited a legacy of watered-down accountability, leaving public housing tenants who caused repeated disturbances, threatened their neighbours, threatened each other and blatantly disregarded community standards to remain in public housing with little to no repercussions. The CLP government is delivering on its promise to reduce crime and restore the Territory lifestyle by cracking down on public housing tenants and holding them accountable.

Social housing is essential. It provides safe, affordable homes for low-income and vulnerable individuals and families across the Territory. It helps reduce homelessness, supports economic participation and ensures access to essential services. The year 2025 was a year of action, laying down the foundation of clear expectations for social housing tenants. As we move into our second year—the year of growth, certainty and security—we are staying the course, reminding Territorians that the CLP government is here to continue cracking down on crime and focus on the root causes of antisocial behaviour.

Territorians have the right to be safe in their homes and communities. We are tipping the scales by placing victims' rights and needs above those who repeatedly do the wrong thing. Since launching the public housing reform agenda in March 2025 the CLP government has significantly stepped up compliance and enforcement. To accelerate progress on the reforms I directed the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development to establish a dedicated team to solely focus on further delivering these reforms.

In February 2026 the Tenant Accountability Policy Statement was released, setting out clear, non-negotiable tenant behaviour expectations; enforceable consequences when obligations are not met; equal enforceable standards for tenant and visitor conduct; liability for tenant and visitor property damage with enforcement if unpaid; and consultation on positive incentives for tenants who meet their obligations and demonstrate responsible behaviour.

Since March 2025 there have been 148 formal matters brought to the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal on issues such as terminations, unacceptable conduct, unpaid rent, untidy yards and failing to provide access for routine inspections or repairs. Of these 148 matters, 122 were secured in the CEO of Housing's favour and there are a further 26 active cases before NTCAT.

This has been a tremendous effort by the department. We are clawing back unpaid rent and have brought in clear rent compliance rules for all tenants, with prompt follow-up action when arrears arise. Agreements to pay are negotiated on strict terms with clear legal consequences for default.

The CLP government is empowering our frontline staff to do what they need for effective tenancy management, as the landlord. For far too long under the former Labor government, staff had their vision blurred on their roles and expectations. Our frontline staff work tirelessly to support all public housing residents to achieve sustainable tenancy management, but they are not social workers. They are representatives of the CEO of Housing as the landlord and have a responsibility to hold tenants accountable, in line with the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

The vision is clear now with the implementation of clear guidelines and updated policies to better strengthen frontline capabilities. We are getting back to basics. We are establishing ourselves as landlords to ensure obligations are met in line with the *Residential Tenancies Act*. We work closely with our support agencies such as Mission Australia, CatholicCare NT, Larrakia Nation and Anglicare NT, to ensure eligible tenants are provided intensive support to successfully manage their tenancies.

As part of this reform the allocation process has been strengthened to sharpen the focus on eligibility assessments, and all applicants on the waiting list are now rigorously assessed by way of increased reviews and auditing to ensure they are tenancy-ready and suitable for allocation. If applicants cannot demonstrate they are suitable, they will be supported with a referral to support programs, services or transitional accommodation to assist them in becoming tenancy-ready.

As the minister for Housing I have a responsibility to ensure legislation and public housing policies are tightened and enforced with a consistent operating model across the Territory that keeps all agencies working in lockstep on the front line and reflects clear community expectations.

The department has been actively working with NT Police to review and redraft the memorandum of understanding to set clear expectations on information-sharing to better equip compliance processes. A strengthened MOU will limit duplication across agencies, confusion about enforcement powers and operational inefficiencies. Ongoing information-sharing remains critical to support effective operations and ensure the CEO of Housing can fulfil their landlord responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

As well as the review of the MOU there is about to be the introduction of the police public safety officers. The CLP government continues to deliver significant law and order reform. The enforcement capability of the police public safety officers allows for early intervention to deter emerging disorder and restore order in public housing areas when required, making sure that people who commit crimes or cause antisocial behaviour face appropriate consequences.

The public housing reform brings trust, authority and responsibility into clear alignment and ensures that community safety is not left to chance. As this reform ignites our frontline staff to untangle the weeds of neglect and lack of care for community wellbeing from the former government, it is becoming all too obvious that pre-existing processes and policies had been sitting in their back pockets, stale and unused.

To curb alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour, we have declared 94 common areas of public housing complexes alcohol restricted premises and activated powers never used before, including seeking alcohol restrictions under the *Liquor Act* without the tenants' consent and imposing restrictions on individual tenancies with repeated issues.

Regular regional safety blitzes with NT Police and partner agencies have seen operations conducted across greater Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, enforcing liquor restrictions, breaking up disruptive behaviour and conducting patrols to tip out alcohol where in breach of the law. We have increased the use of crime prevention through environmental design and reviews to support increased security in areas subject to crime and antisocial behaviour. This has seen the increase at our complexes of security lights, clear signage, removal of shrubbery or bushes for clear vision, exterior painting and fencing.

I reiterate our key initiatives for implementation for our public housing reform. This includes intensifying enforcement action, strengthening enforcement partnerships, updating legislation and policies to target antisocial behaviour, streamlining processes to target rental debt, and reinforcing positive tenancy incentives.

I reiterate that most tenants are doing the right thing, and we recognise that. We will not stand for that small minority who are causing havoc, disturbances, drinking, fighting, swearing, abusing and disturbing neighbours in the street. We are putting in place clear policy, procedure and partnerships to work with the

police to understand what is going on and take enforcement action. Antisocial behaviour cannot continue in the way we have seen it develop over years of neglect by the former Labor government.

The CLP government is continuing to deliver on our promise to create a safer and stronger Territory.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, this petition is important. When members from our community feel there is an important issue for the parliament to debate, that debate can happen. I have read the petition and noted it, and aspects of it warrant the appropriate action.

When talking about tenancies in the Northern Territory, we are talking about people's lives, home and places in our community. Talking about tenancies and the work that needs to be done, it should be imperative that everything we do is about maintaining a safe and stable tenancy to keep people in homes. It is a trademark of the CLP government that when in doubt, evict people. When you evict people, you put them out on the streets and they then go and stay with other family members, putting pressure on the family unit and thereby causing another disruption to another tenancy. It is hysterical that the Housing minister tries to talk big but delivers no action.

In Tennant Creek we continue to see houses boarded up and derelict homes, as you do in Alice Springs. They are doing this because the communities have had enough; they have stood up and said, 'We want action'. That is the only reason the Housing minister stood up and made a housing commitment in January this year to try to turn over new houses. You do more when you help people stay in tenancies.

Let us be clear: do not blame people. Do not demonise every public housing tenant. Do better to help them maintain tenancies. When you see behaviours and issues escalating, do the work with the agency and the department to invest early from the start so you can see that tenancy maintained. Do not go the easy way out and evict people. Do the hard work and try to help someone maintain the tenancy so they can provide a safe, secure and affordable home for themselves and their family.

Safe, secure and affordable housing and accommodation is a human right, and we should be doing everything we can to help people stay in their homes. It is important. These issues can be fixed through investment, support and resources. That is what we need to see, but under this budget we have not. There are no real winners. It looks like there has been a decrease in the budget for town camps and homelands. The repairs and maintenance track record of this government speaks more than words. They have failed and continue to fail because houses are continually derelict and broken in Alice Springs.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, it will come as no surprise that I speak to this petition, as the Member for Karama and assistant minister for Housing and homelessness. I understand where the petitioners are coming from because it echoes the same in my electorate.

I have said many times in this Assembly that antisocial behaviour and criminal behaviour associated with certain public housing tenancies is the largest issue raised by the residents I serve. I maintain that I am a strong supporter for public housing. The minister is right that 95% of people do the right thing, but there are 5% who are destroying our neighbourhoods.

One of the reasons they are destroying the neighbourhoods is that Labor never had any consequences for bad behaviour. While we are introducing consequences, the minister has already gone through a number of them. I will not repeat it all because I do not have time. There are 148 matters before NTCAT, and that includes some evictions and returned housing. I am here for residents, but this budget—a fantastic budget—introduced the police public safety officers.

It invests in our police, supporting the rollout of a brand-new 212-strong police public safety officer workforce, backed by an additional $48m over four years and $15.8m of ongoing funding, providing visible patrols in public places, including public housing complexes, and freeing more experienced police to focus on serious crime.

That is a serious action that we are taking; we are not mucking around. I am here for the residents, always. I am here for the residents of Hawkins Court, Tabletop Place and Welsh Court in Malak. I am here for Mistletoe Crescent, Mahogany Crescent, Dorrigo Crescent, Sedge Court, Moreton Place in Karama and many more. I said that in my maiden speech.

I will quote the commentary of someone who wrote on my Facebook page when I was promoting our security initiatives: 'I would reckon Lia has done more in this government than Labor ever did. We have more police and more security around our northern suburbs. Everyone is good to bag out the current government who are trying to clean up the shit that the Labor government did.'

Those were her words, not mine. That is what the residents are telling us. They stand with us and want us to stay the course.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I will engage with these petitions carefully, because I think there are two different things going on here and they deserve to be separated.

The first is that there are Territorians who are genuinely struggling with difficult situations in their neighbourhoods with noise, antisocial behaviour, feeling like nobody is listening to them or responding. Those experiences are real, and I do not dismiss them.

The second thing is the framing of these petitions and the framing of the responses in this House; that framing concerns me. When we talk about problem tenancies, we are talking about public housing tenants, and when we use language like 'communities filled with riots, edged weapons and criminal activity'—language that appears in the petition itself—we are not describing a housing management problem. We are panning an entire group of Territorians as a threat. People who are, by definition, among the most vulnerable in our community, and people who are in public housing because they have nowhere else to go.

I believe that this framing does these residents a disservice, and I think this Assembly should be careful about lending a credibility. Here is what we know: public housing tenants are not more likely to be perpetrators of antisocial behaviour than anyone else. What they are more likely to be are people managing complex circumstances, mental illness, family violence, addiction, disability and poverty without adequate support.

When those circumstances go unaddressed, they can spill into the surrounding community. That is real and can cause great harm and problems to people, but the answer is not harsher evictions and more surveillance. The answer is the support that should have been there before crisis point.

This petition calls for faster evictions, information-sharing with police about problematic tenants and stricter tenancy enforcement. Some of that has merit. Clearer processes and better resourced housing officers are reasonable asks, but evicting someone from public housing does not solve the problem; it moves it. Often it makes it significantly worse for the person evicted and for the community that encounters them next, without a roof and support.

If we are serious about the concerns these petitioners are raising, we need to invest in mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment and support housing for people with complex needs. We need housing officers who have time and training, not guns, to support tenants. I will not support a framing that treats vulnerable Territorians as the problem rather than people who need and deserve better from their government.

I commend the genuine concerns behind this petition to the government, but I ask that the response addresses the underlying causes, not just the symptoms.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I speak to this petition because I agree that there has been some concerning language raised in regard to this petition.

The Member for Karama today said that he is here for his residents of Karama. Let us remember what the Member for Karama did only a couple of months ago. He called out residents' addresses because he thought there was an issue at their public housing. Shame on the Member for Karama for breaching people's privacy without going through the proper process. The Member for Karama could not care less about his constituents in the electorate of Karama.

The Member for Karama forgets that there are complexities in the families of many of the people he is speaking about in public housing. We heard people speak about drug and alcohol addiction, so what is the Member for Karama doing to ensure that people with addictions and mental health issues get support? He is calling out their addresses. He has breached the privacy of those residents in public housing rather than address the underlying issues. He is not leading with any empathy or care; he is trying to politicise and get political points for his own gain.

I suggest to the government that it addresses the underlying issues rather than politicise such a complex issue which we know some people in public housing have. He is smirking away over there, thinking it is hilarious that he can call out people's addresses. The real shame is that he cannot be an adult and bring in the supports that people need.

Motion agreed to; petition noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I recognise that today marks my 5,000th day of service as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Madam Speaker, you and I both know that only you and I have been around that long. You have been here for each of those 5,000 days and even longer. You might want to calculate that.

I thank my colleagues, who I had no idea would congratulate me on that milestone yesterday; they were extraordinarily sweet. It took me aback. You just kind of go along every day, do the work and fight for your community. You rarely—I certainly do not—pause to reflect and look back. When my beautiful team congratulated me yesterday, it genuinely knocked me for the rest of the day.

I thank all the communities I have served over 5,000 days. I started my journey on 25 August 2012, as the Member for Drysdale at the time, representing the suburbs of Gray, Durack and Driver. Over the four elections and terms I have served, the electoral boundaries have changed. In 2016 I moved to the electorate of Spillett and have had the opportunity to serve probably all of Palmerston in one way, shape or form, even going back to the times when Spillett came all the way to the Bagot Road overpass and my office was at the Winnellie shops. That was an interesting experience.

So many people have supported that journey along the way, not least of which are the communities that continue to elect me to serve. It is at their privilege that I can wake up every day to be the Member for Spillett and fight for what my community believes is the right direction for the Northern Territory.

I thank a few people. It will be 14 years in August, so many people who have supported me along the way are no longer here. I thought it was a nice opportunity to put on the record my thanks. Gosh, I did not want to get upset about it. I cried yesterday, and I was not going to cry today.

Gerhard Reuter was a member of our branch. Member for Brennan, I am sure you remember Gerhard. He was an incredibly strong man and somewhat terrifying. He would demand that people take a bag when handing them out at the Palmerston Markets. I think people were too scared not to take one of our bags. We would be like, 'Gerhard, you are doing a great job, but do you want to smile? That would be good.' Gerhard is no longer with us.

Chris Nathanael, who recently passed away, was on my preselection panel. I remember him always keeping an eye out for me over all those years.

Vic Ludwig, who we put to rest only last week, was an incredibly strong and important supporter of mine, along with many other people.

I thank Tim and Sandy for their unwavering support in the lead-up to 2012 and to this day. You are my rock.

Thanks go to Angie, my first electorate officer, when we were forging our way forward in a new and uncertain world, just trying to deliver the best possible services we could for the people of Drysdale, and to Jess, who supported me since Angie left.

To the CLP, it has been an incredible journey since I was elected as one of the youngest if not the youngest member of parliament at that time at 27. Then it was just Gary and me from 2016. I acknowledge and thank Gary for those difficult years in opposition. Then was the build back with my team from last term and now in government. I thank the CLP, particularly our party president, Nathan Land. He is amazing, and he is the president the CLP needs, so I thank him.

To my husband, Sam, and my entire family, including my mum and dad, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law, who is no longer with us. At 27, I was not even married when I came to parliament. Then I got married and had two beautiful children. It is a privilege to be supported by such an incredibly loving and supportive family, because I am such a workaholic, and I love this job with my whole heart. I love the Territory with my whole heart, and I wake up every day to make this place better. I can only do that because of the opportunity they give me; that is not lost on me any day. I know their sacrifice allows me to go out every day and do what I have to do.

Even on Thursday after attending my mother-in-law's funeral, I will have to come back to Parliament House for an important meeting, and I am okay to do that because that is my job. It is the people around you who give you the opportunity to serve at the level I expect to serve. You never forget why you do this job. It is such a privilege to serve.

To the new Member for Nightcliff, you have a whole journey ahead of you. Never forget why you put up your hand to serve.

I said in my maiden speech that I would not be afraid to fight for the right decisions for our Territory. I like to think that people have seen that I have stayed true to that and that is the way people interpret my service to the community. I have been here for four Territory elections, five federal elections and eight by-elections. I think I have doorknocked most of Darwin and Palmerston. It is such a wonderful thing.

I thank my community for 5,000 incredible days, and today, of all days, I finally delivered the Kirkland Road roundabout. Those who are not in Palmerston will not appreciate how important that is. For more than 5,000 days I have been fighting and promising the people of Drysdale and now Spillett that there will be a roundabout at Kirkland Road and Woodlake Boulevard, and today was the day. That is a lesson in never giving up. Never give up on the projects that you think are important for your community. One day you will deliver them.

I thank my incredibly amazing team. I love you all so much. To the staff and everyone who has helped me along the way—there are just too many to mention—but for every little bit that someone has poured time, energy or insight into me, I say thank you. It has made me a better person, leader and member of parliament. I am so proud to be the Member for Spillett and the Chief Minister. I thank every Territorian for the opportunity to serve 5,000 days.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I do not always see eye to eye with the Chief Minister, but congratulations on surviving 5,000 days and for doing it without a single grey hair.

Today I recognise something that has always been at the heart of our Territory: the union movement. From the marches in Alice Springs and Darwin over the weekend we saw Territorians stand shoulder to shoulder—workers, families and communities—coming together with one clear message: fairness matters. The truth is that the conditions we often take for granted, the ones we have today—fair pay, safe workplaces, leave entitlements and respect on the job—were fought for, won and protected by unions. That work is just as important today as it ever was.

Unions continue to stand up for workers, making sure people are paid properly, treated fairly and get to go home safely at the end of the day. They give workers a voice, especially when they feel like they do not have one. I am proud to be a union member. I am proud to stand with the hardworking unions across this great Territory. Unions like the United Workers Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the Manufacturing Workers' Union, the CPSU, the Transport Workers' Union, the Maritime Union of Australia, the Australian Education Union, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation and the medical unions do the hard work every day, standing up for Territorians.

I give a huge shout-out to Unions NT for always being there, backing the workers and their rights because when workers are supported, communities are stronger. When those rights come under pressure and workers are under attack, we do not stand back; we stand up, speak up and fight back. That is what May Day represents: solidarity; strength; and the belief that everyone deserves a fair go at work and in life.

I thank the union members, organisers, delegates and the workers who keep showing up for not just themselves but also for each other because a stronger union movement means a stronger Territory. What do we do when we are under attack? We stand up and fight back.

I place on the record my support and sincere thanks to the people in Alice Springs and the Rotary Club of Alice Springs. Sunday marked the annual Bangtail Muster, an amazing event in Central Australia where the community comes together to see a street parade down the main street of Alice Springs. The Bangtail Muster has been operating for 67 years and was the start of the mustering season many years ago. In 1961 the Rotary Club of Alice Springs took on the operations of the Bangtail Muster, and for decades it has been a festival of empowerment, enlightenment and community. Every year you will see the preschool kids, and it is a rite of passage as a Central Australian child growing up in our wonderful community to be on the Bangtail Muster float, waving at your family, friends and parents as you do the parade.

Thank you to all our wonderful multicultural groups, environmental groups, community organisations and the Henley on Todd ships that came through the Todd Mall as well. It sounds weird talking about ships in the middle of the desert, but it is an amazing event with the vintage cars. It is a great event for the community to come together to celebrate and reminds us of the strength of the Central Australian community.

This was the 67th annual Bangtail Muster. A huge shout-out and thanks goes to the Rotary Club of Alice Springs, which did an amazing job pulling this together. I highlight the work of Eli Melky, who did an amazing job wrangling everyone together. It was seamless and looked amazing yesterday for all of us there, watching on. I thank the Members for Araluen and Braitling, who were part of the parade.

Keeping that event alive is important for Central Australians, and we need to encourage more families and community groups to be part of the Bangtail Muster. It is a great event and, as I said, a rite of passage for Central Australian children.

I give a huge shout-out to the Alice Springs Turf Club. We had the Alice Springs Cup Carnival yesterday. It was an amazing time and great to see so many Centralians getting their backsides trackside to support the local racing industry. A huge shout-out goes to Kerry Petrick, the trainer who delivered the cup winner. The Alice Springs Cup Carnival is a big thing to pull together, and I thank the Alice Springs Turf Club, which pulled together an amazing event. It was great to see so many people beautifully dressed up and supporting the local carnival. It is a great time to bring people together.

Thank you to everyone who participated in Fashions on the Field. Thank you to our local jockeys and those who travelled to Alice Springs; all of our trainers who have been doing the hard work; and the Alice Springs Turf Club for maintaining the track so it is in impeccable condition, making sure the catering was done and making sure the calling was all done professionally.

The entire cup carnival has been amazing. The backdrop of the MacDonnell Ranges in Central Australia is a truly iconic racetrack for a truly iconic race, the Alice Springs Cup. Thank you to everyone who supported that event.

My Central Australian colleagues the Members for Araluen, Braitling, Namatjira and Barkly know that as we head into the cooler months, Central Australia comes alive with events. I am looking forward to the colourful array of community events and festivals.

A shout-out goes to everyone who travelled to Ross River for the folk festival. The Member for Araluen got down there. It was an amazing event that is dear to Central Australia's heart. We had time to come together and remember the late Hon Ted Egan there.

To my Darwin parliamentary colleagues, if you are looking for things to do, the desert and Central Australia are alive during winter for the festival season. There are many events to come.

I also give a shout-out to all of the organisers, supporters and artists who participated in the Parrtjima festival. I am getting emotional now. It was our first Parrtjima without Rhoda Roberts. I love her so much; she did an amazing job and was a good friend of mine. She is with the ancestors now. It was an amazing festival. I thank Paul Ah Chee for making sure that Rhoda was recognised, honoured and commemorated as part of the Parrtjima festival. It has been going for 10 years, showcasing our culture under light.

If members of this parliament have not had the opportunity to see the amazing Parrtjima, you are missing out. It was great to see artists from across the Territory come together to showcase their work, installations, the marketplaces and the local talks. It is something we should all be incredibly proud of. It is the best First Nations light festival in the world, and we should be proud of that. It is hosted every year in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). It brings people together.

At that event I did not see anything bad; I saw love, laughter, happiness and the excitement of Territory children when they saw the ranges coming to life under the amazing light installations with those important First Nations stories and artistic creations being told and shared. It is truly incredible. We are so lucky to call the Territory home. These events help us showcase the Territory to the rest of the country and the world.

Thank you to all of the organisers of the Parrtjima festival and those within the department since the amalgamation of NT Major Events for putting together an amazing festival; it was incredible. I look forward to next year and supporting the next curator of the festival.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge many of the events I have hosted and attended in the past couple of months.

As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I had the opportunity to host two multicultural events at Parliament House in April 2026.

The first was the vibrant celebration of Vaisakhi in the Main Hall of this building, marking the Sikh harvest festival and the birth of the Khalsa. This important occasion reflects the enduring Sikh values of faith, justice and service and highlights the strong contribution of the Sikh community to the Northern Territory.

I thank the Sikh community, particularly Harpal Dhillon from the Sikh Association of the NT, Rajwinder Singh and the Khalsa Association NT for sharing this meaningful celebration with us.

I also thank my colleagues who attended including the Minister for Health; the minister for Education; and the Members for Drysdale, Fannie Bay, Casuarina and Wanguri.

The second event I hosted was Thai Songkran new year. I was joined by our lovely Thai community for a function at Parliament House as a way of giving back to the Thai community, who contribute so much to the Northern Territory through their businesses, leadership and strong sense of culture and connection.

Songkran is a meaningful time of renewal, gratitude and respect. The water blessing ceremony beautifully reflected a fresh beginning for the year ahead.

The Finocchiaro government remains committed to restoring our Territory lifestyle by supporting and celebrating the communities that make us vibrant, inclusive and strong.

I thank Tou, President of the NT Thai Association, and her team for sharing this important tradition with us. I also thank the assistant minister for People Sport and Culture, Clinton Howe, for emceeing the event. It was great to have His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Hon David Connolly, attend as the patron of the NT Thai Association. My other parliamentary colleagues in attendance were the Minister for Health and Members for Fannie Bay, Casuarina and Blain.

Also in March was an honour to represent the Chief Minister and, as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, join the Greek community in commemorating Greek Independence Day. It was a meaningful opportunity to recognise the courage, resilience and enduring spirit of Greek people and to acknowledge the significant contributions Greek Territorians continue to make to our diverse and vibrant community.

I also acknowledge the efforts of the Greek Community NT GOCNA committee with Michael Koulianos, president; Ilias Makrylos, vice president; and all those who work to preserve and celebrate Greek culture, language and traditions across the Northern Territory.

My colleagues who joined me were the Treasurer; the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations; and the Member for Wanguri.

At the end of March I was pleased to attend the International Food Fair, recognising it as a valued annual event that is an important fundraiser for the Buddhist Society of the Northern Territory. I applaud Bandula Abeywickrama, President of Buddhist Society of the Northern Territory, and all the volunteers for bringing together the Darwin community with such a vibrant mix of cultures, flavours and community spirit.

Our government supported this event through our Multicultural Grants Program. Helping the community come together to restore the Territory lifestyle is what this government is all about.

It was a pleasure to be joined by my northern suburbs team, the Members for Karama, Casuarina and Wanguri. I applaud all other community groups who came to support important fundraising events in the annual calendar.

Recently I attended the inaugural opening walk of the 2026 Multicultural Walking Group. We started from the STEPS Casuarina office, where English courses are held for the newly arrived migrants, and made our way to Wanguri Oval alongside STEPS Group, Anglicare NT and Heart Foundation.

Every Wednesday this walk brings people from all cultures and backgrounds together as a chance to build confidence, make new connections and enjoy a healthy start to the day. A free breakfast is also served from 8 am at the STEPS Casuarina office before the walk at 8.30 am.

It was inspiring to see our community come together in such a positive and welcoming way. I had many chats with new migrants and community members along the way. These moments reminds us just how vibrant and diverse the Territory truly is.

I was honoured to represent the Chief Minister at the Sri Rama Navami celebrations, recognising the rich cultural significance of the occasion and the strong contributions of the Telangana Association of Darwin. Thank you to president Mithun Keesara and the community for sharing this celebration and the Member for Wanguri for being there.

I spent a wonderful Sunday morning last month with the Darwin Sikh community at the Sikh temple in Marrara in my electorate. It was a privilege to join the celebrations for the 327th anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa. This day marks a pivotal moment in Sikh history, the birth of Khalsa Panth in 1699. I thank Harpal Dhillon and the Sikh Association of the Northern Territory for the warm welcome.

I joined the local Telugu community and celebrated renewal and prosperity at the Ugadi celebration at Harmony Hall in April. The celebration marked the new year, a time for family, tradition and looking ahead with optimism. It was wonderful to see our diverse heritage on full display through music and dance.

I thank Vijay, Vikrant and the entire Telugu Association of the Northern Territory for coordinating this event.

I had the privilege of attending the Eid-al-Fitr reunion dinner at the Palmerston Mosque on Saturday 11 April, coordinated by the Islamic Society of Palmerston led by president Qasim Mujahid. This annual gathering over dinner was a special opportunity to celebrate culture, faith and community and to engage in important discussions that strengthen understanding and connections across the Territory. I thank the Member for Blain, the local member, for joining me for that celebration.

On Good Friday I walked 26 kilometres from Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Palmerston to St Mary's Star of the Sea Cathedral Darwin, reflecting on the Stations of the Cross along the way. It was a deeply prayerful and humbling journey walking with faith, sacrificing and grace in every step. I was grateful to conclude the walk with blessings and prayers led by Bishop Gauci from the Catholic Diocese of Darwin. It was great to be joined at the service by the Member for Port Darwin.

At the end of April I was joined by the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations and the Member for Wanguri at the Sinhala and Tamil New Year festival and games. I was honoured to light the traditional oil lamp to mark the new year. I thank president Saminda Sumanaratne and the Sri Lankan Australian Friendship Association of the Northern Territory committee for their timeless efforts in organising the day.

I also joined the Tamil Society of the Northern Territory for the Harmony Day and Tamil New Year (Tamil Puthandu) celebration. This event beautifully reflected the rich cultural diversity of the Northern Territory, bringing people together in the true spirit of Harmony Day. I commend the organisers, particularly Kavithasan Vivekananthan, for delivering such a vibrant program of cultural performances and community celebration. It was lovely to see my daughter performing a dance as part of the celebration as well.

On a lovely Dry Season evening, I was honoured to represent the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality to open the 2026 National Indian Film Festival of Australia in Darwin at the beautiful Deckchair Cinema. I was joined by the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations and the Member for Casuarina. This was the inaugural festival for Darwin, and I am sure it will become a regular fixture on the calendar. I acknowledge the incredible efforts of Anupam Sharma, NIFFA festival director; Farabee Kabir; and all the NIFFA team for organising this wonderful festival in Darwin.

After the opening I attended the Fall of Saigon Remembrance Day with the Vietnamese Community in Australia NT Chapter. I thank president Mr Thien Le and Phuong Le for their kind invitation.

This past weekend the Darwin community was treated to a fun, colourful and vibrant event at Civic Park as the Latin American Festival took over. It was an afternoon and evening of Latin American performances, food and cultural activities, and there were many Territorians out enjoying the carnival.

Our government was proud to support this event through our grants program. I was honoured to represent the Chief Minister and be joined by my colleagues the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations and the Members for Fannie Bay, Fong Lim and Casuarina. I congratulate Maria Consuelo and Maria Arcos, along with their organising committee of the Latin American Association, for a successful event.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, last Wednesday it was my distinct privilege to represent the Minister for Major Events and Minister for Tourism and Hospitality in launching the program of the Darwin Fringe Festival, which does not get nearly as much attention as its bigger cousin, but I thought it deserved a shout-out with a bit of specificity. The Darwin Fringe Festival is no longer just a tiny attachment to the Bougainvillea Festival, which it was when I was a kid growing up here; it is now its own artistic and economy powerhouse, and it is worth highlighting the contribution it makes to our community and society.

It was a wonderful opportunity to get together with the guests, festival organisers, artists, venue owners and sponsors to launch the program. The program is so dense that it does not warrant me cherrypicking stuff out. The fact is there is theatre, spoken and written word, visual media art, workshops of all sorts, music and comedy performances. It is a fantastic program filled with 70% local performers. Think about what that means. We are providing people with a platform to express themselves, make a contribution to the community and push forward their own artistic endeavour.

The festival is in its 11th year; it is a celebration of creativity, character and lifestyle. It is an incredible platform for Territory talent, with now 70% of the program being Northern Territory artists. The festival started in the 1980s as a club-style program within the Bougainvillea Festival, and it has always been a bit cuckoo bananas and had a little more edge to it. It was a space for experimentation, collaboration and emerging creative voices. There was a fringe festival moment in the 2010s, and then it relaunched in 2015 as an open-access independent festival by Councillor Fraser Bell.

It is worth noting what open access means. It means people can be part of it independently without being auspiced. It started with just 20 events, but it has built to support accessible career-building opportunities for artists. They are important for us to have. The festival has grown dramatically, and that is something to keep an eye on. By 2019 we were talking about 180-plus performances and 100-plus shows.

The leadership has transitioned to Hannah Illingworth who, as many of you know, is running it now and does a bang-up job. She has been there for 10 years or so, picking it up from Tamara Howie before that. They successfully navigated difficult times through COVID for a festival that is forward-facing and interactive, and they became a strong, well-governed and mature setup. They were independently incorporated in 2022—previously they were auspiced by Browns Mart—and now they are supported by a fantastic volunteer board. I give a shout-out to all those people for their hard work and commitment to making the festival happen.

It is now the largest independent arts platform in the Top End; it is a 10-day festival. To put on 10 consecutive days of a festival is no small thing. Some of you may recall that last year I put on a fledgling three-day festival, and it was just a small thing. To look at something like this, which is 10-days—17 to 26 July—and the density of the programming, it is a major endeavour.

It is a 10-day festival 'with bite' is how they bill it. There is always something interesting to check out at the Darwin Fringe Festival. By the same token, you can check it out is because it is a low-cost event. People can attend these events and get something out of the arts for a relatively low cost. It creates accessible experiences across Darwin, and that open-access model allows everyone from first-time performers to established artists to get amongst it.

At the broadest level, we need to recognise that it showcases Territory stories, culture and talent. It activates venues as well; that is important. These things create a multi-flow effect in our economy. It supports hospitality and local businesses during a period when there are gaps in between the other festival programming. It drives visitation and contributes to the community visitor economy, and it encourages community participation and social connection. These are the kind of things that we need to facilitate more of if we want not only to spend but make money, which, as you know, is a constant refrain from me in this place.

The key message in all of this is that the Darwin Fringe Festival reflects the Territory's creative heartbeat. It supports emerging talent, which we need to do to provide people with outlets for productive activity. For some it also builds career pathways. It strengthens community and reinforces what we keep calling a unique Territory lifestyle.

The thing about the unique Territory lifestyle stuff is I cannot catch a fish, and I am a terrible shot. It is not all about hunting and fishing; there a ton of things it is about. I have nothing against any of those things; all I am saying is that I cannot hunt, and I am a terrible fisherman. This is a place that has always punched disproportionately above its weight class when it comes to what happens in the arts, and it is important to recognise that.

I recognise the artists, producers, volunteers, festival leadership, the board and the venue and hospitality operators. There are so many of them to acknowledge that I do not want to do a shopping list, as I do not think it pays adequate service to the people who put in so much effort, particularly a lot of volunteer effort, to make the Fringe Festival happen. Fringe is more than a festival; it is a reflection of who we are as Territorians, and it plays an important role in restoring and strengthening our unique Territory lifestyle. That means different things to different people, but it is important to understand that the arts is a big part of our important Territory lifestyle.

Member for Nightcliff, you will soon learn that no speech that I give in this place happens without me talking about something economic; get used to it. The Fringe Festival pays payees out, which is something to recognise. I keep saying to the arts community at all the things I go to that the intrinsic worth of the arts is all well and good, but we need strategies in this space. Budget week is a great time to remember it, not just to figure out how to spend money, but how to make, save and stop the wastage of money institutionally. These are the things that matter.

Why am I championing the Fringe Festival in this regard? If it was just for the arts' sake, it would be a component of a smaller speech, but this is something that pays off big. Here are some facts and figures to put it in context. Since 2015 these guys presented 103 days of programming; 778 events; 1,382 individual performances and experiences; 3,229 creative engagements; sold, not given away, more than 40,000 tickets for paying punters; and paid about—get this—more than $1m to just independent performers. That is everyday people who are buskers or have only small-ticket gigs and may not be Missy Higgins quite yet getting the opportunity to ply their trade, be paid for it and create a return on investment in a multiplier effect for our local economy.

I will keep banging the drum for the fact that if we want to feed the people of the Northern Territory we need to catch more small fish, not just chase big white whales. I do not want to talk about the budget today; there will be plenty of days for that. The reality is that we chased too many white whales and, frankly, landed almost none of them for the best part of 25 years. We have to start catching those smaller fish. This is a pretty good-sized fish. This is not for catch and release; this is definitely for keeping.

The Fringe Festival currently pays out about 7% of the box office straight back to artists. The festival operates with only—this is the kicker—$100,000 worth of grant support. That is all it costs. It punches well above its weight class. What do tickets cost? How does it generate that? Tickets are in the $25 to $30 range which, frankly, these days you can barely watch a movie for.

This is something that pays off for us, big time. I know that the arts is not everyone's everything. The AFL is not everyone's everything, and we are not all necessarily hunters and shooters. However, it behoves everyone in this room to support a range of activities. It would be lovely to see more people at the Darwin Fringe Festival this year, showing their faces in and around some of the activity. It contributes more than $1m to the Territory economy every year. It is winning awards and formalising partnerships with the Italia fringe and other festivals.

I had the good fortune to be at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe many times. This is a festival that is comparable in many ways, and that is not an overstatement.

With that, I encourage all of you to get behind Darwin Fringe in its 11th year.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the career of Mr William (Bill) Daw, who served as NT Director of the Australian Red Cross, and recognise his extraordinary contribution to communities across the Northern Territory, following his retirement on 24 April 2026.

I was honoured to be invited to attend his retirement party along with my colleagues, the Members for Port Darwin and Casuarina. There were lots of tears and tissues in the room that night. It was a beautiful party for Bill.

It is important to know that Bill has dedicated decades of years of service to strengthening the Territory's communities through his leadership, advocacy and community-led development. Throughout his career he has worked extensively alongside First Nations and multicultural communities across the Top End, empowering local leadership, supporting youth pathways, strengthening governance and building long-lasting partnerships across Katherine, the Tiwi Islands and Nauiyu.

What stands out most about Bill's career is not simply the positions he has held but the enormous amount of voluntary service he gave back to the Territory community. Over more than two decades Bill has served

across local government in the arts, tourism, business, youth services, sports and multicultural organisations, consistently stepping up and stepping forward whenever leadership and community advocacy was needed.

Bill served as an alderman and Deputy Mayor of Katherine Town Council; the President of the Katherine Filipino Australia Association; Chairman of the Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre interim board; Chairman of the Katherine Regional Cultural Precinct Board; Chairman of Katherine Community Radio; and chairman of the economic development team for Katherine and Lajamanu.

Bill also contributed through numerous boards and committees, including the Australia Day Council, the Katherine Chamber of Commerce and the Rivers Region Youth Development Services, along with many other organisations across the Territory.

Since becoming the NT Director of the Australian Red Cross, Bill has led critical disaster response and community support programs across the Territory. He has assisted communities through floods, fires and times of hardship with compassion and sturdy leadership.

Bill was recognised with the Red Cross Distinguished Service Medal. His contribution to the Northern Territory has been truly extraordinary.

I first met Bill two-and-a-half years ago when campaigning for my seat in the 2024 election. I could instantly tell that Bill was a kind and understanding man who was deeply committed to the work he did and the people he served. Bill gave me a lot of support and advice and has always stood by everybody's side. Over the last two years I have come to see just how true that first impression was when I met Bill. I knew he was someone who always had community front of mind.

Bill has been a steady, compassionate and respected presence in the Northern Territory community. Through his work with the Red Cross and through the many connections he has built along the way, he has made a real difference to people's lives. In my experience—to Bill, if you are listening tonight—you have always carried yourself with humility, care and genuine sense of responsibility. You understand that good community work is built on trust, respect and a willingness to learn and listen. Those qualities make you not only a strong leader but somebody who people can rely on and feel comfortable around. To those who worked, volunteered or simply came across Bill in a social situation, I know that Bill sees you all as his friends. I am sure you will miss his warmth, integrity and deep commitment to service.

Bill left a legacy of kindness, leadership and genuine care for others. I know that whilst Bill is stepping down from his role as director, he intends to continue supporting the Australian Red Cross in a volunteer capacity, which speaks volumes about his commitment to service and Territory community.

To Bill, thank you for your friendship and service and for the difference you have made. You will be missed at Red Cross, but I am sure your colleagues and friends will remember your leadership with great affection and respect. Cheers to your incredible legacy across the Territory.

Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, I adjourn on the incredible resilience of my home town of Alice Springs and to speak to its greatest asset—its people.

Recently Alice Springs has been through something many go an entire lifetime without having to go through. When police reported on the case of a missing five-year-old girl after Anzac Day on 26 April, everyone in our community banded together to assist in the search.

What I saw over the coming days was a community rallying together, with organisations like Tangentyere Council, with Mel being at the community sign-on post for days on end; Purple House; land councils; NORFORCE; the Australian Federal Police drone team; the efforts of our NT Police Force; emergency services; the Alice Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade; and each of the hundreds of community members who gave up their time to assist in the search. Every person contributed to a community effort that was unlike anything I had seen in my entire life living in Alice Springs. What has come out of such an unimaginable loss for the family and the community of Alice Springs will be remembered by me for the way in which the community chose to come together and stand shoulder to shoulder to support one another during this time.

There is so much more that could be said about the situation, with many already commentating on the events that led to the disappearance and subsequent arrest. This evening I have chosen to focus on the resilience of our town and the way it came together.

I offer my sincere condolences to the family and greater community on the loss of such a beautiful little soul.

The Bangtail Muster, organised by the Rotary Club of Alice Springs, was held on Monday 4 May. Much like Madam Speaker, who I know enjoys the event every year, I look forward to this day every year. It is a day for our community to come together and celebrate the best of us, focusing on the young community members in our preschools around town.

Schools prepare their floats and travel down the Todd Mall. It has been occurring for as long as I can remember, with my mother often reminiscing about me being a gumnut baby on the back of a truck in my early years. Last year I watched my own daughter take part in her first Bangtail Muster, and I watched with pride as she rode along on the back of a float, showcasing the best of our community.

This year the community took the time to reflect on the loss of Kumanjayi Little Baby by wearing pink and standing in solidarity for a minute's silence before the event. Once again, as a community we came together, shared in our loss and celebrated our future.

A huge thankyou goes to Eli Melky, the Rotary Club of Alice Springs and all the volunteers who enabled the event to go ahead. This year, in the shadow of all that has occurred, it meant so much to our community.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.