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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Katherine

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Katherine be granted leave of absence from the Chamber today because of an illness and the ongoing emergency in Katherine.

Leave granted.

BAIL AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 52

Continued from 5 February 2026.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, this amendment before the Assembly is all show and no substance. It creates headlines, but it will have little real impact on how the justice system operates or on improving safety in our communities.

Once again this is a missed opportunity by the CLP government to meaningfully address the drivers of crime and to improve the rehabilitative health, justice and social outcomes for young people in the Northern Territory.

This amendment amends the definition of 'court' to include youth court and related judges and registrars. It is a minor technical amendment that will likely not cause any significant changes to the way lawyers and the judiciary already interpret the law, or the way in which matters are dealt with.

Although the CLP thinks this technical amendment is crucial to its agenda, Territory Labor and the wider legal community, stakeholders and experts know that further reducing opportunities for children and young people to access bail will have negative consequences in the short and long term. We know that locking up more children without proper supports to turn their lives around does not make our community safer; in fact, it does the opposite. It increases the likelihood of reoffending, drives long-term costs in our justice and health systems and undermines the social cohesion we need in our communities.

Territory Labor understands that if we want safer communities we have to address the underlying causes facing young people: their unmet health needs; unsustainable and unsafe housing; disengagement from education; involvement in the child protection system; experience with family violence; or a lack of access to place-based culturally safe support services. That work also means building the workforce capacity of services across the Northern Territory, including in our remote communities where challenges are often the greatest faced by our young people and the supports are hardest to access.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the state of our Corrections and youth justice systems. Prisons and youth detention centres across the Territory are operating over-capacity. That level of overcrowding places enormous strain on the Corrections officers, health staff and service providers working in these facilities.

Legal services are operating under considerable strain. Recently, Legal Aid NT made the decision to cease legal representation for children as young as 10 due to budget cuts. When centres operate beyond their intended capacity it means that incarcerated young people have reduced access to education programs, rehabilitation services, mental health supports and culturally appropriate programs that are essential to breaking the cycle of reoffending.

The pressure does not stop there. There is an over-representation of young people in detention with cognitive and functional impairments, with up to 89% of youth detainees likely to have a severe neurodevelopmental impairment. As of 31 October 2025 NT Health had only one allied health position within the Holtze Youth Detention Centre, and that position is vacant. Not only that, but 60% of the specialist assessment team and treatment team positions were vacant as of 31 October 2025. These are critical supports needed for successful rehabilitation.

For young people in particular, detention should never become a place where their connection to community, culture and country is further weakened. These connections are critical to rehabilitation and to giving young people a genuine pathway away from crime. Instead, under this government, we have children and young

people detained thousands of kilometres away from their families, support systems and country. This disconnection serves to further embed trauma and make it harder for children not only to reintegrate back into their community post-release but also to thrive in adulthood and live independently.

Territory Labor believes that investing in prevention and community-based programs for children and families will reduce long-term costs to the community. Instead of seeing meaningful prevention and supports for justice involving young people, we are seeing a Bill to make a technical amendment that will have no real impact. Every dollar invested in prevention reduces the enormous financial and social burden that falls on our health and justice systems when harm goes unaddressed.

This amendment ultimately demonstrates that the CLP government is not focused on tackling the real drivers of crime. For example, the failure of the truancy program is a direct example of a government that is disinterested in helping young people overcome barriers which prevent them from engaging in schooling. The government is failing to listen to, support and invest in frontline domestic and family violence services, housing and homelessness services and culturally safe Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to meet the complex needs of children and families, no matter where they live.

If we are serious about safer communities in the Northern Territory we need to invest in more than just tough talk and short-term solutions. We need certainty, and we need more than technical amendments to the *Bail Act* that will likely have limited material effect. We need long-term investment in prevention, rehabilitation and community-led solutions that support young people to build better stronger futures.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I am seriously shocked that after 18 months Labor still has not changed its position or learnt anything. Territorians put us here with a clear mandate to deal with crime, get offenders off the street and keep them safe. It is more than a mandate; I view it as an order given to us by the people to fix this problem and make the community safe.

In Drysdale everybody knows how unsafe it became. We are still tackling this issue, and we hear Labor rolling out the same excuses. It is just these victimhood statements; everyone else must be the problem, not the actual offender who, in Labor's eyes, is the ultimate victim. I will not stand for it, because it is utter madness. The people in Drysdale see that it is madness. Every day I have the clearest message from my constituents to go hard on crime. They want to be safe at home, at the markets and when going to the shops or work.

A massive part of that safety has been our government's reforms to bail. We state clearly that bail is a right given to you by the courts, and we have told the courts through our other reforms that community safety must be the highest priority. The serious question is: what is the point of a judicial system if all it does is process offenders? If it does not have an outcome that will create protection for the community, what is the point?

We are bringing the judiciary back in line with public expectation. We do not have to apologise for that because the people have given us a clear command to do that, and it is what we are doing. This government is doing exactly what it said it would.

The Member for Gwoja came in today sporting the 'Jailing is Failing' bag. After 18 months that is still the Labor position; nothing has changed. It worries me. What would the world look like in the Northern Territory if Labor were to ever come back in? We would see the same regression into a lawless society.

We will continue with the command given to us by the people. We will continue to listen to our communities and do what they expect of us as representatives.

The system had drifted. The rights of the offender outweighed the rights of ordinary people. That we could end up in that position is, to me, a warped reality.

When crimes are committed, the flow-on effects ripple everywhere. Crime is still a massive problem, and we will continue to push it.

Last week at my house teenage youths were robbing the property behind us. They jumped over the fence into my yard, then jumped into my neighbour's yard. Both of us have young children. Where the offenders jumped into my yard is near where my two young girls sleep. Waz, my neighbour, is a single father. His two sons are younger than my daughters. We had a sick feeling the next day as fathers knowing that teenagers were around the windows of our young children.

I do not apologise for the fact that I hope the police catch them. I hope they are taken off the street so that another mother and father in Drysdale do not have to experience what Waz and I experienced last week. It

is wrong, and I will not stand here and defend the actions of those perpetrators who robbed my back neighbour and then decided that they would dance around in our backyards. God knows what they were planning. Were they planning to come in through our children's windows but could not get access? I do not know. No matter where you sit in this Chamber, you would understand what that feeling is like.

The argument of change is important. I spoke about it yesterday on the domestic violence front; the same principle applies here. We are saying that we will take community safety first and foremost, so we will let the community be safe; we will protect the community's right to safety as the first principle. Then, and only then, do we start with the prevention, education and rehabilitation.

It is the same principle I spoke of yesterday. One approach does not fix this; it takes two. There is no change to my principles from yesterday when it comes to youth crime. I am focusing on youth crime because it is a significant part of the changes we have made. We are unapologetic for being tough with punishment. We are eager, and I mean that sincerely, to tackle the long-term problems. The Minister for Corrections is working on incredible plans. The long-term plans that will come through the Corrections system, particularly those for youths and youth boot camps, will be well received in Drysdale.

We are doing what the people of the Northern Territory commanded us to do. People can make excuses all they want and say that this is not what the community and the legal profession want. I do not care what the legal profession wants because my role is to serve the people of Drysdale, and they tell me what I need to do. That is the power I listen to. My priority in this House will always be the people of Drysdale and what they want me to do.

I find the excuses and the unchanged path of Labor deeply concerning. Here we are 18 months later, and the NT Labor Party still talks about going back to the same system that caused an utter collapse of community safety and the very fabric of our society.

We speak of racism. The crime crisis, to me, drove racism to a point I have never experienced or seen in the Northern Territory. This is a deep reason why we must tackle it. It is disgusting. The Member for Gwoja spoke of it yesterday, and I agree; some of the things that are going around have got to a disgusting level. The cause of that was people not feeling safe because government was not acting principled. The sooner we can get to a place where we have restored community safety and are applying the law equally, as it should always be, the sooner we will start to see real changes to the racial divide that is sickening and tearing at the fabric of the Northern Territory. I deeply hate it, and I believe that government policy has driven it. By restoring the balance in our society I also hope to see a restoring of individuals' views of one another as fellow human beings.

I will continue to fight for every constituent of Drysdale. I will continue to fight for the law to uphold the rights of the innocent and protect community safety for every individual, regardless of their skin colour, ancestry or religion—none of that matters to me.

We will uphold the law and apply it equally to all and make sure that the community is safe first. I thank the minister for her huge volume of reform in 18 months in trying to achieve that objective.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this Bill. This is another part of our government's reform agenda, continuing to strengthen bail and bring it in line with community expectations. It sends a message from those who write the law to those who adjudicate the law that there are community expectations and we are all in this together to deliver for Territorians.

I begin, as I like to do, by asking: how did we get here? It is always informative to look at where we are now by how we got here.

We were elected on the back of a crime crisis caused by the Gunner–Files–Lawler government. Territorians elected us to fix that crisis and bring back safety so that they could feel safe in their homes and the community, the economy could flourish again and they could enjoy the wonderful Territory lifestyle.

How did we get here? Gunner came to office in 2016 on a platform of restoring integrity to government. Who can forget the wonderful book of motherhood statements that he waved around? Unfortunately, his government was mired by scandal and corruption. I keep waiting for Chris Walsh to do a sequel to his book. I think 'Clowns in the Cabinet' would be an appropriate title.

Crime quickly escalated out of control. Under the Gunner government, youth offenders and offenders in general knew that they had a free pass to do whatever they wanted.

Anyone who lived through that period would remember the almost daily reports of stolen cars zooming around the streets. We regularly heard stories of people stealing cars, driving around to find police and then baiting them by purposefully doing a burnout or driving on the wrong side of the road. These people would then drive off because they knew that the Gunner Labor government did not back police and prioritise the safety of victims of crime over that of offenders. They knew that they could speed off and drive on the wrong side of road and police would have to call off the chase. That happened over and again to the point where the streets of Palmerston were littered with the smashed corpses of stolen vehicles. Kids were playing *Grand Theft Auto*; when they were sick of the car and could not go any further, they would slide off the road, abandon the vehicle and head off. If they were picked up by the police they would be bailed fairly soon after and be back on the street.

I have talked before about the reasons that drove me to put up my hand and run for a seat in this parliament. One of my good friends who lives in Gray was packing up to go on a work trip to Alice Springs one night. He was with his young family and his wife. As you do, he was a bit stressed trying to organise everything and put the kids to bed, so he forgot to lock the back door. That was all it took—forgetting to lock the back door one night when he had a big work trip the next day.

That night, youths—whose names are well known in the media, but I will not name them now—snuck in through his back door, grabbed his car keys, took his Toyota and off they went. They had a great time driving around town. They were arrested in your electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker, in the Karama shopping centre two days later.

In the meantime his car had suffered a large amount of damage. When he finally got it back, it was not the same as when they had taken it. It was not written off, and the insurance payout did not cover the amount of damage done. He had to get rid of it. That had an impact on his family and his work. They are a working family with two small kids. They have to get the kids to day care and themselves to work. They went from having two cars to one car for weeks on end because these young offenders, who were later convicted, were out on bail and having a fat old time.

The Gunner government's response to the burgeoning crime crisis in 2017 and 2018 was not to take a hard look at what was going on and listen to the community. Its plan was to have a youth justice centre in Pinelands. The community came out strongly in opposition to that. It is one of the few times that the Gunner Labor government actually listened to Territorians because that plan did not proceed.

What was the Gunner Labor government's response to this burgeoning crime crisis? Kids were running around out of control, causing harm on the streets. Its response was to decriminalise breach of bail in 2019, which supercharged the catch-and-release cycle. It reinforced to young offenders that particular government prioritised their welfare over that of victims and hardworking, taxpaying Territorians who just want to go to work, earn their money, come home and look after their family.

The express purpose of those bail reforms to the *Youth Justice Act* in 2019 was to reduce youths' time spent in custody. That is like being overweight and thinking, 'I need to lose weight, so I will chop my arm off'. Instead of going on a diet and exercising and addressing the root cause of the issue, which would require a bit of discipline and fortitude in the nether regions—if I could put it that way—doing the hard work, the Gunner Labor government took the easy way out and said, 'We do not like having young people in custody, so we will just let them out on the streets. If they breach bail, just let them out.' It was difficult for a young offender to be refused bail under the Labor government. It was literally murder, sexual assault or serious violence offending that would see someone kept in custody; merely disregarding the lawful orders of a judge of the Crown was not enough.

In my previous employment I had the privilege of seeing many of the bail orders that were issued, and they are clear. They are often written in language that is understandable to a young person. They were unable to comply with these. Breaching bail conditions carried no consequence. In that situation what incentives do police have to do the hard work of investigation, chase down and arrest these kids and enforce the bail conditions? Our hardworking police have many demands on them.

Under the previous government, the policy failures were multitudinous. Everywhere we looked there were policy failures. It almost set out on purpose—if there were two ways to do something the Labor government would choose the way that caused the most harm. All those policy failures from the Gunner Labor government in child protection, safety in schools and health—across the board—usually ended up on our hardworking police force. When a child is left in a dangerous situation, becomes traumatised and grows up with an inability to make good choices as a result of that environment and starts to act out and those bad choices form bad behaviours, who eventually has to deal with that young person? The police.

Some young people were unable to regulate their emotions at school and their behaviour would escalate—those of us who lived in Palmerston throughout that time have seen the videos on social media of king hits, coward punches, gang-up fights and stolen vehicles doing burnouts on the oval. This behaviour is not acceptable in our community, but it was allowed to spread and fostered under the previous government.

I remember doorknocking in Bellamack during the election campaign in 2024, and a few people told me—because I was running against the same Labor candidate as in 2020—'I had the Labor candidate in 2020 on my doorstep, and they told me all the Gunner government's plans for youth boot camps'. It is a great idea; I agree with that. If a young person is making bad decisions and cannot regulate themselves, they need to get out of that environment and go somewhere where they can get up early with the sun, do a lot of physical activity, have schooling, get any healthcare they need, have three square meals a day and go to bed early and not be on social media and engaging in the kinds of activities that end with them being in the justice system. How many boot camps were delivered by the Gunner–Fyles–Lawler Labor government in the last term? I reckon it is a big fat potato—zero. Where were they?

I am proud that this government is committed to addressing the root causes. We will roll out youth boot camps to divert young people from bad behaviours and give them opportunities to learn good decisions and behaviours and that there is another path to life. There is not just a path of being a little gangster, running around at night, running from the police, stealing a car, jumping fences and dancing around in the Member for Drysdale's backyard and scaring the pants off his daughters and wife; there is another way.

The Member for Drysdale and I are committed to supporting anything that can help the young people of Palmerston to make good choices and show them that there is another way and they are not locked into the lifestyle or culture that they see around them. We support anything that has good role models and gets kids out of unhealthy environments and into positive environments.

For example, the Member for Drysdale and I went to Aunties Place and watched Scotty BoxFit. He is from Ireland and about seven feet tall. I would not want to meet that guy in a dark alley, but he is the gentlest guy you would ever meet. He is fantastic. He runs a fitness program inside the youth detention facility and a boxing program for at-risk youth outside the facility. The relationship he has with these kids, the mentorship and discipling, is amazing. They use the avenue of a physical activity; they do not fight, just training. They box; it is not about fighting and being a tough guy, but it is about working hard and learning skills. I saw the humility—the humbleness—and the impact he has on those young people's lives. I am a full supporter of that program, and I would love to see it further expanded in Palmerston. That is the sort of thing this government is behind.

This Bill continues our agenda of strengthening bail and being clear to those who are involved in the justice system that there are community expectations and we are all in this together. We all need to work as hard as we can to meet the expectations of the community that there are consequences for bad behaviour. If someone is a danger to the community, they need to have their liberty curtailed until their behaviour and what they allegedly did has been addressed and they have repaid their debt to society.

I support this Bill and commend it to the Assembly.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I was not going to talk on this Bill. As people said, it is a minor administrative change to make things clearer, and I do not have an issue with that. However, seeing as the debate has moved to talking about the approach to crime in general I will make a couple of comments.

Member for Drydale, I could not agree more with your statement: what is the purpose of the judiciary if all it does is process offenders? That is exactly what the CLP is creating; a sausage factory stuffing more and more people into prison, removing the discretion of the judiciary and failing to provide significant rehabilitation in the so-called Corrections system, which corrects nothing and, in fact, makes people worse. We know that when the majority of people in prison are released, they go back in. That is not a system that is working. The CLP approach does nothing to address that.

I agree that the people of the Northern Territory want a safe community. There is no argument from me on that, and I am committed to working towards that.

Despite what this government tells us about its statistics, police statistics do not show a clear downward trend in crime. I refer to several key offence categories. Sexual offences are up by 1%; harm and endanger person incidents are up by 12%—in fact, higher now than when the CLP first came into power—and property damage is up by 5%. Yes, some things are down but other significant offences are up in the most recent reporting period. Police data captures only part of the picture. NT Police acknowledges that its published statistics are

provisional and that recent months may increase by 10% to 15% as the data entry is completed. Court statistics, which track how many matters are moving through the justice system indicate far higher levels of offences—in fact, 7,000 more in the same 12-month period.

I am greatly in favour of using data to see what is working and to evaluate it. If this government wants to use data to show us that this approach is working, let us see all the data and not just cherrypick. Whatever stats are pulled out and however they are used—we have heard lots of talk in this Chamber about using stats in a way that will bolster our own argument—we also have independent reporting from the Productivity Commission which indicates that Territorians feel less safe now than they did a year ago. Also, a significant proportion of crime, as much as 50%, is going unreported.

If we are talking about approaches to crime and community safety and building a community for every person—no matter who they are, where they come from or where they live—let us make sure we have the real information in front of us so that we can make decisions that are good for everyone.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I support the Bill, which amends the *Bail Act 1982* and clarifies the application of bail provisions to youth matters before the Youth Justice Court.

Although the amendment may appear technical in its nature, its purpose is both practical and important. It ensures that the *Bail Act* operates clearly and consistently when dealing with youth offenders and the courts responsible for youth justice matters.

Clarity in law is not a small matter. When legislation is unclear it creates uncertainty for police officers, prosecutors, defence practitioners and the courts. That uncertainty can lead to inconsistent decisions, delays and, ultimately, outcomes that undermine public confidence in our justice system. The amendment addresses that issue directly.

The Bill makes it expressly clear that the *Bail Act* applies in relation to youth matters and the Youth Justice Court and Youth Justice Court judges and registrars unless the Act specifically provides otherwise. That was unclear. It does this by amending the definition of ‘court’ within the *Bail Act* and by expanding the definitions of ‘Local Court’, ‘Local Court judge’ and ‘registrar of the Local Court’ to include the Youth Justice Court and its judicial officers. I suppose in simple terms the amendment ensures that when the *Bail Act* refers to the Local Court and its officers, those provisions also clearly apply to the Youth Justice Court when youth bail matters are being considered. This change removes obscurity and ensures that the law operates clearly on its face.

The need for this amendment became clear following a recent matter in the Youth Justice Court. During that case questions were raised about whether certain provisions of the *Bail Act* apply to the Youth Justice Court in the same way they apply to the Local Court. Although the Supreme Court ultimately confirmed that the *Bail Act* applies to the Youth Justice Court, the case specifically highlighted that the wording of the legislation could create uncertainty or differing interpretations, and we cannot have that in our judicial system.

In a busy court system where bail decisions are made every day, even small ambiguities in legislation can lead to unnecessary legal arguments and delays. This Bill addresses that issue directly by ensuring the *Bail Act* clearly applies to youth matters and to the Youth Justice Court, removing any doubt about how the law should be interpreted.

It is also important to be clear about what this amendment does not do. This amendment does not change the bail test or alter the way the courts assess bail applications; it removes uncertainty so that the existing law can be applied as intended.

Bail decisions are among the most significant decisions our courts make. They make them constantly on a daily basis, and the volumes are increasing. They determine whether a person charged with an offence is released into the community while their matter proceeds through the justice system, and that is why the laws governing bail must be clear and workable. Even small gaps of unclear wording in legislation can have unintended consequences. They can delay proceedings and undermine public confidence that the justice system is operating effectively.

This amendment will also assist those working within the justice system every day. Our judges, magistrates, prosecutors, defence lawyers and court staff operate in a fast-paced, high-volume environment, and clear legislation allows them to apply the law confidently and consistently. When the law is unclear, valuable court time can be spent arguing technical questions of interpretation rather than focusing on the facts of the case

and the safety of our community. Legislation should speak clearly. The amendments before the House ensure that it does.

The Youth Justice Court plays a critical role within our justice system. It deals with some of the most complex and sensitive matters that we face and young people who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. In dealing with youth offenders the justice system must strike an appropriate balance between accountability, rehabilitation and community safety. Young people who commit offences must understand that there are consequences for their actions, but they also must be given the opportunity to change their path and avoid becoming entrenched in the criminal justice system.

For the courts to perform that role effectively, the legislative framework must be clear and concise. By explicitly recognising the Youth Justice Court within the *Bail Act*, this amendment ensures that youth bail matters can be considered within the same clear framework that applies to adult matters unless the Act specifically provides otherwise. This supports consistency in bail decisions while maintaining the ability of the courts to consider the circumstances of each youth offender.

This amendment is also part of a broader program of work being undertaken by the CLP government to strengthen the justice system and restore confidence in law and order across the Northern Territory. Community safety is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of government, and we take that seriously and work hard to provide it every day.

Across the Territory people have been rightly concerned about rising crime, repeat offending and the impact this has on families, businesses and our communities. Territorians expect the justice system to operate clearly, consistently and effectively. They expect that the justice system will prioritise community safety; that repeat offenders, particularly those who commit serious offences, will face appropriate consequences; and that the bail system will operate in a way that reflects the realities our communities experience on a day-to-day basis.

For far too long the balance within the bail framework in the Northern Territory drifted away from the expectations that our community wanted to be applied. Under previous arrangements we saw too many repeat offenders cycling through our justice system—arrested, granted bail, reoffending and returning. I will give examples in our community of Alice Springs, where police picked up a group of young offenders in the afternoon, breaking into a house. They were taken back to the watch house, processed and granted bail. An hour later the police picked them up at another house they were breaking into. Those things should not happen, and our community expects them not to happen. That cycle erodes community confidence, places enormous pressure on our police and leaves victims feeling that the system is not working for them.

The CLP government has been clear that restoring balance to the bail system is essential. Bail is an important principle within our justice system, recognising that a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. However, bail must also recognise that another equally important principle applies; that is, the protection of our community and residents. A bail system that ignores the risk posed by repeat offending fails the community and the trust placed in a government by the community.

The reforms this government is implementing are about restoring balance and trust, ensuring that bail decisions properly consider the risks posed by offenders, particularly those with a history of repeat offending or serious criminal behaviour. They are about ensuring that the justice system sends a clear message that persistent criminal conduct will not be tolerated and you will face consequences for your actions.

At the same time, we recognise that the justice system must operate fairly, transparently and consistently. That is precisely why the amendment before the Assembly is so important. Sometimes reform involves major legislative change, and we have done plenty of that since coming to government. At other times it involves targeted improvements that ensure existing laws operate as intended in practice. This amendment is one of those practical improvements. It is a small but needed improvement to provide clarity to our courts and justice system.

The inclusion of the Youth Justice Court within the definitions of the *Bail Act* may appear straightforward, but it provides a practical improvement that will assist the operation of our justice system. It ensures that when bail matters involving young people come before the court, the relevant provisions of the *Bail Act* clearly apply. It ensures that judicial officers, legal practitioners and police officers can rely on legislation without ambiguity. It also ensures that the administration of justice operates more efficiently.

The CLP government is committed to delivering a justice system that works, a system that protects the community, holds offenders accountable and provides clarity for those responsible for enforcing and administering the laws of the Northern Territory. This amendment contributes to that objective. It strengthens

the legal framework surrounding bail decisions, supports the operation of the Youth Justice Court and ensures the *Bail Act* is as clear and effective as it should be.

Territorians deserve a justice system that prioritises their safety over that of offenders and operates with clarity and fairness. The amendments before the Assembly support those goals, and for those reasons I thank the Attorney-General for bringing on this Bill, and I support its passage through parliament.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, as the newly appointed assistant minister to the Attorney-General in her portfolios, it is a pleasure to speak in support of this Bill.

I will reflect. I cannot forget the Sunday—the day after the election—a bit over 18 months ago, when I walked around the Karama Shopping Plaza and witnessed many of our local residents openly expressing their joy that the CLP had won government and newfound optimism that we would get the Territory back on track.

That optimism had been quashed by the neglect shown by the Labor government over the previous eight years. That neglect was characterised by skyrocketing crime and antisocial behaviour across our neighbourhoods, a plummeting economy, many Territorians looking to pack up and leave and a lifestyle that was being destroyed by overregulation and unnecessary Labor government interference in people's lives. That is a shocker.

Having said that, I will focus on crime because it is appropriate to talk about that today. I could talk about the economy and everything else, but I will go back to crime. I will reference the Member for Johnston's speech yesterday when she talked about the sentencing Bill. I do not normally agree with everything the Member for Johnston says, but she said some good things—maybe not in the terms she thinks she did, but I did. She said:

> *The safety of victims and survivors is exactly why these debates matter.*

We agree with that, Member for Johnston. She continued:

> *If we are serious about protecting people from violence, we must be prepared to ask whether the laws we pass will work.*

Fair enough. Then she said:

> *Over the last 18 months the CLP government has significantly expanded its law and order response.*

I could not put it better myself. She went on:

> *We know there are about 200 additional police officers …*

That is what we want because Labor ran the police force down. We have recruited and will do more. She was on the money. She also said:

> *About 3,000 people are currently in prison …*

Guess what, Member for Johnston? That is 3,000 people who are not on the streets offending. We are doing community safety.

This government is all about community safety. How could I forget our CLP plan? I must go back to it because we do what we say we will do, and we take a lot of pride in that. In 18 months we have promised a lot, but we are delivering the lot, and that is what we have to do.

The Member for Johnston also said:

> *The government has passed 50 new laws, 12 being on urgency.*

She has a concern about urgency, and that is okay, but what was our election commitment to Territorians? We said:

> *Week 1 of Parliament we will:*
>
> - *Stop the revolving door of bail by making all serious violent offenders, with or without a weapon, start with a position of no bail*

Absolutely right—and with urgency; that is okay because the electorate had already put us in and told us that is what it wanted to happen. We also said:

- *Make breach of bail an offence*

That sounds logical to me. Community safety focused—that is what the CLP is. We also said:

- *New minimum mandatory sentencing for assaulting a frontline worker*

Absolutely. The Labor Party was a bit divided on that one and could not come to a united position, but as a united team we knew what we wanted to happen. Our plan continues:

- *Introduce 'Ram Raids' legislation, using a vehicle as a weapon and 'posting and boasting' on social media will be an aggravated offence*

We are focused on community safety. It continues:

- *Give police powers to fine, charge and arrest for public drinking in non-exempt areas*

We have more police to give those powers to now, because we have invested in the police. I know the member has an issue about the age of responsibility, but let us be clear that we said in our election campaign:

- *Lower the age of criminal responsibility so offenders don't fall through the cracks and can be sent to meaningful intervention programs to turn their life around.*

It is about getting kids back on track and getting to them early, not letting them go down. This is what we want.

I hear the whingeing, 'There is no rehabilitation; there is nothing. You are just locking up people.' I heard the Deputy Chief Minister yesterday in the debate about Katherine praising the fact that prisoners were doing the sandbags and good work to support our community. Giving people something positive to do is a good way of remediating them. Only the CLP does that. I remind people of that.

I want an effective opposition. I have been asking for this for ages. Labor and the crossbench members are great commentators from the side. They are good at staging media stunts, but they are devoid of policy. They comment from the side, 'No, no, we do not like that and we do not like this', but they do not deliver anything.

I also remind you that there is a basic principle that I and our whole team follow: bail is a privilege, not a right. In my other role as assistant minister for Housing, you could take out 'bail' and say: public housing is a privilege, not a right.

We always put the community first because community safety is the biggest thing people wanted us to champion.

I keep thinking about how the Labor Party can get back on track. It has to come forward with policies—I want it to—but it has to be honest with the community when it does so. I have a little preface for whenever Labor members get around to developing policies rather than commentating from the side. They need to put at the top of the page, 'We, the Labor Party, acknowledge that we derailed the Northern Territory in our last eight years of government and apologise profusely for that'. We have not heard that yet, but it should come.

The preface continues, 'Going forward, we are reviewing all our policies and accept that the CLP has, in just 18 months, got the Territory back on track'. Acknowledge that. Honesty is a good policy; those opposite should take it on.

They can finish with, 'We now put forward policies that simply endorse the CLP policies with some minor suggested amendments'. That would be a good start. Labor members do not have to make too many amendments, but we will give them a chance to do something positive. This is what they need to do.

I encourage everyone to understand that we put the community and community safety first. All that we have done over the last 18 months, including rebuilding our economy and restoring our lifestyle, shows that. We have the phrase 'growth, certainty and security'. It picks up on that, but the security issue is still there. When I walk around my electorate of Karama, people come up to me and say, 'Brian, your government and team are doing a great job, but there is a lot more to go'. I agree with that. They tell me to stay the course.

A new Member for Nightcliff is coming on board, and I look forward to welcoming him to the Assembly. He is a fantastic person. However, we have to understand what it will do to the dynamics of the Labor Party. People know that I have a penchant for talking about TV shows and doing analogies pertaining to them. This will be the *Teletubbies* versus *Mister Ed*. A horse is a horse, of course, of course, unless that horse, of course, is the famous Mister Ed. Some of those Teletubbies may switch over a bit. Maybe the Member for Gwoja can become Wilbur, the sidekick of Mister Ed. Who knows? I do not know, but it will be a funny dynamic.

I urge Labor members, whatever way you come, to focus on the policies, put the community first, stop being commentators from the side, stop whingeing and carrying on and do not do any more media stunts. Let us be practical. Get behind this government and let us get behind our community.

VISITORS
Sharing Our History, Securing Future Peace Study Tour

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of students and teachers attending the Chief Minister's inaugural Sharing Our History, Securing Future Peace Study Tour to Japan. Welcome to Parliament House and our Chamber; it is great to see you here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I support the amendments to the *Bail Act 1982*. The Bail Amendment Bill 2026 makes a small but important change to the *Bail Act*, as it builds on the work the CLP has already undertaken to ensure our laws are fit for purpose and keep the community safe.

Essentially, this Bill amends the definition of 'court' and inserts a new provision that confirms the powers and functions under the Act are conferred on and apply to the Youth Justice Court, along with the judges and registrars of the Youth Justice Court, as they apply to the Local Court and the judges and registrars of that court. Simply put, this Bill makes it clear that the *Bail Act* applies to youth matters in the Youth Justice Court unless the Act clearly states otherwise. This will help courts and lawyers apply the law correctly and consistently, and removes any uncertainty about how the *Bail Act* applies to youth matters and the Youth Justice Court.

We made a commitment to the Northern Territory that the CLP is here to reduce crime for a safer, stronger and more liveable community. With this change we ensure that there is no ambiguity or confusion, only clarity. We can all agree that clarity is necessary when decisions as important as those regarding bail are made because getting it wrong can have consequences. We are not here to repeat the legacy of the former government; we are here to deliver certainty, growth and security.

There was suggestion earlier in the debate that this Bill is being considered in isolation from our overall Crime Reduction Strategy. I put on the record that this is a part of the bigger picture of our Crime Reduction Strategy. As the Member for Karama said, we came to government on a platform of reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring the Territory lifestyle. We made that clear. We released our Reducing Crime strategy, which has a number of elements. Importantly, this is not in isolation from a number of strategies that our government has implemented. Our Reducing Crime strategy is all about creating a safer community, reducing offending and delivering effective justice. We are holding parents and families to account, addressing the root causes of crime and reforming the system. That is all about strengthening and improving systems and processes so that we can respond to challenges. This legislation provides clarity on how the *Bail Act* works.

When creating a safer community—the Member for Karama touched on a lot of issues which are particularly relevant—it is important to talk about the issues and what we are doing across the board in working with young people. We are addressing the root causes of crime, despite what the commentary from that side of the Chamber suggested this morning.

We are not only investing in health, education, housing and homelessness services but also increasing economic participation and community connection. We are tackling problem drinking and drug use and their impacts; preventing violence in the community, including domestic violence; empowering communities to be accountable for crime reduction; and supporting community-led solutions.

We are focused on early intervention and prevention. Since coming to government we have provided bail support accommodation in my electorate. The previous government spoke about bail support accommodation and having a youth justice facility in Tennant Creek. That was part of the regional deal Labor

failed to implement during its time in government. It was left to the CLP upon coming into power in 2024 to get on with the job and finish all the unfinished business that Labor left us with. There was plenty of talk from Labor that it was focused on working with young people and reducing crime—all that banter—but its laws and policies never reflected that talk. We got on with the job. Tennant Creek now has a bail support facility for young people. We have also delivered a youth boot camp.

I commend Adam Drake of Balanced Choice because, in Tennant Creek alone, some of the work with young people has been incredible. I have attended a number of graduations for young people who have participated in boot camps and programs with Balanced Choice in Tennant Creek. It is important to see that amazing work to help young people build self-esteem and get them on the right track. It is often forgotten that we are taking a holistic approach to dealing with youth crime in the Northern Territory.

We are also focused on addressing antisocial behaviour in locations and hotspots. This is all about creating a safer community in the Northern Territory. We are increasing visible policing. The police public safety officers are in training. Public housing safety officers and transit officers are working together to reduce crime, and we are strengthening that with the introduction of police public safety officers.

To reduce reoffending and deliver effective justice we have promoted the rights of and supports for victims of crime; implemented meaningful consequences for criminal behaviour; and invested in prisoner education and rehabilitation. We are ensuring that detainees and prisoners are working and transitioning to work post-release.

Some of this work is going on in Tennant Creek. I spoke about youths. The Barkly Work Camp in Tennant Creek is focused on preventing and reducing recidivism rates for prisoners. The Barkly Work Camp on any given day has 60 or 70 prisoners working in the community and taking opportunities to build their skills, self-esteem and confidence so that they can transition from prison life into jobs. That is relevant to preventing crime.

We are holding parents and families accountable, which is important because when a young person gets to court it is the last resort to deal with that child's offending. We are making parents responsible for their children's welfare and behaviour, and we are making children attend school. Labor never did those things. We are doing everything we possibly can with school attendance officers to get young people to school because we do not want young people offending; we want them on the right pathway to be better young people in the Northern Territory, not committing offences and not being subject to the *Bail Act*. We are working with parents; getting kids to school; taking the action necessary for early intervention and prevention; and increasing targeted case management for at-risk children and young people.

We are addressing the root causes of crime, which is an important part of early intervention and prevention, by investing in health, housing and homelessness services. Housing programs are underway. The remote housing program is a $4bn agreement with the federal government to build 270 houses per year. It helps to put a roof over young people's head. When a family has a stable home life with a roof over their heads, we will see better outcomes in education and health and a better opportunity for that family to be engaged in employment. We are tackling these things every day of the week, so when I hear those opposite suggest that dealing with the *Bail Act* is the be-all and end-all, it does not make sense to me. This Bill is just one part of the puzzle.

We have already seen some work done to tackle problem drinking. We introduced new laws to increase banned drinker orders from seven to 28 days. We have dealt with drinking in public places. When you put the bigger picture together, all these things will have an impact on young people in the Northern Territory.

Part of our overall Reducing Crime strategy is about fixing the system and the *Bail Act* to ensure clarity for the courts. It became clear that change was necessary after a recent bail decision in the Youth Justice Court.

In that case a youth was involved in threatening a shopping centre employee with a machete and was subsequently charged with multiple offences, including recklessly endangering serious harm. The young person applied for bail and was granted bail by the Youth Justice Court, despite the Director of Public Prosecutions seeking a stay of the bail decision. Normally when this happens, the person being granted bail is kept in custody or detention while the Supreme Court reviews that decision. On that occasion the Youth Justice Court decided that the section of the *Bail Act* that allows bail decisions to be stayed did not apply to that court because it only references the Supreme Court and Local Court, not the Youth Justice Court. As a result, the stay was refused and the youth was granted bail despite the DPP's protest.

The youth remained on bail for six nights until the Supreme Court heard the case, which the DPP brought despite the youth justice decision. The Supreme Court confirmed that the law applies to the Youth Justice Court, restating the existing case law.

Thie Bill builds on the work we have already undertaken to ensure our laws are fit for purpose and keeping the community safe. It makes a small but important change to the *Bail Act*. It will remove any uncertainty about how the *Bail Act* applies to young people and the Youth Justice Court by updating the definition of 'court' by adding a new definition of 'Local Court' that clearly states the Youth Justice Court, its judges and its registrars. With this change we will ensure there is no ambiguity and no confusion, only clarity.

The amendments are intended to assist legal practitioners and the courts to correctly apply the law when considering bail matters in what is generally a high-volume environment. The insertion of section 3AA creates a deeming provision for any reference to the Local Court, Local Court judges and registrars of the Local Court to include the Youth Justice Court, judges of the Youth Justice Court and registrars of the Youth Justice Court respectively, unless specified in the Act.

This is just one small part of the puzzle in working with young people. We are doing everything we can to address the root causes of crime in the Northern Territory by focusing on housing; getting kids to school; supporting young people to have better health outcomes; getting people engaged in education; and providing opportunities for training and further education in the system.

We heard lots of different opinions on this legislation, but it gives certainty and clarity. I support the Bill.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank all the members who have contributed to this important debate on the Bail Amendment Bill. I will go through a couple of things that members said in their contributions. In some cases I will correct the record and in others I will explain further about their statements.

The Member for Gwoja, the former Attorney-General, was the first person to speak today. He tried to make it sound as though this was just Bill to make headlines instead of being focusing on what we should do. I remind everybody—Territorians know this all too well—that the Labor Party was the best at making headlines across the nation for all the wrong reasons. Our CLP government is making headlines for all the right reasons nationally, globally and locally, because we are doing the things that Territorians asked us to do. I make no apology for bringing forward important legislation—whether it has small simple changes or is a huge pieces of reform—to deliver what we promised Territorians: reduce crime; rebuild our economy; and restore our lifestyle. It is ludicrous that the Member for Gwoja accused us of making headlines. I do not think there has been any media about this Bill since we introduced it.

This Bill is important; I will explain why. All Territorians and all the people in our justice system—judges, court staff, defence and prosecutors—need to understand that we are serious about dealing with bail. We make it explicit, with no lines of interpretation, that our bail laws apply to the Local Court and the Youth Justice Court because there was a case with an interpretation that maybe our bail laws did not apply to the Youth Justice Court. The Member for Barkly explained that incident whereby a young person who was in a shopping centre threatening people with a machete received bail—for a short time, I add, because it was then clarified that bail laws apply to the Youth Justice Court as well. This legislation sends the strong clear message that bail applies, in all its forms, to both those courts.

The Member for Gwoja also talked about—I will correct the record—the CLP making cuts to Legal Aid. That is rubbish and nonsense. The CLP, just after coming to government, increased Legal Aid's funding by 87%. That funding is on an ongoing basis so Legal Aid has certainty to deliver services for Territorians, ensuring that alleged offenders are represented and victims can have faster justice. It is rubbish and a mistruth to say that we cut Legal Aid's budget; it is the opposite. I dispute that, and I put it on the record.

The Member for Gwoja talked about how we have failed in education because our truancy officers, in his words, are not working. However, it is clear that the school attendance officers, under the leadership of the minister for Education, have been a resounding success. I speak to parents in my community who do not want to receive a $300 fine, so they get their kids out of bed and get them to school, which is what we wanted to happen. We do not want parents having to pay fines; that is not the point. The point is that the responsibility to get kids to school is on the parent, and if the parent does not do that they will be fined. Guess what happens when the government says that it will fine someone for not doing something? People do it. We now have more kids going to school, thanks to that policy of our Education minister.

He also accused us of failing to invest in domestic violence prevention, which is ludicrous; it is rubbish. We had a huge debate yesterday about the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence's investment made for this government, Territorians and victims of domestic violence. That $36m in ongoing funding is a record investment in the prevention of domestic violence. The CLP government did that, not Labor; therefore, to accuse us of failing is disingenuous.

The Member for Drysdale is a strong advocate for and always talks about his community, which is great. He spoke about what his community went through under Labor. I remind you that the Labor Member for Drysdale was the former Chief Minister. That Chief Minister failed the community. She allowed the crime crisis to get worse, and allowed the Minister for Police, the Attorney-General and all her Cabinet colleagues to turn their backs on Territorians over a long time. That is why she is not in this Chamber anymore and the current Member for Drysdale is in the CLP government. He is fighting for his community because he knows the impact that crime has when it is not under control. He talked about public expectation. It is true that the community members expect governments to do everything they can to keep them safe, and our government is delivering.

Member for Drysdale, I am sorry for what you and your neighbours went through last week. You touched on the feeling you have as a parent knowing that somebody is on your property, and many Territorians understand exactly how that feels. Stories like that remind me why I am in this Chamber and why I am confident and happy to stand here and speak to Territorians about the law and order measures we are taking to ensure that we can keep Territorians safe.

The Member for Blain also spoke about stories in his community, and the stolen vehicles that he used to see dumped, particularly in Palmerston, but it happens all over the Territory. Most of the time the vehicles were stolen by youths, who were often out on bail. That was because the Labor government decriminalised breach of bail as an offence for youths. That is watering down laws and that makes our community unsafe. We saw that with the crime crisis.

VISITORS
Sanderson Middle School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, we are honoured this morning to have Year 7 students from Sanderson Middle School, accompanied by their teachers. Welcome to Parliament House and our Chamber. I hope you are enjoying your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms BOOTHBY: Madam Speaker, that was worth the interruption. Welcome, Sanderson High School. It is wonderful to have you all here learning about our democratic system.

The other part that struck home for me was when the Member for Blain spoke about the impact on one of his friends who had their car stolen the night before they were to go on a work trip to Alice Springs. This impacted the family who were down to one car and could not go to work and had to take their kids around somehow without their vehicle. It is not just the feeling of being violated, that your house has broken into while your children are sleeping—someone has stolen your keys and your car—but also the impact that has for many years to come.

The Member for Johnston said that she wanted this government to focus on rehabilitation, not just crime. She has forgotten that, as the Minister for Corrections often says, we have done more rehabilitation and programs inside our prisons than Labor did.

J Davis: Show us the stats.

Mr Paech: Where is it?

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Ms BOOTHBY: Those stats have been recited over and again. It is higher than it was under Labor. Labor and the crossbench think that when we change legislation it will be a silver bullet and fix everything. I understand why those opposite think that, because that is what they did when in government. It is not true.

Mr Paech: It is your legislation.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please!

Ms BOOTHBY: We have always said that there is more work to be done. We live in our communities and see the work that needs to be done, but Territorians can be sure, because our actions speak louder than words, that we will continue to change legislation to ensure that community safety is the number one priority.

The Member for Namatjira talked about how the community safety threshold is now enshrined in our system. He made a good point, because in April last year we brought in further bail amendments after the death of the gentleman at Nightcliff. At that time we set the strongest bail laws in the country so that community safety is the number one priority when the decision-makers—judges, courts or police—are deciding bail. We set that as the highest, and today we are again changing the bail laws to make it clear that the Youth Justice Court is included.

We have more work to do, which means we will continue to bring in more legislation. Sometimes it is on urgency because Territorians want and need that and sometimes it goes to a scrutiny committee and through that process. Guess what? The CLP government brought back the scrutiny committee because Labor scrapped it. Territorians are happy about that because they remember when Labor scrapped it.

I thank the Member for Karama for his speech because he reminded everyone in this House and Territorians that we took a plan with a big list of promises to the election, and we are delivering them. It is not rocket science; we say that we will do something and we do it. I understand that Territorians were not sure about what would happen after the election. They wanted to be optimistic. The member said that after we won the election there was a shift at the Karama shopping centre as Territorians had hope and optimism.

However, the rubber hits the road when those actions are delivered, which is what we are doing. The Member for Karama knows the crime stats all too well. In 12 months, compared with the previous year under Labor, the number of victims of crime is down by 2,700. That is a lot of people who are now not victims of crime, but were under Labor.

The best part of the Member for Barkly's speech was when he said that our government is making parents responsible. That is simple. As a parent, my kids—whether they are good or bad—are my responsibility. He talked about the school attendance officers and the family responsibility agreements. Labor tried to do that and it failed. I do not know how many Labor did; it was probably five or none. Who would know? It did not happen. The Minister for Children and Families has worked hard with her agencies and the people who work in that space and those agreements are now up and running.

We also have Circuit Breaker, which is part of the big picture. There are 500 families receiving the support they need, because they want to be responsible. Those parents want to be responsible, but sometimes you need a bit of extra support, and that is okay. We are happy to help in that space, and we should and we do.

This legislation makes it clear that the bail laws apply to the Youth Justice Court as well as the Local Court.

I remind Territorians how we got here. We are serious about reducing crime because over eight years of Labor government we saw Territorians packing up and leaving the Territory. It got to the point where Territorians were being ignored. People were looking over their shoulder because they were scared instead of living their lives. Fundamentally, we believe that governments should not be in people's lives or at their kitchen table, but they should be there to protect you. We are turning that around.

Territorians well remember the monumental rally out the front of Parliament House after the stabbing death of a bottle shop worker, young Declan Laverty. We have spoken many times in this Chamber about Declan. This is where this all came to a head as a real turning point for Territorians, why they turned their backs on Labor at the last election and why there are 17 CLP members sitting here. At that rally Territorians were talking about not just Declan but also Sifat, the Bangladeshi student murdered in his bed, because they felt that the government had also ignored his family and friends. People who had never been to a rally or protest came out that day. There were thousands of people out the front of Parliament House demanding that the Labor government make change. Specifically, the change they requested was to bail, because the person convicted of Declan Laverty's death was out on bail at the time.

When the Labor government responded to that rally it set itself a five-month bail review to look at all areas of the *Bail Act* and put forward recommendations to the Assembly for changes. After five long months of Territorians waiting, Labor decided that no change to the *Bail Act* was needed. After thousands of Territorians

rallied out the front and a petition with thousands of signatures was tabled in parliament calling for changes to bail, the Labor government's response was to change nothing.

That is different from what this government is prepared to do—listen to Territorians and take action. Since coming to government this is the third bail amendment we have brought forward to the parliament.

The first round was only a couple of weeks after we won the election; it was in the first sittings of parliament. We promised we would bring forward Declan's law so that we could deal with breach of bail and make it an offence again, deal with problem drunks and knife crime, bring back mandatory sentencing for assaults against workers and have a post-and-boast offence. We prepared all these different laws and brought them to parliament for debate and passage in that first sittings because we do things differently from Labor. That was the first bail amendment we brought forward—straightaway, off the bat, like we promised.

The second was the strongest bail laws in the country after the death of the shopping centre worker in Nightcliff. We thought that Declan's law did a lot of good things, but we needed to make it stronger and clearer so that more people were held to account and dealt with in the courts.

This is the third time we have brought bail amendments to the Assembly.

That is unlike Labor, which at the time of that protest said in the media that the crime Territorians were experiencing was all perception and gossip. That was disgraceful. I remember the former Labor Chief Minister said that a victim who died was in the wrong place at the wrong time, which I thought was disgusting. I remind Territorians that is how the previous Labor government treated people and that is why Labor is not in government anymore.

We have a strong CLP government. We take seriously representing our communities and bringing in new laws to ensure we deliver on our promises.

The bail laws we introduced previously are making a difference. We have seen the number of people on remand increase by 11% while the number of people on bail has decreased by 6%. That is a good thing because it means that the police have found an alleged offender and taken them into custody, then they have been before a court and the bail laws have been applied.

We have more sentenced prisoners than people on remand for the first time in a long time. That is because of the work we are doing. The time on remand is also less now than it was under Labor, by 7%. It is not just bail that gets addressed when you are talking about community safety; the police do their bit, the courts do their bit and if it is all clunky—which it was—and there is no investment or reform in those spaces, people sit around for longer on remand. You have to keep working at it, and that is what we are doing.

There were accusations that we are not preventing crime. I heard at length from some of my colleagues about the root causes of crime and how we are addressing those things. It is a big job, but we are committed to it. It is about not just dealing with the pointy end but also the time after the crime has been committed and the person living with the consequence of the crime.

Our Reducing Crime strategy is built on five priorities: safer communities; reducing reoffending; holding parents and families to account; addressing root causes; and fixing a broken system. Some of that work has been done over 18 months and there is more work to be done, but the Reducing Crime strategy allows for all of us in government to focus on what we have to do so that we have prevention, accountability and real consequences. We can do all of it.

I touch on the initiative that we brought in just after coming to government to help the justice system with early resolutions because if a case can be resolved early it means less time on remand, which means fewer resources and less waiting around. We stood up a team that we affectionately call the TIG-ER team, which is based in the Director of Prosecutions office. That team focuses wholly and solely on gathering all the evidence and working with the defence and prosecutions to decide whether a plea can be entered into early. When that happens, it frees up the justice system and gives justice to victims more quickly.

In the time we have had the team stood up and working hard, more than 600 cases have been finalised. About 62% of those cases resulted in an early plea of guilty. The average time to deal with them has been 12 days. Under Labor there was a case that waited for many months. That person was probably on remand for that time. We have been able to get that down to 12 days. That is a huge turnaround. That is true reform, and exactly what Territorians expect. It is what victims need; they want things to be dealt with quickly and not keep having to relive the trauma of being a victim of crime and having the offender not have his or her day in

court. I am happy with how the TIG-ER team is progressing in that space. There is more work to be done, and it will continue. The TIG-ER team members should be proud, and I thank them for their work.

We increased the victims levy by 40%, which is important. Our government will always put victims first; they need support, and we want there to be fewer of them. There are 2,700 fewer victims than there were under Labor because of the work we have done. By increasing the victims levy by 40% we can support victims with services and use those dollars to get justice more quickly for them.

Speaking of increasing dollars for victims, I thank our Treasurer. He spoke on this Bill, but he also helped by backing us with the strongest and largest law and order budget we have ever had—$1.5bn in investment. Do not underestimate the work the Treasurer has to do in order to make those numbers crunch so that we can get money out the door and into our police, courts and Corrections system. It was incredibly underfunded and in a mess when we came to government, which is part of the reason crime was out of control and we had the crisis, along with the fact the Labor government did not want to deal with it. The Treasurer found that money for us, and we thank him greatly. Territorians thank him as well because we have fewer victims now. We have more work to do, but Territorians can trust that this government will do that work.

I thank the Legislative Scrutiny Committee, which looked at this Bill, and everyone who made submissions.

I also thank the staff in the Attorney-General's Department, because they did a mountain of work to bring this forward. To the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, thank you. There will be a lot more work for all of you, because there is a lot more legislation and reform that we will be doing. I know at times over the past 18 months you have worked day and night to bring forward legislation, and that is much appreciated. Territorians thank you for that because they can feel it making a difference in their lives.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

MOTION
Note Statement – The Year Ahead 2026

Continued from 10 March 2026.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I set out the year ahead, a year of growth, certainty and security, as the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment; Water Resources; and Corporate and Digital Development. As a proud born and bred Territorian, I believe progress is measured not just by plans or policies, but by the real positive differences that can be seen on the ground in our communities across the Northern Territory, delivered by this CLP government.

Across government our commitment has been clear: reduce crime; rebuild the economy; and restore our unique Territory lifestyle. From the start we have been delivering on that promise. We have implemented more initiatives to meet these core objectives than have been seen in a long time. I am proud to say that my portfolios of Lands, Planning and Environment; Water Resources; and Corporate and Digital Development have been at the forefront of those changes.

The year 2025 was a big year. I will begin with some of the ways that my portfolios have been delivering on a key election commitment to cut red tape and reduce approval timeframes by up to 50%. The focus has been simple: deliver practical services; back local capability; and make it easier to do business with government. That is what Territorians expect, and it is what we are delivering. By cutting red tape we are removing unnecessary administrative burdens and making doing business in the Territory easier.

The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment has embraced the opportunity to identify ways to cut red tape through legislative amendments, along with policy and process improvements. We wasted no time. In 2025 as the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment and the Minister for Water Resources, I introduced five Bills, all with a focus on supporting business in the Territory. This included removing third-party merits reviews; facilitating the use of Aboriginal water reserves; expanding the Container Deposit Scheme; improving the NT Fidelity Fund; and introducing several amendments to lands, planning, water and environmental legislation to increase efficiency in administration, reduce regulatory duplication and

modernise regulatory functions. In addition, changes to the NT Planning Scheme have been progressed, and there has been a focus on more efficient use of delegations and exemptions.

I am pleased to report I am hearing positive feedback from industry and the business community on this reform work which is also subject to measurement, with key approvals and timeframes published each year in the department's performance report.

The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment is responsible for 31 recommendations of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce. Almost half of these have been completed, with the remaining recommendations to be completed over the next months. This includes further amendments to the Planning Scheme and improvements to the approval process for onshore gas, mining and water licences, which will be supported through further legislative reform, including to the *Heritage Act,* the *Planning Act,* the *Building Act,* the *Water Act* and the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*. The year 2026 will see us build on the red-tape reduction work of 2025.

The Finocchiaro CLP government knows how much Territorians and visitors alike value our outdoor lifestyle. An adventurous spirit is something that defines the Northern Territory. With so many opportunities to explore and experience we are building on these opportunities, such as our historic acquisition of Silkwood, comprising more than 30,000 hectares adjacent to the Litchfield National Park, the largest addition to the national park estate in 25 years. We acquired this land for the benefit and enjoyment of Territorians now and into the future. It delivers our election promise to give Territorians more places to four-wheel drive, swim and hunt.

Speaking of outdoor opportunities, our government made an election commitment to provide certainty for hunters. We have delivered on that promise by declaring the waterfowl hunting season with a fixed bag limit and season length for the next five years, giving certainty to those hunters.

Land development has been progressed through continued infrastructure planning and delivery to develop Katherine East, Holtze and Kowandi in greater Darwin. The Finocchiaro CLP government is making it clear that the Northern Territory is open for business. When we came into government we said that we would work with developers to enable growth in the Territory, and that is exactly what we are doing. I will explain to everyone why.

I was pleased to announce in January that we have signed off on the project development agreement with Larrakia Development Corporation to deliver the major Farrar West development, with the federal government funding $11m to help facilitate this development,. That is wonderful work, working with the Larrakia Development Corporation to see houses built in the Northern Territory. This groundbreaking development comprises 222 residential lots, five commercial lots, six group housing lots and one community purpose lot to be delivered over the next eight years. It also completes a key element of the Kenbi Land Claim intertidal zone compensation package. I am glad to be the minister who could bring that all together.

New development is crucial as we continue delivering our promise to rebuild the Territory economy. Land supply is the foundation on which to build economic growth. Having an adequate supply of new residential land coming on to the market is fundamental to allowing all Territorians to build a home of their own, which stimulates the housing construction sector, drives the economy and creates jobs.

We have seen with the Treasurer's home build package that the $50,000 grants have been taken up by Territorians across the NT. The population is growing again, and our housing supply must grow with it. Having a home to call your own is a key part of that great Territory lifestyle. Now, thanks to my good friend the Treasurer, this government is expanding opportunities for people to make their dream home a reality by extending the HomeGrown Territory Grant through to September 2027. For those who are listening in, the HomeGrown package will be extended. We listened to builders and first-home builders who wanted this extended, and that is what we have done.

Across the Northern Territory development-ready land is available. In greater Darwin there is the potential for more than 3,700 lots, providing developers with approximately 13 years of supply to meet future demand for land. This includes land at Zuccoli; the new suburb of Asche, which is more commonly referred to as Holtze; Northcrest; Marrara Gardens; Durack Heights; Humpty Doo; and Lee Point.

In Alice Springs residential land is available in Kilgariff Stage 2A, with 29 titled lots. A further 36 lots are set to be released to market later this year through Stage 2B. Planning for further land release in Alice Springs this year includes tourist commercial land on Palm Circuit. This land sat idle for many years, and it has been

wonderful to work with the Lands department to ensure that this can come to market. It is an exciting opportunity for that tourist commercial land.

In Katherine new development-ready land is available in Katherine East, with 53 lots. Planning is underway to support the future release of residential land in the Katherine East neighbourhood centre, and we are working through what we need to bring those other lots to market.

Tennant Creek has six low-density residential lots available for sale, and Pine Creek has eight residential lots available for sale. It is important not to forget the rural regional areas.

Along with new development, two long-running matters that impacted Territory home owners were resolved in 2025—the defect-plagued properties built by George Milatos in Bellamack in 2013 and the Tomazos Group properties built in Johnston in 2015. The Member for Blain has been on at me about this many times. It is good to see that we are bringing these historical issues to rest.

I will now mention key priorities of mine, one of which is progressing the St Mary's site in Alice Springs. The redevelopment of this site for transitional housing for women and children has been a priority of this government and a priority of mine. Commencing with the heritage branch leading careful consultation with former residents, traditional owners and community housing providers, we wanted to ensure we were bringing people along with us on this journey to develop that site. The works associated with the construction of enabling infrastructure are expected to commence later this year, which will help address housing needs in Alice Springs.

Looking ahead to deliver our government's economic agenda, there will be a strong focus on land acquisition to support services and infrastructure for the gas industry in the Beetaloo Sub-basin, as well as the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage project. Over the last 24 to 48 hours we have seen how important water is. Development of the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage project is well and truly happening. The finalisation of Indigenous land use agreements with traditional owners in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek will provide an increase in land for residential development into the future, which is pivotal for our population growth and for Territory communities.

Despite what some may say, our government is working together with the federal government to deliver two exciting water science projects which will help plan and manage water in the Territory for generations to come.

The first is a managed aquifer recharge scheme to increase water storage and improve water quality for the Katherine region. A lot of people might be thinking now that they do not need any more water there, but this is to ensure that we can protect that water for many generations to come.

The second is an aquifer protection study in Alice Springs to assess current and future risks from population growth and environmental change is also underway. Some of the more recent Have Your Says went out.

VISITORS
Sanderson Middle School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Year 7 students from Sanderson Middle School, accompanied by their teachers. Welcome to the Chamber and Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr BURGOYNE: Welcome to those students. I hope you enjoy your time in parliament.

Project plans and risk assessments for both projects are underway, and a managed aquifer recharge project communication workshop with the Daly River Water Advisory Committee is scheduled for May this year.

I have spoken a lot about my portfolios of Lands, Planning and Environment, and Water Resources, so I will outline the key strategic priorities ahead as the Minister for Corporate and Digital Development, which is an important portfolio.

The first is to improve access to free-to-air television in remote communities. Across many remote communities—many people may not realise this—reliable access to free-to-air television has steadily

declined. Broadcasting remains the responsibility of the Commonwealth, but households in remote parts of the Territory continue to be impacted by poor services.

As an electrician I used to put satellite dishes on remote community houses. However, the key issue was in order to access that satellite TV, people had to purchase a VAST satellite decoder and pay for its installation, which was sometimes too much for many living in remote communities.

I have been working with my federal counterparts to bring free-to-air television to remote communities through rebroadcasting technology. I first raised this matter of free-to-air television at the Data and Digital Ministers Meeting held on 22 August 2025, which initiated a productive discussion across jurisdictions. Last month I travelled to Canberra to attend this year's Data and Digital Ministers Meeting where I was proud to continue my advocacy on this issue for the good people of the Northern Territory. I am pleased and proud to report that the Northern Territory achieved a major outcome. All ministers across the nation agreed to urge the Commonwealth to focus on improving free-to-air television for First Nations people in remote communities.

I think this brings it back for people and the students here today. Imagine living in a remote community and being able to turn on your television for the first time and watch the ABC and *Bluey* and, more importantly, get weather updates. We saw how our remote communities were impacted by flooding recently. Many of those remote communities do not have access to free-to-air television, so how can they stay up to date with the most relevant advice, especially as it often comes through the ABC and the Bureau of Meteorology into our homes?

I will continue to advocate this year in national digital forums for a sustainable broadcasting solution for remote environments. I will contribute Territory evidence and case studies to support and influence Commonwealth decision-making. It is important that we all continue to lobby our federal counterparts for better communications in our remote communities.

Another priority is the digital driver's licence, which I intend to launch later this year. If the department is listening, let us ensure that it happens. We want to offer a safer experience for people using government services, and the Department of Corporate and Digital Development will support the community and businesses to prepare for this exciting development. I think we have all been there, especially in Alice Springs; we always have our phone on us these days, but we do not always have our wallet and ID. That is where having the digital driver's licence for those who wish to access it will be a positive thing.

Another priority is the Alice Plaza refurbishment, which people in Alice Springs have been waiting a long time for. There are nice shiny government buildings in Darwin, but in Alice Springs we have been working to bring as many government services as possible under one roof so that there is a one-stop shop for people who need Lands and Planning, MVR or other government services.

Combining Northern Territory Government agencies into Alice Plaza rather than being spread across five separate sites is expected to increase foot traffic in Todd Mall. It is important that we are working on this hand in hand with Alice Springs Town Council, which is working to revitalise Todd Mall. We are trying to bring in more services and foot traffic to Todd Mall. I shout out to all the people who are listening. Business owners have asked us for a long time how we will try to increase foot traffic in Todd Mall, and this is one of the many ways in which we are trying to do that.

The building owner will invest $12m to $15m of their own money to upgrade the areas leased by the Northern Territory Government, with works planned to commence in 2026 using local tradies, contractors and suppliers. A key feature of this project is a new integrated business services hub on the ground floor to bring key government transactional and advisory services together.

I look forward to building on this momentum together with my parliamentary team in 2026 as we continue to deliver a year of growth, certainty and security for all Territorians.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Before we get down to business, there is a number of people in the gallery I will acknowledge.

First, the Hon Terry Stephens MLC, President of the South Australian Legislative Council is present in the gallery this afternoon. Welcome to Parliament House.

Also present are Hon Matthew Guy MP, Member for Bulleen, and Hon David Hodgett MLA, Member for Croydon, from the Victorian Parliament. Welcome.

We also have Mr Mick Uibo, the Opposition Leader's father, and Mr David Odling-Smee, a family friend. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

NOTICES

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion that this Assembly acknowledges the vital contribution emergency service workers and volunteer units make to the Northern Territory and communities.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion that this Assembly:

1. recognises the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle and affirms its importance in ensuring children are raised safely within family, culture and community wherever possible

2. embeds the Aboriginal child placement principle to the standard of active efforts in legislation

3. calls on the Northern Territory Government to provide adequate, ongoing and sustainable funding to properly support kinship carers and foster carers, recognising the critical role they play in caring for vulnerable children

4. calls on the Northern Territory Government to mandate priority access to public housing for kinship carers and for families and individuals fleeing domestic and family violence to ensure safe, stable and appropriate accommodation

5. calls on the Northern Territory Government to ensure that Territory parents and carers have access to fully funded full-time early childhood education and care services, including permanent childcare centres where communities identify the need.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion that this Assembly:

1. notes that Territorians are facing escalating cost-of-living pressures, including record rents, rising power bills, high interest rates and unaffordable airfares, with housing and energy costs consuming an increasing share of household incomes

2. acknowledges the CLP government's failure to deliver promised fuel price reforms and its inaction on airfares and warnings from local governments that cost-shifting will drive up council rates

3. condemns the CLP government's failure to provide meaningful cost-of-living relief and calls on it to immediately deliver action on power prices, fuel pricing transparency, airfares and direct support for families, renters, seniors and young Territorians.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion that this Assembly:

1. acknowledges the importance of supporting the safe and healthy development of children's mental wellbeing so they have the best opportunities in life

2. recognises the role of healthy and respectful relationship education, especially for children who are disengaged from school or who have child protection or youth justice involvement or who have unmet learning needs or disability needs

3. condemns the CLP government's failure to address children's poor mental health outcomes, the rates of child self-harm and/or suicide and the barriers to seeking support.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion that this Assembly:

1. recognises that the Northern Territory is experiencing acute housing shortages across urban, regional and remote communities, with safe and affordable housing essential to economic and social stability

2. notes that the CLP government has cut the forward infrastructure pipeline, abandoned National Housing Accord targets, reduced public housing maintenance and failed to present a coordinated housing plan

3. condemns the CLP government's failure to increase housing supply and protect renters, and calls on it to commit to a comprehensive housing strategy, including social and affordable housing, restored infrastructure investment, public housing maintenance and renters reform.

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

Mr YOUNG (Daly)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I present a petition not conforming with standing orders from 161 petitioners praying for the immediate pause on the closure of the Pine Creek Police Station. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

That we, the residents, workers, and supporters of Pine Creek and surrounding communities, urgently call on the Northern Territory Government and Northern Territory Police to halt the closure of the Pine Creek Police Station and to engage in proper consultation with our town.

The decision to close our police station has been made without any community consultation, despite the significant impact it will have on residents, seniors, businesses, travellers, and vulnerable people in our region.

Pine Creek may not experience the same level of crime as larger towns, but we do have crime, and when incidents occur, they deeply affect our small community. The presence of a local police station provides:

- *Immediate response capability*
- *A visible deterrent to crime*
- *Safety and reassurance for residents and visitors*
- *Essential support for seniors and vulnerable people*
- *Stability for a town located on a major highway*

Removing our police station will inevitably increase response times, reduce safety, and leave our community exposed. A decision of this magnitude should never be made without speaking to the people who love here.

Your petitioners therefore humbly ask …

That the Northern Territory Government

1. *Put an immediate pause on the closure of the Pine Creek Police Station*
2. *Provide a full and transparent community consultation process*
3. *Provide Clear information on how policing services would be delivered if closure proceeds*
4. *Consider the needs of seniors and vulnerable residents, who rely heavily on local services*

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I move that the petition be referred to the Public Accounts Committee to consider whether the petition should be debated.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

NT Floods – Federal Assistance

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

Our amazing frontline staff and public servants are working incredibly hard to support communities affected by devastating floods. Many have been working around the clock and are starting to get extremely fatigued. You and your Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure have said that resources are stretched. Given that response and that the recovery efforts for these widespread floods are likely to go on for many weeks, what assistance have you requested from the federal government to support our frontline staff, public service and volunteers? If you have not already asked for assistance, why not?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we are having an unprecedented cascade of weather events. We have rolled from one emergency to another. We started the season with a cyclone in Darwin; we had two floods in Alice Springs; and now all the flooding across the Top End, in Katherine and all the other affected communities up to Darwin.

It continues to be an emerging situation. Unfortunately, it does not look as though the weather is moving on anytime soon. The low-pressure system 31U continues to hang around the Territory, so we can expect more rain and we hope that rain will not fall in all the wrong places.

It is putting a lot of pressure on our teams. We have a massive operation at the emergency operations centre. I was out in the lunchbreak talking to the teams. We are expanding that facility, given the length of period for the recovery phase. I spoke with the support teams from New South Wales—all the New South Wales personnel who are embedded in our emergency operations centre and providing important relief and support. We have put out the call for more support from around the country through the national networks that are structured and designed for emergencies. That is the proper process.

We have also activated a wide range of disaster relief funding, which is now with the federal government. There are many moving pieces. I will explain some of the challenges, and sometimes there is not always a solution to every problem, unfortunately.

This morning we tried to surge Children and Families resources from Darwin to Katherine to support the delivery of the disaster relief payments. The plane was turned around. We tried again, and the plane was turned around a second time. We had to put them on a bus. This is the realities of government, and the weather is an amazing thing that none of us have the power to control. Best efforts are always made. Strong plans are put in place, but when your plane is turned around, it is turned around …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; I appreciate the Chief Minister's answer so far, but she has failed to respond to the specific question: what requests of assistance have you asked of the federal government, and why are you not asking if you have not already?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Opposition Leader, do not do this. Do not play politics in an emergency. You do not just ring the federal government, and magically resources appear. There is a nationwide process for this, which I just explained. We have done that. I just explained to you that we have personnel in our emergency operations centre. If you want to try to be a hero in an emergency you can live with the consequences of that, but I have to lead the Territory and get us through what is an unprecedented natural disaster.

NT Floods – Disaster Relief Payments

Mr HOWE to CHIEF MINISTER

The residents of Katherine have been severely impacted by the recent floods. Many families have lost property. Although the cleanup process has begun, recovery will take time. I understand that Katherine residents began accessing their disaster relief payments from yesterday.

Can you update the Legislative Assembly on the rollout of these disaster relief payments and advise how many residents have accessed this support so far?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Drysdale's great question gives me an opportunity to expand on this further, and I hope that the opposition listens to this. Of course …

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please; no interjections.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I explained it a bit in my previous answer. Disaster relief funding, like those immediate relief payments, the replacement of whitegoods and emergency accommodation, was activated. We brought resources into Katherine. Those resources have been overwhelmed by the volume of people seeking them. We have relocated. We were surging more resources in today, but obviously the weather got the better of everyone's best laid plans.

Despite all that, Children and Families has done an incredible job. Children and Families administers this scheme. About 435 people have been supported across the three evacuation centres in Katherine. We have 110 children in pop-up schools, which is good. We are trying to provide continuity and a normal environment for our kids, which is difficult under the circumstances.

Department of Children and Families CEO Brent Warren—I quote him because this paints the picture—said:

> *This is the largest Immediate Relief Payment rollout our Welfare Group has needed to administer in a single event, and our teams are working hard to ensure flood-affected residents receive support as quickly as possible …*

Everyone is working around the clock, as I said, to deliver services.

Every part of this natural disaster is at a different stage. For example, we still cannot gain access to Beswick to assess the damage in the bottom camp to see whether we can support people with whitegoods et cetera—whatever they need. Obviously, Daly and Palumpa are well and truly still mid-weather event and the river continues to rise. Even in Katherine this morning the river rose again, albeit to moderate flood level; it is still below major flood level. New homes in Katherine flooded overnight because of a different weather system and river coming up. Every minute of the day it is evolving.

Although we have managed to get a significant number of hardship payments out the door, because this is an historical flood event it is practically difficult to do so. Each of these communities is at a different stage. Everything is being activated, but there is different intelligence, information, responses and capability across the Top End.

NT Floods – Disaster Relief Payments

Mr YOUNG to CHIEF MINISTER

Under intense community pressure it is good to hear that you will fast-track disaster relief payments to the residents of Darwin River and the rural area. We welcome the financial relief available to residents in Katherine, Darwin River and the rural area, but the people of Jilkminggan, Wugularr, Barunga, Mataranka, Palumpa, Daly, Nemarluk and a number of other communities are still waiting to hear whether you will provide them with the same level of financial relief.

Can you explain to the thousands of flood-impacted Territorians who live outside of Katherine and Darwin River why you have not activated disaster relief measures for them, denying people support they need during this incredibly difficult time?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, again division, division, division—it is all Labor knows. All those opposite want to do is stoke a fire that does not exist, and it is disgusting.

I do not know how many times in the media and in parliament I can explain—I just finished explaining it to the Member for Drysdale—that every part of this is at a different stage. I assure those opposite that there is nothing on my desk. We have activated all DRA funding, but it does not mean that people will get money tomorrow. You are creating an expectation that does not exist. This is the same system that existed when

Labor was in government; it is a federal system with federal rules and processes. There is nothing on my desk. Do not create an expectation that there will be immediate relief payments for everyone tomorrow; there just will not be.

We have a big difference between a shelter, an evacuation centre and people who have had to stay in situ. For example, people in Beswick are still in community; they have not had to evacuate because everyone has gone to the top camp, so everyone is safe. As soon as we can get in, we can do the assessment on the ground. People cannot be buying fridges in Beswick today because there is no shop or understanding of what impact has happened to their house—what you are saying is ridiculous—whereas shops are open and people are clearing out their houses in Katherine. That is not the stage that the other communities are at. Daly River is still rising; it is not over for Daly and Palumpa. They are still in the process of the devastation, albeit people are safe.

Mr Young: They just want answers.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Member for Daly, I hear you yelling out that they want answers. I am not sure what you think I am doing standing here, but it is not a performance. I am giving you the answers; whether you want to understand and accept it is entirely a matter for you. Quite frankly, I could not care less because we have multiple ever-evolving situations, including people still being flooded today and yesterday. These are new families, regions and areas …

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I have answered the question.

Mr YOUNG: Standing Order 110; relevance. The Chief Minister stated that she could not care less. I am trying to understand. She could care about people …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, please take your seat. The Chief Minister has finished her answer.

NT Floods – Jilkminggan

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

The 400 residents of Jilkminggan were evacuated to Mataranka over the weekend and were housed near the school or the town hall. Roper Gulf Regional Council has been doing an incredible job paying for and providing evacuated residents with food and essential items. Local police, teachers and other frontline staff in Mataranka have also been going above and beyond to support the people of Jilkminggan and Mataranka.

Evacuees are now being told that they will be moved from the school, but there is no adequate alternative accommodation for 400 people. What is the plan for these evacuees so that they can be properly accommodated and supported? Will you activate relief payments so that the people of Jilkminggan, Mataranka and those on affected properties around the Never Never region and the local council supporting them can access this much-needed and deserved financial support?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, all those opposite should grab their pencil and scrub out the bit where it says, ‘Will you activate’, because I have already said that I have done that. They can rub that bit out of their predetermined question and move on to an actual one.

One thing that I am happy and pleased about in Question Time today is the distinct change of tune from those opposite. Yesterday they sought to tear down every public servant who has been working 12 to 16-hour shifts around the clock for weeks, bouncing from one disaster to the next. Today they are being a little more respectful, which I appreciate.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; the Chief Minister is imputing improper motives from our members. We have not run down the public service or emergency services.

Madam SPEAKER: No, she is not.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Everyone take your seat. Member for Daly, you do not use a point of order to bring in new information or make a mini speech for yourself.

Mr Young: It is a reflection on us.

Madam SPEAKER: No; there is no point of order.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: As I was saying, I appreciate that change of tone because it is hurtful and impacts the people on the ground. I have just been in the EOC where I had to say to our teams, 'Do not worry about all the noise; you are doing a good job.' I hear from people on the ground that they understand this is an unbelievable scale of operation; we are running multiple operations at once. They are doing an amazing job, so I thanked them and told them to please keep going and not to worry about all that noise—that criticism—which they were appreciative of. These are real people with real lives, Territorians invested in this place as much as anyone else, doing everything they can to get the best possible outcome.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Please pause, Chief Minister.

Mr Young: They are talking to us too.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, you do not keep talking when I am talking.

What is your point of order, Opposition Leader?

Ms UIBO: Standing Order 110; the specific question was about accommodating the 400 people who have been displaced and evacuated from Jilkminggan, and what are the plans from the NT Government.

Madam SPEAKER: There will be no more points of order.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: There are 949 people in shelters Territory-wide, so we have staff deployed to all those areas. I noticed you gave a long list of people who are supporting that shelter in Mataranka, and you did not include the Northern Territory Government.

Ms Uibo: I said the school—yes, I did.

Mr Young: Yes, she did.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Again, if you want to be political …

Ms Uibo: How can you answer if you are not listening to the question?

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the interjections!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: … that is entirely a matter for you. However, if you think it is the council that is feeding and caring for the people in the shelter at Mataranka from Jilkminggan, you are dreaming.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I am tired of being interrupted. I will sit down, and that can be the end of my answer if she will continue to interrupt me.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Opposition Leader.

Ms Uibo: I have a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: No, I said before you have used up your points of order.

Ms Uibo: I did not realise we had limits on points of order.

Madam SPEAKER: Just because you are not hearing the answer you want to hear does not mean you can keep interrupting.

NT Floods – Darwin River Dam Pump Station

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for ESSENTIAL SERVICES

It is good to ask a question without interruption. Last night the announcement came through that the Darwin River Dam pump station is back online. Although I understand that a boil water alert is still in place, I appreciate this important step in restoring Darwin's potable water supply. On behalf of the residents of Darwin, I thank the hardworking Power and Water staff and crews who were up again last night working on critical restoration efforts.

Can you provide an update for greater Darwin residents on the status of the Darwin River Dam pump station and the boil water alert?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Blain for this question because it is …

Mr Young: The real Chief Minister, please stand up.

Mr Maley: Throw him out.

Mr Young: I was just saying you are the real Chief Minister.

Mr EDGINGTON: I think he is on a warning, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: No. Minister, you do not tell me what to do either. Member for Daly, you can stop interjecting, otherwise you will be spending some time outside the Chamber. We will listen to the minister give his answer in silence.

Mr EDGINGTON: I will try again.

I can confirm that Power and Water crews worked tirelessly overnight to repair the critical infrastructure at the Darwin River Dam pump station, which is now supplying some water to the greater Darwin network. Getting to this stage has been no small effort. I was advised this morning that more than 50 people, including 20 specialists, worked onsite at the dam last night.

I reiterate that the advice from Power and Water is for residents to please continue to use water for essential purposes only while work continues to restore the network.

I thank all our Power and Water personnel, who continue to work hard and see this unprecedented situation resolved. The work they are doing is incredible. The Treasurer was there last night and saw firsthand the incredible work going on throughout the night. Travelling to the site—just to get there—has been an incredible feat on its own. I thank all the staff and contractors onsite.

I reiterate that the boil water alert issued at 10.30 yesterday by the Chief Health Officer is still in place. The boil water alert was issued as a precautionary measure to reduce public health risks to the community. This notification was issued to a number of key stakeholders and publicly through various media channels. I have been advised that this alert will be lifted when Power and Water advises the Chief Health Officer that the Darwin River Dam supply is operating reliably and when test results show that boiling water is no longer required.

I understand there have been questions from the community about drinking water at our hospitals. I reassure everybody that I am advised that all staff and patients at Royal Darwin Hospital and Palmerston Regional Hospital have access to safe water. They have filtration systems in place. That is working and safe. Ancillary buildings at the RDH campus have received instruction on safe water supply and have been supplied with bottled water.

I thank Territorians for their continued patience and support as we work to fully restore drinking water supply across the greater Darwin network.

I reiterate that we support Power and Water and thank the staff for every bit of work that they are doing.

NT Floods – Impact on Pastoralists, Farmers and Producers

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Agriculture is a cornerstone of the Northern Territory economy, supporting thousands of jobs and driving investment across our regions and remote communities. In recent weeks there has been significant flooding across large parts of the Territory, including the Barkly, Central, Katherine and greater Darwin regions. Although these events have been devastating for many communities, they have also had a profound impact on our pastoralists, farmers and producers. Territory pastoralists are known for their resilience, but many have suffered substantial losses of livestock, infrastructure and access to properties.

Can you update the Assembly on the challenges our producers have faced during these flooding events and how the Territory government is supporting them throughout this difficult period?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Goyder is passionate about this because, being the good rural boy he is, he understands that flooding affects people across the Northern Territory, not just in the urban areas.

Today I went to the JESCC with the Chief Minister for the first time and saw the team there working hard. Seeing with my own eyes all the information on the big screens brought home to me the extent of the loss and damage resulting from these continuous simultaneous events. It is widespread and devastating, and there is more to come. As the Chief Minister mentioned, the Daly River is still rising. It is getting worse in Palumpa and those areas I have been to. This will not be a situation that ends today or tomorrow; it is ongoing.

I thank the people across all the government agencies who together are working hard. There are many different groups.

I spoke to the animal welfare people from my department who are out there. They have a picture of a little dog they saved. That was their motivation to keep going. It was great to see with my own eyes.

I have spoken to pastoralists across the Northern Territory. They have lost equipment, vehicles and the technology they use to get information to keep their businesses going. I spoke to Amber Driver from Elkedra Station, Jay Mohr-Bell from Katherine and Romy Carey from the Cattlemen's Association. The information they told me was almost identical: properties have been inundated with water; road access has been lost; stock has been lost; and infrastructure has been damaged.

Unfortunately, they have been unable to assess a lot of that yet because the water is still there so they cannot get around the stations. These stations are large; they are spread over big areas of land, so it is hard to get across them. They are using helicopters, which is expensive. They are waiting for the water to go down so that they can properly assess the damage. Airstrips have been compromised and main roads have been cut.

The stories they told me were heartbreaking. I have been to some of these stations, so I understand that once it gets wet, people cannot move. They are stuck at the homestead. They know their stock are out there, but they cannot get to them to protect them. That is devastating.

I have also spoken to Simone Cameron from Cotton Australia. She told me that the cotton has wet feet because it is sitting in water. Cotton is an expensive crop, and it needs sunshine to get the yield happening. Unfortunately, all the cloud is affecting the cotton crop this year.

We are supporting the industry. We have the disaster assistance arrangements happening. They can access up to $5,000 for freight.

Member for Fong Lim – Conduct

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

Every Territorian deserves a safe and respectful workplace. Can you explain to Territorians what steps you have taken to address the allegations of bullying by the Member for Fong Lim, who is your anointed assistant minister for Education? These are allegations that the Speaker has described as a very serious matter. Please outline what you have done to address these allegations to the parliament.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as I have said publicly a number of times, this is an HR matter. It has been dealt with, and the Speaker has confirmed that it has been resolved. The Member for Fong Lim put out a statement clearly. There is nothing further to add.

Fuel Prices

Mrs ZIO to TREASURER

With the crisis in the Middle East and the ongoing floods in the Territory, people in Fannie Bay and all Territorians are under real financial pressure at home. Can you update the Assembly on the formal actions you have taken to address the sudden and unjustified spike in fuel prices across the Territory following the conflict involving Iran? What concrete difference can Territorians in electorates like Fannie Bay expect to see at the bowser? Furthermore, how are you ensuring that deep frustrations of Territorians—who are feeling these price rises and are being exploited by unscrupulous fuel retailers at a time when our communities are already under significant pressure—are heard loud and clear in your dealings with industry and regulators?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fannie Bay is right; it is not just the people in her electorate but also people across the Territory feeling these pressures.

This is a good opportunity to speak on this important issue that has pushed many Territorians to the boiling point. Across the Territory, Territorians feel like they are being gouged at the fuel bowser while many are still recovering from the impacts of severe floods across the Barkly, Central Australia and now in Katherine and the Top End.

I saw with my own eyes service stations jack up their prices by 10c to 15c per litre in a matter of days, despite already having tanks full of fuel purchased at the lower terminal gate price. I have heard stories from everyday Territorians who are utterly fed up, even more so in remote corners of the Territory in places like Ramingining where families are being hit with prices of nearly $4 per litre. To see prices rise so sharply just as we look down the barrel of even more weather events seems utterly predatory. After all these weather events, people finally had the opportunity to get home to their communities and they are being gouged at the bowser. There is no excuse for ripping people off when the fuel has already been paid for at the gate. It is offensive to suggest that international volatility justifies an immediate hike before the costs have even moved through the supply chain to those retailers.

The CLP is committed to making the Territory the most competitive place to live, work, visit and invest. We cannot achieve that goal when petrol suppliers use world events as an excuse to blindside consumers and industry, no matter their industry. That is why I wrote to the ACCC last week asking for an urgent examination of this matter. I instructed Treasury to monitor fuel prices across the Territory daily, and we will keep a close eye on them.

Today we wrote to all those retailers, letting them know just this: we are watching and keeping an eye on them. If they continue these predatory behaviours, we will use whatever means we can to make sure we deal with those issues. Any increase has to be defensible and capable of scrutiny. When and if gate prices go down, so should the fuel prices—just as fast as they went up. It is time they stopped taking Territorians for a ride because we will not stand for it.

Member for Fong Lim – Conduct

Mr PAECH to SPEAKER

I ask this question under Standing Order 116. Given the allegations of bullying by the Member for Fong Lim of Department of the Legislative Assembly staff which the Chief Minister refuses to address, can you outline what actions were taken to address what you have described as a very serious matter?

ANSWER

Member for Gwoja, the Chief Minister is right when she says that the matter was resolved. From my perspective, my realm of responsibility is to ensure the integrity of this Assembly and the effective and

efficient operation of the Department of the Legislative Assembly which, of course, is looking after the safety and wellbeing of the staff.

From my perspective …

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Madam Speaker, this …

Madam SPEAKER: No, I have not given you the jump. I would like to address this, please.

From my perspective as the Speaker, the matter was resolved from the perspective of the welfare of the two members of staff who were aggrieved.

I will use this opportunity—I did not quite expect this opportunity—to make a few comments about what has transpired in the public domain, particularly over the last week, and I will direct my comments to the Member for Fong Lim. I have thought long and hard about saying something about this situation since his press release on Sunday night. I feel that, in the role of Speaker, I have a responsibility to say something about what has transpired.

Member for Fong Lim, serious allegations of workplace bullying have been made against you, arising from your conduct as Chair of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee. This is all on the public record now. Someone provided that; it was not me. It is on the public record.

The staff who raised those concerns have behaved throughout with restraint and dignity. They did not seek media attention or come to this place looking for a fight. They came forward because they felt they had no other choice.

When those allegations became public, you had a moment—a very human moment—to decide how you would respond. You could have acknowledged that your conduct caused distress or expressed genuine remorse. You did not need a formal process or a direction from this Chair—me—to do any of that; you simply needed the courage to say, 'I am sorry', and you did not say that. You apparently have reached for your lawyers instead.

In the news report from 8 March you stated that you are actively considering suing for defamation. Who exactly are you intending to sue, Member for Fong Lim? Are you intending to sue your colleagues, Department of the Legislative Assembly staff, the media or, indeed, me? I have made comments in public about this whole situation. Who are you intending to sue?

Let me be direct with you about what that means. Threatening defamation action against colleagues who have spoken about your parliamentary conduct is not just a personal matter; it is an attempt—whether you intend it that way or not—to silence people who have every right to speak. This Chair and this Assembly takes this very seriously.

The path available to you is not complicated: withdraw the legal threats and apologise genuinely and directly to the staff who were harmed. That is not weakness; that is what leadership looks like.

The people of Fong Lim elected you to represent them with integrity; the staff of this parliament deserve to know that this Assembly will not look away when they are hurt. This institution deserves better than to have its members answer allegations of harm with threats of litigation. It is not too late to do the right thing, but time and goodwill are not unlimited.

Qantas Australian Tourism Awards

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

Can you update the Assembly on how the Northern Territory once again showed the nation what the Territory spirit looks like at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards? From Katherine to Tennant Creek and from the Red Centre to the Top End, our regional operators stood proudly on the national stage and led the country. What does this recognition say about the strength of our region and the quality of our tourism industry? How does this success demonstrate that confidence in the Territory economy is rising in our year of growth, security and certainty?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina knows that with everything happening locally as well as nationally and globally, it is pretty tough for a lot of people.

It is nice to celebrate what is happening in our tourism industry. We are leading the nation, and not just in who we are as a Territory-spirited people, but the world. This comes off the back of the fact that we were voted number 14 in the world as one of the best places to visit by the *New York Times*. That is worth celebrating and saying over and again.

The Member for Casuarina will now know that five of our Territorian businesses can now boast that they are on the national stage; they are Qantas Australian Tourism Award winners. Katherine Outback Experience won gold for the third time in a row; it is the fourth time in five years. It was also inducted into the Hall of Fame, which is fabulous. On the back of what is going on in Katherine, I am sure all the Katherine community is behind Tom and Annabel Curtain for their amazing achievement.

In the Barkly the Safari Lodge Motel took out gold this year. That is off the back of winning silver last year, and now it has taken the gold. I met that passionate group of people at the Brolgas last year with the Member for Barkly, and they love what they do.

Madam Speaker, in your neck of the woods, Tourism Central Australia took out gold for its Stories From The Heart campaign. That is amazing. It was up against places like Melbourne and Rottnest Island; that is what the Northern Territory beat, which is fabulous. It was a wonderful campaign where locals shared their stories about why they love Alice Springs so much to bring people to the Centre. It worked, and now it is a national award winner as well.

The Darwin Convention Centre also took out a national award for business events. We have conferences coming here all the time.

The Top End Visitor Information Centre won silver as well.

These businesses were showing the Territory spirit on the national stage, and that is on the back of visitor trips being up by 28% this year compared with last year. Visitor spending is up by 38%. That is attributed to these wonderful businesses we celebrate in the Territory which are winners not only locally but now on the national stage. We could not be prouder of them, and we wish them all the best. I am sure they will continue to be award winners.

Legal Aid Funding

J DAVIS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Today in the Chamber you said again that you have increased funding for Legal Aid; however, reports indicate that the vital top-up funding, which covers complex matters like murder trials, appeals and bush courts, has been cut or stopped. Can you confirm whether this is correct and that, despite your claims of increased funding, Legal Aid is receiving less overall support to manage complex cases and the growing number of matters generated by your new laws? Is this why we are hearing reports that children are now being forced to self-represent? Will you table the year-by-year funding provided by the Northern Territory Government to Legal Aid NT over the past five years, including baseline funding and top-up funding?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this gives me another chance to explain exactly what we did for Legal Aid when we came to government. Legal Aid used to be in a big mess. Every year it came to government asking for top-up funding. That is not a way to operate an organisation. Upon coming to government we saw mega challenges there and we knew that demand would increase exponentially because our new laws to deliver a safer community for Territorians would have an impact on those who need to use Legal Aid for their defence.

Immediately—I think it was early November, not long after the first sittings of parliament—I increased that funding to Legal Aid by about 87% and made it ongoing each year. That is a huge uplift on what it had. The biggest thing about that is the fact it is certainty for Legal Aid. It can use that budget every year to work out how it will manage.

You also remember that I appointed a new director, which you all complained about. You carried on and made it sound like a really bad thing, but Legal Aid needed new leadership. We have a new board for Legal Aid as well. There is all new leadership and new increased funding. Then I said, 'Go and represent Territorians who need defence so that we can have faster justice for victims'.

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question is: is Legal Aid now getting less overall funding?

Madam SPEAKER: I think she is getting there.

Ms BOOTHBY: I said that it is an increase, compared with what it was, of over 87%. I am not sure how many times I have to say that.

In the annual reports …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: You cannot have two points of order within five seconds, Member for Johnston.

J DAVIS: Ten seconds?

Madam SPEAKER: I will let it go through this time, but this is your last point of order.

J DAVIS: To clarify my question, I am not asking about baseline funding. I am asking: is Legal Aid getting less overall funding, taking into account baseline funding and top-up funding?

Madam SPEAKER: No more points of order.

Ms BOOTHBY: I am answering the question, being crystal clear that our government increased the funding for Legal Aid. To put it plainly, for those who do not understand, Legal Aid was getting a little; now it is getting a lot, and Legal Aid is getting it ongoing to provide certainty for that organisation to defend people in courts, because that is needed so that we can have justice for victims.

Legal Aid has new leadership and new increased funding. Now my expectation is that it will deliver those services for Territorians. That is simple. It is my expectation, and it is what is happening.

Legal Aid Funding – Supplementary Question

J DAVIS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Will you table the funding to Legal Aid over the past five years, including baseline funding and top-up funding?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I do not have it on me to table, but if we go back and look online at the budget papers, at the Estimates papers—you ask me every time. It is everywhere.

HomeGrown Territory Grants

Dr RAHMAN to TREASURER

The CLP government is focused on making the Northern Territory a place where more people can afford to buy a home and build their future. Through the nation-leading HomeGrown Territory program, we are helping more Territorians to take their first step into home ownership and to encourage families to put down roots in the Territory for the long haul.

Can you update the Assembly on the results we are starting to see from the HomeGrown Territory program and outline your recent advocacy to the federal government to secure a fairer property price cap for Territorians under the Home Guarantee Scheme?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the number of houses is expanding in the Member for Fong Lim's electorate, at Northcrest. This is off the back of the HomeGrown grants.

We care about getting Territorians into their own homes. To say that our HomeGrown program is a success would be an understatement. It continues to power ahead, with 400 grants now approved, representing an injection of $180m flowing through our local economy. That is 400 households putting down roots in the Territory and setting up themselves and their children's futures.

With the grants extended to 30 September 2027, the door is now wide open for many more. The CLP is doing exactly what Labor could not do: rebuilding the Territory as a great place to live.

Under the previous eight-year train wreck, the Territory was on track to build the lowest number of homes since records began. The economy was in retreat, private investors fled and crime was tolerated. Thank goodness we have turned that around and are making life worth living in the Northern Territory. In just 17 months since being elected we have transformed the Territory from a place where people aspire to leave to one they now aspire to call home.

For months young hardworking Territorians were locked out of the market by a senseless $600,000 federal limit on the 5% cap for first homebuyers. This was decided in Canberra, with no local input. That cap was out of touch, lumping Darwin in with regional areas like Norfolk Island and regional Tasmania, of all places.

What did the Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling, do? The short answer is nothing. He repeatedly fobbed them off and shot down our calls to lift the cap. He slammed the door shut on first homebuyers arguing their dream family home was an apartment in the sky. Meanwhile, his NT Labor counterparts were silent. We did not hear boo from them. They did not come out to support the people of Darwin to raise that cap. There was not a word—nothing. All we got was crickets.

We did not accept that. I called on Luke Gosling to pick up the phone and ring Canberra, and because we kept the pressure on, the Commonwealth finally listened to us. It lifted the cap to $750,000, giving more choice for families to make a life in the Territory. It means that families are not held back and can buy new houses that suit their needs.

We are making the NT a place to live and thrive, anchored by growth, certainty and security.

Mr Young: When will you stop reading from your script? You are a minister. It is embarrassing.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, please!

Criminal Offences

Mr PAECH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

According to Local Court data, the number of criminal offences is sitting at the highest it has been since 2016, with a whopping 42,352 offences across the Northern Territory. You claim to have reduced crime, but this data shows that none of your measures are preventing crime. They are putting more people into the justice system and more unsustainable pressure on the courts. What is your government doing to prevent crime before it occurs and to prevent people from entering the justice system, where the likelihood of reoffending increases?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am perplexed by this question. Territorians remember that he is the former Attorney-General who was responsible for what happened over nearly a decade of Labor government, which had a crime crisis across the Northern Territory. It is not just about the data; Territorians were leaving the Territory. They were not just the people who had flown in for a couple of years or months; they were long-term multigenerational families who said that they had enough of crime. They said, 'It never used to be like that. We are so busy looking over our shoulder we cannot not move forward.' They packed up and left. The former Labor Attorney-General was responsible for destroying the Northern Territory.

Our CLP government is turning that around, as we promised Territorians at the last election. Today I explained ad nauseam our Reducing Crime strategy and our plan to deliver for Territorians to reduce the

number of victims. We have done that. We have 2,700 fewer victims of crime today compared with under Labor in the same set of data 12 months prior. That data cannot be argued against; it is real.

Domestic violence was up by 81% under Labor. Under our government, it is decreasing; it is down by 3% Territory-wide, and in Alice Springs it is down by 16%. It is a huge turnaround which is changing people's lives. People are optimistic about the future. They know we have more work to do and that things need to continue to improve.

The government can and will continue to bring in laws so that there are consequences for offenders, whether they be youths, adults, fathers or mothers. People know that our government can deliver that, and they remember how Labor was destroying their lives. There were eight long years of Attorneys-General—the current Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Gwoja—who failed dismally. It was a disgrace.

I will not apologise for the fact that we have 2,700 fewer victims, more people in jail and more police. That is the work we were elected to do, and we will continue to do that.

Nobles Goldmine

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

As you are aware, our plan highlights five critical industries for development, being tourism, Defence, agriculture, gas and mining. Consistent with our plan, supporting the mining sector is essential to unlocking private investment and creating sustainable regional jobs. The recent early repayment of a $10m concessional loan by Tennant Mines, delivered 16 months ahead of schedule, serves as a powerful endorsement of the Territory as a premier destination to do business. The project has already revitalised the Barkly, the land of opportunity, as a leading mining hub and strengthened our position in minerals processing and advanced manufacturing.

Can you update the Assembly on how the Nobles goldmine project is delivering practical results for Territorians, specifically regarding local employment and support for Territory suppliers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Karama knows that our Finocchiaro CLP government's commitment to rebuilding our economy is absolute and has, as its core, the objective of restoring the Territory as a competitive and attractive jurisdiction in which to live, work, visit and invest. The early repayment by Tennant Mines of the government's concessional loan—which enabled the re-establishment of the Nobles goldmine project and construction of a 70,000 tonne-a-month processing facility—16 months ahead of schedule is clear evidence that this goal is being achieved.

The Finocchiaro CLP government's commitment to making the Territory the best place to do business, backed by smart regulatory reform and removal of red tape, enabled this project to advance into construction and production ahead of schedule, which not only was a benefit to the company but also served to accelerate economic activity within the region. I love a good success story, and the results speak for themselves.

A $94m mining development, which could have stagnated under the burden of the outrageous regulatory processes under the previous government, was allowed to go forth, produce and succeed. In the land of opportunity, better known as the Barkly region …

Members interjecting.

Mrs ZIO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I am trying to hear the response from the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, but she keeps getting interrupted and I cannot hear.

Madam SPEAKER: The interruptions are coming from both sides. You can hear the 'Hear, hear' and the chatter. I suggest everyone remains silent.

Ms CAHILL: The Barkly region is reaffirming its historic role as a significant mining district, with more than $80m in private capital investment from this project alone, and the benefits to the community are tangible. This operation supports 56 direct employees and a further 158 contractors drawn largely from the local workforce. In addition, Tennant Mines has backed its commitment with substantial engagement with the Territory's supply chain. Since April 2024 it has directed approximately $21.5m in expenditure to 252 Territory-based businesses, including $12.2m in the Barkly and $2.1m to Aboriginal-owned enterprises.

These achievements are not incidental; they reflect a deliberate economic strategy encompassing procurement reform and workforce development. Now in full production this mine is proving that this government knows how to grow an economy.

Legal Aid Funding

Mr PAECH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

According to NT Local Courts, the average court remand time is 97 days for an adult and 71 days for a young person. With your government exacerbating the crisis in the justice system by cutting funding to Legal Aid and expecting NAAJA to cover the shortfall, when will you listen to calls from the legal community that the situation is unsustainable? What is your government doing to support legal services which are operating …

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my question in silence without laughter.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes. Could you pause.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: We have commentary from both sides. I ask everyone to remain silent while the question is being asked and while it is being answered.

Mr PAECH: What is your government doing to support legal services which are operating under considerable strain and workload so that victims and offenders have appropriate and timely legal assistance?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am loving these questions from the former Attorney-General, the now shadow Attorney-General. There is a reason he is sitting on the other side of the Chamber and voted out of government.

These statistics he is quoting sound pretty good. I wish I had the actual number of what it was under his watch, but I know that the number of persons on remand in the Local Court decreased by 13% and the Youth Justice Court decreased by 7%, compared with when Labor was in government. For the first time in such a long time the number of sentenced prisoners is more than the number of remand prisoners. Under Labor, the remand numbers increased every month. It was ridiculous, and because Labor also watered down the law and its bail laws were literally nothing, remandees were out the next day. Then they would be back in court, then out and the next day they would be back in court.

We on this side are doing the work. Our government is listening to Territorians and delivering the promises we made at the election to make the community safer. We have made so many changes in the short 18 months we have been in government so that Territorians can feel safe in their communities. It was our number one priority, and it remains our number one priority. We know that there is more work to be done. We have continued to bring legislation into the Chamber and pass it to put the rights of victims above the rights of offenders.

We have a decrease, for the first time in a long time, for DV assaults. It used to sit at about an 81% increase under Labor, which was shameful. It is now sitting at a reduction of 3% across the Territory. In Alice Springs alone, the number of DV assaults has reduced by 16%. That is a huge turnaround.

The number of bail refusals has increased under our watch. Unlike Labor, we deal with offenders. If people do the wrong thing there will be consequences under this government. We have a Corrections master plan, which is finding new beds and, in some cases, new mattresses for people who break the law and deserve to be in prison. People who commit violence and serious offences will be behind bars; there will be consequences for them. We make no apologies for that.

The questions you are asking about how the courts are in disarray and that there are too many prisoners and too many people being arrested—that is good. We want people who are doing the wrong thing to be arrested. That is the whole point. We are fixing the mess of the courts that Labor left for us.

DXC Arena Upgrades

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for PEOPLE, SPORT and CULTURE

Can you update the Assembly on how the Finocchiaro CLP government is investing in community sporting infrastructure to support participation across the Territory? In particular, can you provide the Assembly with details of the government's recent investment in upgrades to DXC Arena to strengthen grassroots sport, improve opportunities for women and girls and ensure the facilities continue to support local competitions and major sporting events in the future?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Finocchiaro CLP government understands that strong communities are built around strong sporting facilities, which is why we are investing $1.32m to upgrade DXC Arena, one of the Territory's busiest and most important sporting venues. This investment will fund modern female-friendly change rooms and important upgrades to the car park, ensuring the facility remains safe, accessible and fit for purpose for thousands of Territorians who use it every year.

DXC Arena is the home ground for NT Cricket, PINT Football Club and PINT Cricket Club. DXC Arena hosts more than 1,000 cricket and AFL matches annually, making it a truly year-round sporting ground.

Last week I was there to make that announcement with the assistant minister for People, Sport and Culture, Clinton Howe; the President of PINT Football Club, Spencer Harvey; President of PINT Cricket Club, Mark Macdonald; and the CEO of NT Cricket, Gavin Dovey. It was wonderful to see the excitement of both club presidents that we are investing in DXC Arena, which is one of the most utilised facilities not just in the Dry Season for cricket but also in the Wet Season for AFL.

That facility was built in the 1990s, about 35 years ago. It is nowhere near the quality that we need in 2026, so we are investing in modern inclusive change rooms that better support female athletes and providing appropriate amenities for players, volunteers and visiting teams. Cricket and AFL participation in the Territory is thriving, with more women and girls picking up a bat and ball than ever before. That is why these upgrades matter. We back the females who want to play sport and access these amenities.

Along with that, DXC Arena and the Marrara Sports Precinct are becoming busier every year. This year we have the addition of international test cricket at the Marrara stadium. There will be AFL games, NRL games and international cricket in the Marrara Sports Precinct, so the upgrade of the car park will benefit thousands of Territorians who access those facilities during that time.

This government is investing at the grassroots, in the clubs, to make sure we support the young generation to have a pathway forward.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge Matthew Guy in the gallery and thank him for being here.

We have run out of time for Question Time, and I ask that further questions be placed on the Written Question Paper.
xxx

ANSWER TO QUESTION
PFAS Contamination – Rapid Creek

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 115, I will answer a question from yesterday's Question Time.

Member for Johnston, PFAS is a family of synthetic chemicals used since the 1950s in products that resist heat, stains, grease and water, including firefighting products. PFAS are mobilised by rainfall and are likely to move into areas down gradient of contaminated sites during heavy rainfall, much like what we have seen in Darwin recently.

As part of its response to PFAS contamination at RAAF Darwin, the Department of Defence undertakes an ongoing monitoring plan and ongoing monitoring report; PFAS sampling at all off-base locations occurs twice yearly at the end of the Wet Season in March and the start of the Wet Season in December; and additional sampling occurs at selected sites, including along Rapid Creek—which goes to your question from yesterday—monthly during the Wet Season, December to April, and twice during the Dry Season, June and

July. There is ongoing monitoring which can be accessed online. The sampling results are in an annual monitoring report published by the Department of Defence each year.

Responsibility for the environmental regulation of PFAS contamination under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998* is with the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA). The NTEPA works closely with the Commonwealth Department of Defence to manage PFAS impacts across the Northern Territory.

MOTION
Parliamentary Code of Conduct for Members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I move that this Assembly:

- notes the importance of safe, respectful and professional parliamentary workplaces

- acknowledges that all members have a responsibility to model integrity, dignity and respectful conduct in every setting connected to their role

- recognises that bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation and misuse of authority have no place in the Northern Territory parliament, including towards Department of the Legislative Assembly staff

- supports the amendment of the *Legislative Assembly (Members' Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards) Act 2008* to include a clear behaviour code for members, with independent oversight, confidential complaint handling and a range of proportionate sanctions

- calls on the government to implement such a behaviour code as a priority to ensure parliamentary standards reflect community expectations and are consistent with best practice across the Commonwealth.

I tabled this motion in November last year after more than a year of observing bullying, harassment and intimidation in this Chamber. I brought on this motion because Territorians have a right to expect their elected representatives to uphold the highest standards of behaviour. They expect us to debate strongly, disagree, scrutinise legislation and argue passionately for our communities. This is what a healthy democracy looks like, but bullying, harassment and intimidation are not debate and they are not a standard that would pass in any other workplace. Territorians expect strong debate in this Chamber, but they also expect the same standards of behaviour here that they would expect in any other workplace in the Northern Territory.

The question before this Assembly is simple: should the Northern Territory parliament be held to the same workplace standards that apply everywhere else? I do not believe that there is one member of this Assembly who would say that bullying, harassment and intimidation should be tolerated in any workplace, so it should not be controversial to say that it should not be tolerated in this one. Supporting this motion is about ensuring that this parliament reflects the standards Territorians expect everywhere else—respect, accountability and professionalism.

Bullying and harassment are not unique to the Northern Territory parliament. Across Australia there are many repeated and high-profile incidents of misconduct, and many of them have led to major independent reviews.

At the Commonwealth level the Foster review and the landmark Jenkins review, Set the Standard, examined serious incidents and workplace culture in parliamentary workplaces. In New South Wales the Broderick review investigated bullying, sexual harassment and misconduct in parliament. South Australia commissioned the Strickland review, followed by the Paske review to examine implementation of reforms. In Tasmania the Bolt review looked closely at culture within ministerial and parliamentary workplaces.

Although each of these reviews examined different circumstances, their findings were strikingly similar. They found that existing frameworks governing the conduct of members of parliament were inadequate. They had failed to protect parliamentary staff, including electorate staff, advisers and nonpartisan staff, as well as members themselves from bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. As a result jurisdictions across Australia have begun to introduce stronger standards, including clearer codes of conduct and behaviour frameworks for members of parliament.

These reviews make the important point that codes alone are not a silver bullet because some parliaments had codes in place, yet harmful behaviour persisted. These reviews tell us that clear standards are necessary and culture and leadership matter just as much.

Bullying and intimidation are not new in any parliament, including this parliament, but it does not have to be like this. For those outside the Chamber who are listening, here are examples of the kind of behaviour I am talking about: members being shouted down while speaking; people being screamed at across the Chamber; people being called gutter trash; mocking laughter across the Chamber; and taunting of, 'No-one cares about you'.

The Chief Minister said to me, 'Just straight in the gutter, your happy place on the other side'. At a different time the Chief Minister said about the Leader of the Opposition:

> *… she wins the award for being the biggest gutter trash politician in the Chamber.*

Of course, many have seen the recording that circulated of the Chief Minister saying to the former Member for Nightcliff, who sadly is no longer in the Chamber:

> *… it must be time for the bottom of the barrel from the queen of bottom of the barrel herself. The gutter trash on the other side has still not been taken out with the rubbish from Cyclone Fina.*

The Deputy Chief Minister misrepresented what I said and then screamed at me across the Chamber in a manner that was aggressive and intimidating, inconsistent with the standards of behaviour expected in any workplace. The same Deputy Chief Minister taunted the Leader of the Opposition with, 'You are a loser' over and again while she talked about her family history of the Stolen Generation. Let me say that again: while a member of this Chamber talked about one of the most harmful and shameful episodes in our history and how it impacted her and her family, the deputy leader of our government called across the Chamber, 'You are a loser'.

These examples stand among a litany of personal comments directed at individuals and their families rather than at their arguments. This kind of name-calling would not be acceptable in a schoolyard, let alone any workplace.

None of these comments strengthen debate; they lower the standard of it. They do not improve legislation or serve the people we represent. Name-calling does not make communities safer, fix hospitals or help families who are struggling with the rising cost of living. More than that, though, this behaviour is a strategy. It creates distractions, often tactical ones, used to disrupt important debate, obfuscate and avoid questions. It belittles anyone who disagrees, questions decisions or seeks to broaden debate and contribute to good decision-making in the Northern Territory. This behaviour wastes valuable parliamentary time and diverts attention from the serious issues that Territorians expect us to deal with. This erodes public trust in the process, and I cannot tell you how many times people raise this with me. Put simply, bullying, harassment and intimidation disrupt and undermine our democracy.

Parliamentary debate is supposed to be a process of strengthening policies, when members listen to each other and work together to make the best possible law for the people we represent. Any time we offer Territorians less than that, we are failing to do our jobs and failing our communities.

People watching Question Time should hear explanations about policy and decisions from leaders who understand and take seriously their accountability to the public. Instead, too often they hear questions met with personal attacks, sarcasm or attempts to belittle the person asking the question, prioritising momentary political points over giving Territorians understanding, input and, ultimately, control over the decisions that affect their lives. Territorians want answers, not insults.

We all love it in when school groups come to parliament. Children sit in the gallery and observe how their elected representatives behave. More than once these young people have asked me, 'Why are they shouting at each other? We are not allowed to do that at school.' I agree. This Chamber should model the best of how people in a democracy work together. It should show that people can disagree strongly, argue robustly and still treat each other with respect. If we cannot demonstrate respectful disagreement in the parliament of the Northern Territory, we cannot expect it in the wider community. If children can understand the difference between disagreement and disrespect, surely members of parliament can.

Parliament is not just a debating Chamber; it is also a workplace. Every day dozens of people come here to do their jobs—staff of the department, advisers, accountants, parliamentary and secretariat staff, security staff, cleaners and the many others who keep this institution running and enable us to do our jobs. They are not politicians and cannot answer back, but they deserve to work in a professional environment where they feel safe and respected.

We heard allegations of bullying by the Member for Fong Lim towards Department of the Legislative Assembly staff. This is a serious matter, yet, as has been raised, the government has failed to openly explain how these incidents have been dealt with.

Yesterday the CLP government refused to use our parliament's mechanism to investigate these matters, by voting against referring the Member for Fong Lim to the Privileges Committee. That refusal to use the tools we have to try to make sure that this is a safe workplace makes it abundantly clear that we need better and more robust processes. In your words, Madam Speaker, said in this Chamber a few minutes ago, the staff in this building deserve to know that this Assembly will not look away. This is our opportunity to show them exactly that.

At a recent International Women's Day event Josie Hullick from the Anti-Discrimination Commission spoke about how organisations can move from a reactive to proactive approach by focusing on three things:

- intentional courageous leadership that models respectful behaviour, inclusion and equality
- reviewing policies, reporting pathways and decision-making processes to ensure that they are inclusive, accessible to everyone and everyone can trust them
- examining power structures—asking who holds authority, who is at the table and whether people feel safe to speak up.

Hullick highlighted that prevention starts with courageous proactive leadership to create workplaces and institutions free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. These principles reflect what the law now requires in many workplaces across Australia.

Territorians have a right to expect the same standards here that exist in other workplaces. Other parliaments are already moving in this direction. The Tasmanian Parliament recently introduced a strengthened code that emphasises leadership, accountability and independent oversight—exactly the kind of framework that we could implement here.

When parliament becomes a place of hostility rather than healthy debate, the quality of our work suffers, serious issues are pushed aside and scrutiny is sidelined. When we do our jobs poorly that shows great disrespect to everyone in the Territory.

Territorians did not elect us to shout at each other; they elected us to deal with the issues that matter such as safer communities, functioning hospitals and the cost of living. Bullying does not solve these problems; doing our jobs professionally does.

This motion is practical and clear. It asks us to review our current code of conduct, which is silent on issues of bullying, harassment and intimidating behaviour, and to develop a clear behaviour code for members of the Northern Territory parliament that is robust and workable, with clear behaviour standards, independent oversight and confidential complaint handling. It must be a code with consequences—something that I know the CLP government loves—and proportionate sanctions in place when standards are breached. There are basic workplace protections that exist in many other workplaces across Australia and are consistent with best practice in parliaments across the Commonwealth and with what Territorians expect.

Standards matter. The culture of the parliament shapes the quality of its work. Strong debate is essential and central to this parliament, but none of that requires bullying, harassment or intimidation. Personal attacks are what politicians reach for when they cannot defend their policies.

Territorians expect better, and it is time that we rise to meet their expectations. This motion asks a simple question of every member in this Chamber: do you believe bullying, harassment and intimidation have a place in this parliament? If the answer is no, then supporting a behaviour code with clear standards and accountability should not be controversial.

Territorians deserve a parliament that reflects the best of our community—respectful, accountable and focused on the job that we were elected to do. Territorians expect better from this parliament, and they have every right to.

I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I move to amend the motion by inserting the word 'and' after 'their role' and deleting all the words after 'Legislative Assembly staff'.

I now speak to the amendment.

Everyone deserves a safe, respectful, professional environment. That extends across all industries and the entire Territory. I think we can all agree on that. Whether someone works on a construction site, in a hospital, in a school, in a shop, on a cattle station or in an office, every Territorian deserves to go to work knowing that they will be treated with dignity and respect. A safe and respectful workplace is not a privilege; it is basic expectation. It is founded on a strong workforce, strong business and strong communities. When people feel safe at work and expectations are clear, they can get on with the job. They can contribute and focus on their work that matters.

Every workplace has a culture that is shaped by the behaviour of the people within it. It is shaped by how people treat each other, whether people are willing to stand up for what is right and whether leaders set the right example. Leadership is not just about titles and positions; it is about behaviour, setting standards and showing others what is acceptable and what is not.

Territorians are known for looking after each other. That is happening now throughout the floods and weather events across the Northern Territory. A defining characteristic of our Territory community is when times are tough, Territorians step up. They support their neighbours, colleagues and communities. We are seeing that play out across the Territory and that same spirit should be extended to our workplaces; respect should be the starting point for every interaction. It should not matter what role someone has, how long they have been there or what position they hold; every person deserves to be treated fairly and respectfully.

Workplaces across the Territory are made up of people from different backgrounds, experiences and walks of life. Just like in this Chamber, there are tradies, teachers, lawyers, electricians, business owners, nurses and a lot more. That diversity gives us strength. It brings different perspectives and new ideas, and it strengthens organisations and the communities we are all part of. Diversity also requires the commitment to respect, to ensure every person feels valued and included and that unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. When behaviour crosses the line there are proper processes in place to deal with it, and these processes should be respected.

Respect in the workplace is not just about policies or rules; it is about culture and everyday actions—the way people speak to each other, support each other and respond to something that is not right. Creating a respectful workplace is a shared responsibility; every person has a role to play in ensuring their workplace is safe, respectful and professional.

Strong workplaces are built on trust between colleagues, trust between the staff and the leadership and trust that people will be treated fairly and respectfully. When that trust exists, the workplace thrives. People feel confident to speak up, to contribute to their community and their workplace and that they are valued members of the team.

The Territory relies on the hard work of thousands of people every day, from frontline workers to tradies, teachers, nurses, small business owners and public servants. We are relying on those people as this weather event unfolds. They all play a role in building the Territory we are proud of, and they all deserve a work environment that is safe and respectful. When our workplaces are strong, our communities are strong. When people are treated with dignity and respect, organisations perform better. When workplaces support their people, the entire Territory benefits.

These principles are simple but important—respect, professionalism and integrity. These values underpin strong workplaces and communities, and they should guide us each day that we work here and people across the Northern Territory.

Madam Speaker, I move that the question be put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16	Noes 6
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Guyula
Mrs Carlson	Mr Paech

Mr Charls	Ms Uibo
Mr Edgington	Mr Young
Mrs Finocchiaro	
Mr Howe	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	
Mr Maley	
Mr O'Gallagher	
Mr Patel	
Dr Rahman	
Mr Yan	
Mrs Zio	

Motion agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16	Noes 6
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Guyula
Mrs Carlson	Mr Paech
Mr Charls	Ms Uibo
Mr Edgington	Mr Young
Mrs Finocchiaro	
Mr Howe	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	
Mr Maley	
Mr O'Gallagher	
Mr Patel	
Dr Rahman	
Mr Yan	
Mrs Zio	

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION
Fuel Price Disclosure

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I move the motion.

This motion is simple. It asks members of the government to do one thing: look at passing the Bill they wrote themselves. It is not a Labor Bill or an idea from the crossbench, God forbid; it is a CLP Bill.

In 2022 the now Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro, stood in this parliament and told Territorians that she had a solution for high fuel prices: she would introduce the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill which would drive down prices at the bowser and ease cost-of-living pressures. She was not wrong; she introduced the Bill. I remember that I had about 15 or 16 minutes left to speak on that Bill in the 14th Assembly. I have been unable to find that 16 minutes left, so I now have another 30 minutes to speak on it today. Here I am with the GBD motion as the Labor Opposition Leader to talk about how we can better protect Territorians from high fuel prices, which the Chief Minister, when she was the Opposition Leader, said she would do, and failed miserably.

She is still failing miserably as the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory with a lot more levers to pull now. It is extremely disappointing that in the last year-and-a-half the Chief Minister, other than last week, has not spoken about reducing fuel costs and protecting consumers from high fuel costs. It is only when the fuel price becomes a topic that the rest of the Territory starts to arc up about that CLP members pop up and show their faces, otherwise the ministers tend to run away and hide. They love popping out for good photos. The Member for Barkly is good at selfies. I do not mind that he is taking credit for our remote housing program; it

started under the Labor government. We do not see CLP members in times of crisis stepping up every day to inform Territorians of what they will do and how they will do it. The questions that should be fielded and answered by the government of the day are not in their toolbox.

Although the comments made by the now Chief Minister, when she was Opposition Leader, were vague, legislation was drafted by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and introduced in the 14th Assembly. Our Labor opposition simply asks the government: if it was a good enough Bill then, why has the CLP government not acted with its numbers to implement and pass it? Why has that Bill slipped off the Chief Minister's radar? Why is providing better consumer protections for Territorians in regard to high fuel costs not a priority for the CLP government?

The Chief Minister said that governments should be judged on their actions and not their words. I can assure her Territorians are doing that. Where the CLP was in opposition it said that Labor is all talk and no action on fuel prices, Territorians were being ripped off at the bowser and transparency would drive prices down. There are only two distinct possibilities now. One is that the CLP genuinely believes that its fuel Bill would fix fuel prices in which case it should pass that Bill immediately—or was it all for show? The second is that CLP members never believed that their stunt would work and misled Territorians for their own political gain. I will leave it to Territorians to decide what they think is the truth. It is either hypocrisy, or CLP members knew that their Bill—which they never finished in the two years left to pass it in—would never work anyway.

We raise this on behalf of Territorians. It is topical. Territorians are suffering from extremely elevated fuel prices that we saw jump in just a week. The irony is that the reality of the debate started by Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro in 2022 when she was the Opposition Leader is still relevant, yet her government has not acted on any of its own words.

Fuel prices have increased again; standard fuel is up by about 10%, and premium diesel has increased by about 25%. Territorians are paying more every time they pull up at the bowser. I argue that matters more in the Territory than almost anywhere else in the country because Territorians drive further and our businesses rely on vehicles more. Freight costs are enormous to get around our beautiful Territory. Fuel costs flow through to the cost of food, services and groceries, hitting the hip pockets of Territorians.

The then Opposition Leader said that fuel is the driving force behind the rising cost of living. We are seeing that today, and it has been even more magnified in the last week. If that was true when the then Opposition Leader introduced this Bill in 2022, it is even more so now. Territorians are under real pressure. Power prices are the highest they have ever been. The CLP government sold TIO in former days, so it has no levers left to protect Territorians from insurance increases after events like floods. Now Territory families are dealing with rising fuel prices on top of everything else. It is also exacerbating costs for our Territory businesses.

If the government truly believes it has a solution to fuel prices, this is its moment to act—not later, not after another review, but now. The Chief Minister when she was the Opposition Leader said that transparency would expose retailers charging excessive margins. When she brought the Bill to the 14th Assembly she argued that forcing retailers to disclose profits would shine a light on the market, expose outliers and drive down prices. If the CLP still believes in those three elements it should bring back the legislation and pass it; it has the numbers and the resources in government to do so. Let us hope that there is something the CLP will act on, rather than deliver the empty words it did in opposition. If the government does not believe that anymore, it should explain to Territorians why it said that in opposition all those years ago and made a big fuss and now it is not doing a thing.

I remind the Assembly of what the now Chief Minister said when she introduced the Bill in 2022:

The purpose of this legislation is simple; it is to drive down the cost of living for Territorians.

The now Chief Minister told the parliament that fuel was the driving force behind rising costs and that Territorians were paying 30c to 40c more than they should at the bowser. She said that the Bill would force fuel retailers to disclose their profit margins and 'shine a light on what is happening in the market'. She argued that exposing those margins would drive down fuel prices.

She said something else that is worth repeating: that governments should be judged not on their words but on their actions. Today we are doing exactly that; we are judging the government on its lack of action. Those words were not said in a press release; they were spoken in the Chamber by the then Opposition Leader, now Chief Minister.

She introduced legislation which she believed, argued and debated would help Territorians, so the question is simple: if the Chief Minister believed it would lower fuel prices when she was the Opposition Leader, why is she not bringing forward that Bill now she is in government and has the power, resources and numbers to do so?

This motion is not radical. It simply says to CLP members: if you believed the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill would help Territorians when you were in opposition, prove it now when you are in government.

I have the explanatory statement and the Bill to refresh government members' memories if they want to take on the work they started. As I said, I missed out on the last 16 minutes to debate this in the 14th Assembly, so I am glad my time has been refreshed.

I seek leave to table the explanatory statement of the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill 2022 so that we can have it on the record.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: We know Territorians are watching. My electorate of Arnhem has high fuel costs, and that was before the soaring fuel prices last week not just across the Northern Territory but also around the country and the globe.

We want to see practical plans, which the CLP government tends to struggle with. It tends to be unable to provide Territorians with a firm definitive plan and timeframes for things CLP members say they will do, turning them into actions to lessen the cost-of-living pressures on their fellow Territorians.

The Labor government introduced and implemented the MyFuel NT app and website. That caused a stir. It was the end of the world, according to the CLP opposition at the time.

Just the other day I saw the Treasurer with his MyFuel NT app, flagging it on the TV screen. There he is with it—no, that is your messages, Member for Namatjira. He has it somewhere on his phone, which is great. He is a bush member so he should know that it helps us to tell people and see for ourselves where the pressure points may be so that we can support our constituents in advocating for lower fuel costs.

I asked the Member for Barkly on radio whether the CLP would scrap MyFuel NT as it threatened to do when it was in opposition, but, lo and behold, when in government perspectives change. The CLP has seen the light and will not scrap MyFuel NT.

When the former Territory Labor government introduced MyFuel NT there were teething issues—as is the case with something new—particularly the website before it was digitally crossed over to the app format, which a lot of people use on mobile phones, laptops, iPads and tablets et cetera.

The South Australian Government saw what we did. It modelled a similar program and app for South Australia because of the work that was done in the Northern Territory. Imagine that: the NT modelled something that a larger and more populated jurisdiction has copied, followed, endorsed and implemented. How great is that?

The CLP opposition was in uproar about the website and said that development of the app would not be helpful or suitable. CLP members threatened to take it away, but their priorities have changed now that they are in government. The Member for Barkly confirmed that he did not know of any processes underway or commitments to remove MyFuel NT. Thankfully, CLP members have seen the light and will not scrap that important app just because the former Labor government put it in place to help Territorians.

CLP members have scrapped a lot of projects just because they were Labor projects, but they have also taken a lot of credit for the positive Labor projects they have hand-picked, like the goldmine in Tennant Creek. That great project was fast-tracked. I believe it was a record in the last Labor government—12 months to expedite the Tennant Creek goldmine. The Member for Barkly will agree with me on that.

Mr Edgington: It was the Member for Barkly's strong advocacy.

Ms UIBO: It was strong advocacy from the Member for Barkly and strong support for that fantastic Labor-started project, the Tennant Creek goldmine. I visited that site, so I know how important it is to expand opportunities across political cycles. It is about more than just a couple of members who are a part of the government of the day; Territory businesses and experts invest huge amounts of time, effort and resources, including finances, to get these major projects off the ground. They advocate strongly for them.

Dare I say, outside the wedding cake that is the NT parliament is the giant white elephant—the State Square art gallery—which was shamefully put into limbo because it was a Labor project. The CLP government picks and chooses which projects it will support, to the detriment of the Northern Territory. Projects have faltered and flailed because the CLP government has not been decisive. That project was championed by some extremely invested Territorians in business and tourism. The CLP government has been malicious in its decision, rather than saying, 'Great. This will improve the visitor experience and offer more local lifestyle experiences by having great things that people can come to on the weekends, during holidays and after hours. It will support Territorians by providing things to do in the arts space. It will celebrate the good work of Territorians advocating for better and more prominent ways to engage tourism and support businesses in the CBD of our beautiful capital of Darwin.'

There are those projects, and that is just two; I picked one from the Barkly and one in the Port Darwin electorate. We see the CLP play games and politics with major decisions.

Madam Speaker, in your neck of the woods—and the Treasurer's—the Alice Springs economy will be unable to grow under the CLP with its lack of vision and small-mindedness. It scrapped one of the largest and economically most anticipated projects in Central Australia—the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art gallery. The shameful thing is, with all the delays, barriers and challenges over the last few years, Alice Springs and Central Australia have been left with nothing to fill that space. When you scrap one thing, what do you replace it with? At the moment, with the CLP government, nothing. There is no vision, no plan and no way to drive the economy forward.

Why do I say all this? It is because it comes down to the cost of living. Not everybody can travel outside the Territory for holidays to see family or go to other parts of the country or overseas, so we need to make sure there are things for locals, as well as visitor enhancement and improving tourism, in the Northern Territory.

When we see what happened in the last week, with fuel prices rising across the Territory, we know that Territorians, businesses and visitors may limit their movement around the Territory. They may have to rethink what school drop-offs, getting to work and travel and holidays look like. They may have to make tough decisions, balancing whether they can afford rent or a mortgage with moving around in one or two cars or on a scooter, bike or motorbike. They need to think about whether they can afford groceries and the things they normally buy or whether they have to substitute or cut out things from their normal routine.

It is important to talk about what hits Territorians' hip pockets, and fuel prices hurt all our constituents. I am sure people have heard far and wide about the rising fuel costs, particularly in the last week, and are watching this hot topic throughout the year and political cycles.

Some communities in my electorate normally pay about $2.80 a litre for diesel. They are remote, so it costs a bit of money to truck in fuel. Some communities bring in fuel by barge because they are seabound or cut off from the roads in the Wet Season. There are fuel storage costs too. Fuel costs take a toll on remote communities as well as the urban areas. Some of my colleagues are keen to talk about this motion because of the impact on their electorates.

I believe we have seen today in the Member for Mulka's electorate—Ramingining, which has always had the highest cost of fuel. I know that because Mick Uibo, my dad—who was in the Chamber watching Question Time—is a daily watcher of the MyFuel NT app. Even when I did not want to know the fuel price of the day, I did not have a way to avoid it because Mick Uibo was on the phone or texting me, especially because I live in Katherine, saying, 'Wow, did you see the prices? Katherine is cheaper than Darwin, so when I come to Katherine to visit you I will make sure I fuel up.'

My dad has been a keen observer of fuel prices, even before the MyFuel NT website and app. He was always writing down in his notebook where the best fuel prices were. He would always tell me, especially when I lived at Numbulwar, working as a teacher, 'Selena, make sure you fuel up at such-and-such a place; it has the lowest price. If you add your AANT discount you will get another couple of cents off.'

Flybuys and Woolies rewards et cetera often have fuel discounts attached. I am a member of AANT, which provides 8c off at a United fuel station. People can decide whether to fuel up at their local servo or go a bit further down the road and fill up at a place with membership rewards or a discount docket to save more. They may have to travel a few extra kilometres to get there. When you are out bush you have to travel hundreds of kilometres to get to big commercial service stations.

It is having an impact now, not just in 2022 when the then Opposition Leader introduced her fuel Bill, which she never passed. She had two years to pass it, and it never came up. I kept joking, but I really had

16 minutes left to speak on it. It dropped away, of course, with the new Assembly. This is the 15th Assembly, and there have been 18 months of inaction and silence from the Chief Minister. You would think it would have been one of the first things because all the work was already done. She could have said, 'I have my fuel Bill, so here we go. Let us bring it in.' It is phenomenal that she has missed the opportunity.

If I was in the CLP government I would ask why the Chief Minister has not picked this up. Why is the CLP government not championing those changes? Perhaps it is an honest mistake, but you would think that, as one of the longest-serving members of parliament, she would know better.

The Member for Spillett did not do her homework and speak to commercial operators. There was an interesting—open and loud—backlash against the Member for Spillett's Bill because of the consultation process, so it does not surprise me that now she is Chief Minister, consultation does not seem to be in the CLP government's toolbox. Apparently, CLP members know better than the experts and it is not worth their time to do the work in government to ensure they have the best Bills possible.

Territorians will judge the CLP government, the same way they judge every government, and particularly the Chief Minister's words and the lack of action to reduce fuel prices for Territorians and businesses.

Territorians will continue to be upset, outraged and frustrated, and rightly so, by the growing prices. Fuel prices have increased by 10c a litre. What is the government doing about it? We have a pretty easy way for it to do something—that is, reintroducing and passing its own fuel Bill.

It takes a bit of work to produce a private member's Bill, as I found out with all the background work I did as the Opposition Leader to produce a voluntary assisted dying Bill. The government has not used or rejected it. The Attorney-General told me that she read it. However, because it is a Bill that Labor presented, the government is not interested. We will wait to see whether the government is doing the work it said it would do after lots of community pressure. I thank Territorians for being proactive in talking about such an important topic. I do not diminish the work that goes into a private member's Bill. I know it takes resources, particularly when you are in opposition, as I found out.

It is strange that there is unfinished business from three-and-a-half years ago. The Member for Spillett is now the Chief Minister, so why does she not pull the Bill out of her drawer, dust it off, introduce it in parliament, pass it with her 17 members and make it a reality for Territorians? The work was done, but the Bill never passed. The CLP opposition never brought that Bill back for debate all those years ago. Here we are with an opportunity for action, which is apparently one of the CLP's values.

We will keep asking the questions. People in our remote, urban and regional electorates all deserve a government that stands up for them and will stabilise fuel prices to reduce the cost-of-living pressures, regardless of where they live. The government should provide stability in the market, where possible, using whichever levers it can.

When the then Opposition Leader introduced the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill 2022 she said that she had a resolution to this issue, but now she is the Chief Minister there is nothing. Apparently, it was okay in opposition but it is not good enough in government.

We are keen to find out what will happen next. What will be the government's response? Does the CLP still support the 2022 Bill that its leader brought into parliament? She said that she was standing up for Territorians in regard to fuel prices, so let us see whether that is a priority for the CLP government.

I am interested to hear the contributions to debate on this motion. If government members agree to it, that will be fantastic and we can all move forward. Let us see what work the government will commit to doing. I am focused on the government's response. I assume and hope that it will support the motion. I commend the motion. I am keen to hear the debate. I look forward to seeing government support for this motion.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill motion to the Assembly to talk about the all-too-important fuel cost issue. However, I cannot agree to the motion as put forward by the opposition. I move that the motion be amended by removing all the words after 'That this Assembly' and inserting:

- acknowledges that the CLP government is committed to ensuring Territorians are treated fairly at the petrol bowser and that fuel pricing transparency and competition remain critical issues for the Territory

- notes the Treasurer has written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and local retailers seeking closer scrutiny of fuel pricing behaviour affecting Territorians

- calls on the Albanese government to strengthen the powers of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission so it can take stronger action where anti-competitive behaviour or price exploitation occurs

- notes that on 30 November 2022 the Member for Arnhem stated, 'I am happy to make a contribution and speak against the Bill', when debating the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill

- condemns the contradictory, divisive and bizarre policy positions of the Labor Party when it comes to fuel prices.

I will address the rather remarkable turn of events regarding fuel prices and monitoring in the Northern Territory. We have recently seen from those opposite, particularly the Member for Arnhem, a level of political inconsistency that deserves to be called out. As I have said previously in this Chamber, I have seen backflips worthy of Cirque de Soleil from Labor. However, this is a backflip of epic proportions. If we were using an Olympic scoring system the degree of difficulty would be pretty low, but the execution is an order of magnitude, so you would have to give it an 11 out of 10.

In all seriousness, though, Territorians deserve honesty in debate on issues that affect their daily lives. The fuel price is certainly one of those issues. Every Territorian knows that the cost of filling up their vehicle has a direct impact on their household budget. It affects families driving to work, small businesses transporting goods, pastoralists moving supplies and tourists travelling across the vast spaces of the Territory. Fuel prices are not an abstract debate in this Chamber; they are real costs felt by every Territorian.

A few years ago the CLP brought forward legislation aimed at improving transparency in fuel pricing. The intention of that Bill was straightforward: to give Territorians greater visibility into how fuel prices were being set and ensure that fuel retailers operating in the Territory acted transparently. It was about fairness at the bowser.

What did we hear from those opposite at the time? We heard ridicule, dismissal and speeches from Labor government members, including the Member for Arnhem, explaining why fuel price monitoring was unnecessary. The Member for Arnhem stood in this House and argued that fuel prices were directly driven by global market forces. She told this Assembly that supply and demand determined fuel prices and that governments should not interfere. She mocked the CLP's proposal. She described it as a recycled Bill. She treated the idea of fuel price monitoring as though it was some kind of political stunt. In fact, the Member for Arnhem went even further. She suggested that the CLP did not understand how fuel markets work and that transparency measures could somehow interfere with market competition.

Those were her words then, but what do we hear now? We hear criticism that the CLP government is not doing enough to monitor fuel prices, calls for greater scrutiny of fuel retailers and concerns about potential price increases following international events such as the conflict in the Middle East.

The irony is beyond extraordinary. The very thing that the Member for Arnhem dismissed a few years ago is now exactly what she says is needed. The transparency measures she mocked are now being demanded. The oversight she opposed is apparently now necessary. A member cannot stand in this House one year and say that fuel price monitoring is unnecessary then later criticise the government for not doing enough monitoring. That is not policy; that is political convenience. It clearly shows where Labor's focus is. It is convenience over substance.

I do not know who is making decisions on the other side of the Chamber, but I suggest that Labor members need to step back, take a deep breath and have a long hard look at themselves. This week they are absorbed in themselves, rather than the community and what is taking place and affecting Territorians every day.

Let us also be clear about the circumstances we are facing. Global tensions in the Middle East, particularly involving Iran, have created uncertainty in international oil markets. These events can affect global crude prices and supply chains and eventually flow through to retail fuel prices around the world. That is not disputed. In fact, it was that exact argument the Member for Arnhem relied upon in her 2022 speech when she told us that international conflict and global supply were the primary drivers of fuel prices. She said that these factors are not within the Northern Territory Government's control. Today, when a similar global condition exists, she is using it as an opportunity to criticise the CLP.

What is the difference this time? The difference is that this government has taken action. Recognising the potential for global events to influence local fuel prices, I have formally written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission requesting specific oversight of fuel pricing behaviour in the Northern Territory.

I place on the record a letter to the Australian consumer commissioner, Ms Gina Cass-Gottlieb, and a letter to retailers about fuel prices which was sent out today.

At the end of the day Territorians deserve to know that when fuel prices go up, it is for legitimate reasons. If retailers are exploiting international events to raise prices without justification that must be scrutinised.

I have repeatedly and publicly called out retailers in the media for price gouging during the current conflict in the Middle East. As I have said and the tabled documents show, I have written to retailers across the Territory, telling them I have raised their pricing behaviour with the ACCC and that we will closely monitor their behaviour and consider what our next steps may be, should evidence emerge of unjustified and opportunistic price increases.

That is responsible government. We are acting in the interest of consumers. It is the kind of oversight that those opposite not that long ago claimed was unnecessary.

It is worth remembering something else about the debate in 2022: when the CLP proposed stronger transparency for fuel pricing, the Labor government told Territorians that the ACCC was already monitoring the market and that was sufficient. It said that nothing more needed to be done. That is on the record. Today when we engaged the ACCC directly and asked it to examine the situation in the Northern Territory, we were somehow criticised for not doing enough. Which is it? Was relying on the ACCC sufficient when Labor was in government, or is scrutiny suddenly important now that the CLP is taking action? This contradiction is impossible to ignore.

Territorians expect consistency, honesty in policy debates and for politicians to stand by the positions they take. If fuel price monitoring was unnecessary in 2022, why is it suddenly so important now? That is the question I ask the opposition. If global market forces were the only explanation for fuel prices then, why are those same forces now being used as a political attack?

The reality is that the CLP has always supported transparency in fuel pricing. Our position on this has always been consistent. We believe that consumers deserve access to clear information, regulators should have the ability to scrutinise market behaviour and that Territorians deserve confidence that they are getting a fair deal when they fill up their vehicle.

There are plenty of bush members in this Chamber, and we know what fuel costs in the bush. We see prices in Darwin—I think I heard today it was $2.30 or $2.35 per litre—but it is different in the bush. Alice Springs I believe is up to about $2.55 today, and in some remote communities it is up to $4. I understand that there are costs associated with transporting fuel to remote locations, but I will not stand for price gouging.

Fuel prices in the Northern Territory have always been amongst the highest in the country, and that is a fact. Our geography plays a role in that reality. Transport, supply chains and the distances involved in servicing remote communities all contribute to those higher prices, but that does not mean Territorians should simply accept whatever price appears at the bowser without question. Transparency, accountability and scrutiny matter.

That is why writing to the ACCC and the retailers is the right thing to do. It sends a clear message to fuel retailers operating across the Territory: the government is paying attention; we are watching what they are doing; consumers are not powerless; and if there is any attempt to exploit global instability for profit, regulators are watching.

Territorians will not accept political hypocrisy. They will not accept politicians who dismiss fuel price monitoring one year and demand it the next. What is it? They will not accept politicians who ridicule transparency measures and then claim that transparency is lacking. They will not accept politicians who attempt to rewrite their own words, which we are seeing in this Chamber today.

The record is clear that the Member for Arnhem, the Leader of the Opposition, opposed fuel price monitoring. She mocked the CLP proposal and dismissed the idea of greater transparency of fuel prices. Now she is criticising the government for not doing enough to monitor fuel prices. That contradiction speaks volumes.

The CLP government will always act in the best interests of Territorians. We will continue to engage regulators when concerns arise; ensure that fuel retailers operating in the Territory know they are being watched; and stand up for consumers who simply want a fair price at the pump.

At the end of the day this debate is not about political pointscoring; it is about fairness for Territorians. The CLP government and I will not waver from that principle. We will continue to monitor what is taking place at the bowser. I have said publicly on radio this week and last week that if we find out that unscrupulous retailers are gouging Territorians, if need be, we will name and shame them because Territorians deserve better than that. Territorians deserve a fair go, and we will not be taken for a ride.

I cannot support the motion as put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. She cannot have her cake and eat it too. She cannot say one minute that she does not support fuel price monitoring and then, when it is all of a sudden convenient and there may be a political point to be scored during a time of crisis, say that we have to monitor fuel prices. The hypocrisy in this motion from Labor speaks for itself, and that is why I cannot support the motion as it was put by the Opposition Leader.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, this is an important motion.

It is a bit rich for the Treasurer—he cannot have his cake and eat it too—a member of the previous opposition which opposed and was critical of the MyFuel NT app to last week promote the MyFuel app introduced by the previous Labor government.

I seek leave to table the image of the Treasurer rejoicing in Labor's MyFuel app.

Leave granted.

Ms Boothby interjecting.

Mr PAECH: We now hear interjections from the Attorney-General, who loves to talk about people being hypocrites. When you shine a light on the hypocrisy of the CLP, you see it everywhere.

The motion put forward simply asks CLP members to do one thing: pass the Bill they wrote themselves and introduced in 2022. It is 2026, and we still have not had a vote on the floor of parliament on the CLP's fuel Bill, which it said would make life easier for Territorians and stop people being exploited by fuel prices.

The Member for Namatjira said, 'You have to stand by your position and stand up for what you said you believe in at the time', but he needs to hold up the mirror and look at himself because he is not following that lead. He was critical of the app that the previous government introduced, yet he spoke about the Leader of the Opposition opposing that Bill. She cannot oppose it because it never made it to the floor of parliament for a vote.

The CLP members used the Bill as a political tool to look like they were doing something, but it sat on the Notice Paper for years. For the remainder of their time in opposition, they had the opportunity to bring that Bill back, and they did not.

I acknowledge that fuel is important across the Northern Territory, and people are feeling the pressure in different locations. As we heard, in Ramingining today petrol is $3.99 a litre. In Milingimbi, it is $3.95 a litre. In Yirrkala, it is $3.28 a litre. In Kaltukatjara (Docker River) in the electorate of Gwoja, people are paying more than $3.10 a litre. In Alice Springs, people are paying more than $2.30 a litre.

Fuel is needed for transport, but I make the point that many people in remote homelands also rely on fuel for power generation, for generators to keep the lights on. Fuel price increases have a direct impact on people's lives. Some of the Territory's most vulnerable and marginalised people living in remote homelands across the Territory experience additional pressures when fuel prices go up. It is important to highlight that.

We understand that there are costs associated with getting goods and services to particular locations across the Territory, but we are also mindful that some of these prices are astronomical and warrant further investigation. I acknowledge the conversations about pressure being put on the ACCC to look at, interrogate and investigate the prices of fuel across the Northern Territory. It is important we do that work. The Treasurer talks about that being the only mechanism—because the CLP did not bring back its Bill to look at this measure—but the government could be doing more.

On the Northern Territory statute book is the *Price Exploitation Prevention Act 1949*. This Act makes:

> *… provision for the regulation of prices for the sale of certain goods and supply of certain services so as to prevent price exploitation arising consequential on the occurrence of natural or man-made disasters and to modify the effects of monopolies and the failure of competition in the marketplace to benefit consumers, and for other purposes.*

Put plainly, the purpose of that Act is to prevent price exploitation arising consequential on the occurrence, whether or not in the NT, of natural or man-made disasters that prevent consumers benefiting from the operation of a competitive market. It prevents price exploitation that may occur because of the apparent failure of other laws to protect consumers from monopolies or effectively ensure that consumers benefit from the operation of a competitive market within all parts of the Territory.

I seek leave to table this document.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been advised that when seeking leave to table, if anyone says no then the answer is no; sorry.

Mr PAECH: I will keep that in mind for future documents the CLP wants to table.

This shows you how petty and pathetic the CLP members are that they do not even want a document tabled to show how they could ensure that there is no price exploitation in the Territory. They just said no; they do not want to be shown that document and do not want it tabled. They do not want Territorians to know that the CLP government could use existing legislation to keep prices down in the Northern Territory.

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: I pick up on the laughter from those opposite. They think it is funny, but this is people's lives. People are paying extra at the fuel pump, and they are laughing.

That document reminds CLP members there is legislation in place that they could activate to stop price exploitation in the Northern Territory. It is simple. It is disappointing that they did not want that made clear.

As the Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out in her contribution, the CLP developed the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill when it was in opposition and brought it to the parliament. The CLP failed to bring it back. CLP members talk about actions speaking louder than words, but they failed to act then and are failing to act now. They blame everyone else and do not take on accountability.

There are effective mechanisms in the NT to monitor the price of fuel; instead, the Treasurer and the Leader of Government Business do not want people to know that they have levers they could pull to address this issue.

As we have heard in these contributions, many of us are remote members. We saw how quickly the price of fuel changed when the reserves had not even been used up. Anyone who thinks it is okay to take advantage of people in our local community is deplorable. People already pay excessive prices. We continue to see the government just put this on the ACCC, but everyone here should be doing the work to call out high prices where they exist.

There is legislation on the statute book, so it is still actively considered legal in the Northern Territory. I acknowledge that it has probably been dormant for a long time, but the government can activate that legislation to regulate prices in regard to natural and man-made disasters. This is an important option that could be used.

I am sure we will hear those opposite give us every excuse why we cannot or should not do it. The fact is that when fuel costs are hurting Territorians in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy and the bush, it is about not only transportation but also keeping the lights on in remote communities, homelands and outstations. It is incredibly important, so we need to be doing the work.

I acknowledge that there is a bunch of good retailers doing the right thing. There is the MyFuel NT app. We know the Treasurer likes to use it, even though he did not support it when he was in opposition. It is good to

remind people that they can get on the app each day to check the price of fuel across the Northern Territory and find the best option.

Catastrophic events are unfolding across the world. They are devastating for not only those countries and communities but also the world economy and fuel. These events should not be exploited by horrible people to raise the price of fuel when reserves have not even been exhausted, but we are seeing the disgusting acts of dominant corporates putting up prices and milking horrible wars that are taking place across the world. It is disgusting, and we need to call it out.

I have seen on social media people panicking. I saw that in Queensland someone rocked up with a jerry can—if you would call it that—of 1,000 litres …

Mr Kerle: It is a pod.

Mr PAECH: This person had a clear empty pod of 1,000 litres to fuel up. Panic buying is also causing strain on the reserves and fear. People are panicking, worrying and coming to town because they do not want to be stuck out bush and think that the fuel will run out.

We all have a role to communicate that there is work happening. I think all of us have communicated or raised concerns with the ACCC that work needs to be done. I acknowledge that work is happening at the Commonwealth level as well.

Questions needs to be asked of the CLP government. In 2022 the CLP had a Bill that it said would be good for the Territory. What changed its position from 2022 to today? If this is about lowering costs and having strong regulation and oversight to stop exploitation by fuel retailers in the Northern Territory, what has changed? The government could bring back that legislation. It was drafted by Parliamentary Counsel and sat on the Notice Paper for more than two years. It could come back now, and we could pass it and say that the parliament unanimously supported the CLP's fuel Bill to have stronger regulation and stop exploitation of consumers with the price of fuel. We are not seeing that, so we ask: what has changed? Why has your position changed? If there is a reasonable justification for why the position has changed, I am happy and willing to hear it and work through that with you, but we have only heard that the government will not support it.

The Treasurer tried to rewrite history. He told everybody that you have to stand by your word, your conviction and your position, but he has not done that. His position was to bring a fuel Bill to the Northern Territory parliament, and now he has walked away from it. His position was to oppose the MyFuel NT app, but now he holds it up and tells everyone to jump online and have a look.

I am happy to say that I was sceptical of the Bill when the CLP first brought it in, without a doubt, but I am willing to give it a go if the government is willing to bring it back. Why are you not willing to bring back your Bill that you never allowed to have a vote on the floor of parliament? You never formally recorded people's positions because there was never a vote, a division or debate.

It is important to discuss this because people will be further worried, and that anxiety will continue to grow. As we watch the horrible events unfolding in the Middle East my heart goes out to the families who have nowhere to go. We all need to call out the horrific attitudes of corporates and retailers who take advantage of a horrible situation in the Middle East and put up fuel prices.

Of course, there are actions by governments that will contribute to the restriction of fuel. When people are blowing up ships and restricting access to things, that puts pressure on systems. However, I do not think we should all actively, and so quickly, go out and blame.

This is digressing a bit, but it is important to remember that when we have these discussions in our communities about what is going and the actions of countries, we are often talking about the governments of those countries. Do not demonise all the people from those countries, because we are seeing the actions of governments of all persuasions from multiple countries that are involved in this conflict. I make it clear that there are many wonderful people across the Middle East, and I would hate for them all to be demonised because of this conflict.

It would be good to understand why the CLP does not want to bring its fuel Bill back to parliament. Will the government consider activating the existing provisions—the *Price Exploitation Prevention Act*, which is in force as of 1 May 2016—and if not, why not? These are important questions. Is there a mechanism in the Territory to look at oversight? When departmental staff travel across the regional and remote footprint, will

they check the prices at the bowsers and report it to the responsible agency in the Northern Territory Government to get that to the ACCC?

DCM, Housing and Territory Families staff travelling to remote communities could stop, look at the fuel bowser and report it to Consumer Affairs, which would be a tangible way to ensure we do not see people paying $4 a litre, like the good folk of Ramingining and Milingimbi do. In Docker River, people are paying more than $3.20 a litre. These are outrageous prices when many of our mob live below the poverty line. It is terrible. We are seeing prices of about $3 a litre in Wadeye and Palumpa. These prices are unrealistic, and they need action.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before proceeding, I want to clarify the rejection of leave to table. I thought I heard noes, and I went for the noes, thinking a division could be called. The Clerk advised me otherwise, so I refer everyone, including me, to Standing Order 69: Seeking leave of the Assembly. It states:

> *A Member who has the call may seek the leave of the Assembly. Leave must be unanimous and granted without any dissent.*

That is why it was rejected.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, the cost of fuel affects every Territorian and is felt directly by the people I represent in Casuarina. Fuel prices are a real concern for Territorians, particularly those with small businesses and young families, who are already managing rising costs of living.

In electorates like Casuarina, where daily life depends heavily on getting around by car, the impact of fuel prices is especially real. People are constantly on the move in Casuarina and the surrounding northern suburbs. Families drive to and from school, childcare, work, appointments, sport, shopping centres and community events and to visit relatives. Many households do multiple trips a day. They may be taking one child to school, heading to work, picking up groceries from Casuarina Square, attending sport training in the afternoon, helping care for an elderly family member in the evening and going for medical appointments, surgery or treatment. These are not optional trips; this is everyday life.

When fuel prices go up, it is families in places like Casuarina who feel it immediately. A young family in Casuarina does not look at fuel prices as a distant economic issue; they see it every week when they fill up the car. They feel it when they are trying to stretch the family budget to cover groceries, school expenses, insurance, electricity bills and rent or mortgage repayments. Every extra dollar spent on fuel is money that cannot be spent somewhere else.

In the northern suburbs many families have no real alternative; parents still must get to work, children still need to get to school, families still need to get to appointments and sport commitments and grandparents still need support. Life keeps moving, whether fuel is affordable or not. That is why fuel is not a luxury in Casuarina; it is an essential household item.

I also know this issue from the perspective of small business. As a former small business owner, I understand how fuel costs directly affect the cost of doing business. In a community like Casuarina small businesses are the backbone of local economic life. They employ local people, serve local families and help keep our suburbs vibrant, but they are also under constant pressure from rising operating costs, and fuel is one of the costs that flows through almost everything.

Fuel affects deliveries, transport of stock, staff commuting to work, service calls, maintenance runs, supply pickups and day-to-day operations. Small cafes, retail shops, mobile service operators, tradies, local cleaners, couriers and home services businesses all feel rising fuel prices. Even businesses that are not directly transport based still pay more because goods and services cost more to move.

When fuel prices rise local businesses in Casuarina often face a difficult choice: absorb the cost and reduce their already tight margins or pass it on to customers who are already under pressure themselves. Neither option is good, and this is when fuel prices stop being just a transport issue and become a broader cost-of-living issue. When fuel costs rise, freight costs can rise. When freight costs rise, the cost of food, supplies and everyday goods can rise.

That means the family filling up the car in Casuarina can be hit twice—once at the bowser and again at the checkout. That matters greatly in a place like Casuarina, because it is a community of working families, small business owners, seniors, students, shiftworkers and carers. It is a community where people work hard and

budget carefully and where many people are already trying to manage increasing costs in multiple areas of life. Higher fuel prices simply add one more layer of pressure.

In Casuarina the daily reality of travel is clear. People commute to Royal Darwin Hospital, schools, shops, Charles Darwin University, local businesses, sporting precincts and work across Darwin's northern suburbs and beyond. Many residents travel between Casuarina, Nightcliff, Karama, Palmerston and the city for work and family reasons. For some, one tank of fuel is not enough for the week. For others, filling up has become something they delay for as long as possible because of how much it costs.

That pressure is not just financial; it affects peace of mind. Decisions about family outings, after-school activities and even basic spending are affected. When the cost of filling up becomes a burden, families start thinking twice about ordinary parts of life. That is not how it should be.

Fuel affordability matters because mobility matters. In a community like Casuarina moving around safely and affordably is a part of participating in everyday life. It is also important to remember that Casuarina is a major hub in the Northern Territory. People do not only travel within the electorate; many come to Casuarina for shopping, work, services, education and recreation. Casuarina Square, schools, medical services, sporting clubs and community facilities all serve a wider area. That means transport costs have a wider impact too. When fuel becomes more expensive it affects not just one suburb but also the broader network of communities connected to Casuarina. That is why this issue deserves proper attention.

Territorians deserve transparency on fuel pricing and communities like Casuarina deserve to know that these concerns are taken seriously. People want to know that prices are fair and there is proper scrutiny. People want confidence that they are not paying more than they should simply because they live in the Territory.

Our government has taken this matter seriously and reported concerns about fuel pricing in the Northern Territory to the ACCC. That is an important step, because people in Casuarina expect their government to stand up for them and speak up when essential living costs become too high. They expect strong advocacy when families and businesses are being squeezed. They are right to expect that because the people of Casuarina work hard and contribute a lot to our economy. They run businesses, volunteer in community organisations, raise families and support local schools and sporting clubs. They do everything right, and they deserve fairness. They deserve fair prices at the bowser, transparency in how fuel prices are set, proper scrutiny when concerns arise and a government that will continue to advocate strongly on their behalf.

This issue is about more than fuel; it is about everyday life in communities like Casuarina. It is about the parent doing the school run before work, the small business owner managing another rising cost, the young apprentice travelling to their job site and the grandparent helping to care for grandchildren. It is about the nurse, the shop worker, the teacher, the tradie, the delivery driver and the student. Every one of them feels the impact when fuel prices rise, so when we talk about fuel affordability we are really talking about fairness, ensuring that communities like Casuarina do not carry an unfair burden and that Territorians are not paying more than they should for something essential to daily life.

In Casuarina fuel is not optional; it is a part of getting to work, getting to school, running a business and caring for family. That is why this issue matters so much to the people I represent.

I will continue to advocate strongly for fairness, transparency and proper scrutiny on behalf of the people of Casuarina and all Territorians.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Opposition Leader for bringing on this motion about fuel costs. In remote regions we already suffer greatly with incredibly high prices for fuel. I support the push from the opposition, asking what the government can do to address increasing fuel costs.

I am interested in what can be done about the ongoing high cost of fuel in remote and regional areas. In Milingimbi today diesel is $3.95 per litre. In Nhulunbuy, it is $2.20 for diesel and $2.45 per litre for unleaded petrol. These are the regular prices that people pay often.

The majority of people in our communities have minimal incomes. For those of us with higher incomes, money is spread out across many families to support a large number of people. When government workers come to live in our communities, they get a freight subsidy that recognises the high cost of living in remote and regional areas. We do not get that; rather, we must bear the brunt of these high prices every day at the bowser.

The government should do what it can to bring down prices across the Northern Territory, particularly in remote areas where some of the poorest people are living with some of the highest prices. We all know that high fuel costs increase the cost of food, labour and mechanic services; everything goes up.

I have put a written question to the minister for Community Development about grants in homelands. When grants are not increased in line with increased fuel and material costs, programs can no longer provide what is needed. The funds simply cannot stretch as far.

I face the same problem, as a local member with an electorate allowance that has not increased in line with the increasing cost of goods and services within the Mulka electorate. I also struggle to travel far. A charter flight once cost $1,200 from Milingimbi to Gove, but now I pay $2,000. These are substantial rises in costs.

These are the costs that individuals, businesses, organisations and government services face in my electorate due to increases in fuel and freight costs over a number of years. These problems need to be addressed by the NT Government, working in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government to try to bring relief across the region.

I support the government doing this work in whichever form best suits the conditions of 2026. I supported the Bill that the CLP brought in during the last Assembly, because it was a sensible way of monitoring fuel prices and stopping fuel price gouging. I would support the government doing further consultations at this time and using all the resources available to it to find the best way to address these issues.

VISITOR
Anjan Paudel

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we move on, I acknowledge the presence of Mr Anjan Paudel, who was a candidate in the Nightcliff by-election.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I address the opposition's motion on fuel prices.

Nobody in this Chamber can deny that Territorians are doing it tough at the bowser and in their hip pockets. Families across the Northern Territory from the suburbs of Fannie Bay, Parap, Ludmilla, Coconut Grove and the Gardens through to remote communities and places like Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, are all paying some of the highest prices for fuel in the nation. Every extra cent per litre is not an abstract number; it is a direct hit to household budgets, forcing tough choices between filling the tank and putting food on the table.

In the NT high fuel prices do not stop at the pump; they ripple out in ways that hit us harder than most other places. Our vast distances mean that freight costs and the price of groceries skyrocket. A simple trip to the supermarket in Darwin becomes more expensive for regional and remote families. It is even worse out bush. Fresh produce, meat and dairy cost more to get there, and those increases are passed straight on to the consumer.

Small businesses in the Fannie Bay electorate tell me that they are struggling. Tradies are facing higher diesel costs on every job site. Delivery drivers are burning more fuel just to keep the shelves stocked. Tourism operators are watching margins evaporate as fuel prices eat into their bottom line.

Then there are the families. Parents are juggling school runs, sports practices and weekend visits to relatives. In a spread-out place like the NT, a car is not a luxury; it is a lifeline. High prices mean cutting back on kids' sports, family outings to places like the famous Parap Markets or even medical appointments that require a long drive.

For pensioners and single-income households in my electorate, it is a cruel squeeze.

Do not get me started on our regional communities, where fuel is the difference between accessing services, jobs and emergency support. When prices spike, it is not just inconvenient; it isolates people and strains essential services.

Recent global shocks have only intensified this pain. The war in the Middle East, including the conflict involving Iran, has disrupted oil production and driven up international crude benchmarks. Supply chains are volatile and wholesale costs have jumped. It takes time for those global pressures to ease locally.

Territorians understand this. They are not naive about how the world works. They know that we cannot snap our fingers and ignore the crude price or shipping routes halfway across the globe. The opposition knows this too—or it should—yet, as the Member for Namatjira stated, those opposite have brought a motion focused on the Member for Spillett's private member's Bill from 2022 as if local transparency alone could magic away the impact of global instability.

Where were these questions when the global markets were stable? Where was the urgency on fuel prices in 2022 before the world changed with floods, wars and conflicts? This is not leadership; it is political theatre timed for headlines rather than genuine solutions. Those opposite sat quietly when prices were high before these global events dominated the news, and now they want credit for stating the obvious. People in Fannie Bay want straight answers, not recycled motions.

Fuel prices are spiking, mostly faster than they can drop. Prices stay high because competition is limited in a small market like Darwin or even the Territory, and global volatility keeps the pressure on.

This government is on the case. We are engaging with the ACCC to monitor margins and with retailers to ensure they understand the impact of their price increases. We do this this so that motorists can shop smart. We are working with industry to ensure fair play. We are not pretending that we control world oil markets, but we are delivering practical action and targeted relief where we can, stronger oversight and support for households and businesses hit the hardest.

This motion notes the high prices and the resulting additional cost-of-living pain; we all agree on that. However, recycling a lapsed opposition Bill ignores the real drivers—global destruction, freight realities and NT-specific challenges. Most importantly, it dodges the hard work of governing through a crisis.

On behalf of Fannie Bay residents, families skipping meals to fuel the car, businesses fighting to stay afloat and communities holding on through the squeeze, I call on those opposite to join us in practical, Territory-based and Territory-focused action, not just pointscoring when the world markets make their job easier.

For those reasons, I do not support the opposition's motion, but I support the Treasurer's amendment.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Mr Deputy Speaker, before I begin my contribution, I thank Anjan Paudel in the gallery. He is a fantastic hardworking candidate, and I was proud to doorknock with him in Nightcliff. I was a bit out of my comfort zone in the green leafy suburbs next to the sea, but it is a lovely area, and he is a great guy. Hopefully he has a big future ahead.

The Treasurer moved to amend the motion by omitting all words after 'That this Assembly' and inserting:

- acknowledges that the CLP government is committed to ensuring Territorians are treated fairly at the petrol bowser and that fuel pricing transparency and competition remain critical issues for the Territory

- notes the Treasurer has written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and local retailers seeking closer scrutiny of fuel pricing behaviour affecting Territorians

- calls on the Albanese government to strengthen the powers of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission so it can take stronger action where anti-competitive behaviour or price exploitation occurs

- notes that on 30 November 2022 the Member for Arnhem stated, 'I am happy to make a contribution and speak against the Bill', when debating the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill

- condemns the contradictory, divisive and bizarre policy positions of the Labor Party when it comes to fuel prices.

It is helpful to examine how we got to this position because spikes like this do not come out of nowhere; there is usually a long process building up to them. We need to look at the history of Iran, going back to 1000 BC and the empire of Cyrus the Great of Persia. Sorry—I will not seriously go back that far. Iran has a long and proud history of being a developed and highly educated nation for thousands of years prior to the current day. Moving forward to the 20th century, Iran came into democracy and had the Shah of Iran. Iranians enjoyed several decades of democracy when women walked with their hair uncovered …

Mr Paech: While he was slaughtering his own people.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Cease the interjections, please. Member for Blain, address your comments through the Chair.

Mr KERLE: I will get to the leader of Iran who slaughtered his own people, don't you worry.

Iranians enjoyed several decades of democracy under the Shah of Iran, when women could walk in the streets with their heads uncovered, go to school, be educated and participate to the fullest extent in society without fear of religious police or oppression.

Come the late 1970s, the Ayatollah Khomeini took advantage of—they are called the useful idiots—the coalition of socialists who were unhappy with the democratic government of Iran. They were complaining and destabilising the government. This proceeded until the Iranian revolution of 1979.

J Davis: They were not socialists, Mr Kerle.

Mr KERLE: It is useful to note history because that coalition of useful idiots who helped Khomeini come to power were the same people who were persecuted and locked up in prisons. A large number were killed. This is a fact of history; you can look at it yourselves if you care to learn from history. These people were murdered, tortured and persecuted by the leader they supported into power.

That regime taught children in school to chant, 'Death to America. Death to the West.' It sponsored terrorism throughout the Middle East.

We now find ourselves in a situation where the United States is taking action against that regime. Due to history, geography and how oil deposits were laid down around the world, the majority of oil resources for our society pass through the Strait of Hormuz, which is only a few tens of kilometres wide and off the shore of Iran. The conflict taking place in the Middle East has caused a shock to oil markets around the world, which are now responding and causing the higher prices we see at the bowser.

This is on top of an unprecedented concatenation of events that severed the north–south link of the Territory, the Stuart Highway, for a number of days. There are two ways that fuel gets into Darwin: it comes in by boat from refineries overseas, usually Singapore; and it comes up the Stuart Highway. For nearly a week the Stuart Highway has been closed. Correct me if I am wrong, but when I looked at the Road Report website earlier the Stuart Highway was still closed south of Katherine. The Treasurer said that two road trains were bogged on the highway, so there is obviously a bit of work to do to get it back up to full capacity.

We are enduring a supply shock and a concatenation of events which is unprecedented—a conflict in the Middle East driven by factors out of our control and the cutting off of our land supply route to the south due to weather situations that are also out of our control. These two things happened at the same time, so we are relying on the fuel in the tanks at the port to keep us going.

I turn to the importance of price signals and economics. When the then Leader of the Opposition brought the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill to the House, suddenly every member of the Labor Party was an expert in economics. It was the most amazing thing; they all transformed into free-market economists. Milton Friedman would have been proud of the economic theory that was spouted that day. However, that did not fix the fundamental failings of that Labor government. The disclosure Bill was not about price controls or what those opposite may love to do, which is the fascist approach of telling businesses what to do with their own business; it was about disclosing the margins that were there.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 31; I find it offensive that he has come in here and tried to call us fascist. I ask that he withdraw those offensive remarks. He has called us fascists.

Mr Kerle: I am happy to explain.

Mr YOUNG: He needs to withdraw those offensive remarks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Blain, you may not have directly done that to them, but I remind you to watch your language, thank you.

Mr KERLE: I will, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No further points of order on this matter, please.

Mr YOUNG: He needs to withdraw the remarks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have said to let it go. Please take your seat.

Mr KERLE: For the record, the defining characteristic of fascism is the control of private property, private businesses, by the state. You may have your business, it is yours, but you are told what to do with it by the state. If those opposite think that describes what they would like to do to private business, that is a matter for them. We on this side will not tell people what to do with their business. We want to set the rules of the game so that they can play fairly and get along with each other. After that we prefer to step out and let the free market take its place.

I return to the importance of price signals. We have an unprecedented concatenation of events and need to conserve fuel until the Stuart Highway is fully opened and the conflict in the Middle East resolves. It appears that the retailers in Darwin have been enthusiastic in jumping on the price signal to encourage the drivers of Darwin and Palmerston to conserve fuel. The question is: are they overstepping their bounds and stepping into price gouging? That is what the Treasurer has been addressing.

This government takes seriously the mandate given to it by the Territory. The Treasurer has taken balanced and appropriate steps in writing to the federal government and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which is the appropriate body because it monitors competition and prices and prevents price gouging. The Treasurer has written to ask them to keep an eye on the situation and ensure that there is no price gouging or excessive use of the price signal.

I will briefly detour into the importance of the price signal. Around the world when there is a supply shock there are a few ways to respond. Countries can let the price rise and let people make their individual decisions about how much driving they want to do and how to balance their personal budgets. I am looking at the price of fuel, which has gone up by more than 40c. It was $1.80-something last week, and I saw prices this morning of about $2.40, so that is at least 50c in a week, which is significant. People can either look at their budget and decide those trips are necessary or they can ration fuel.

We have seen a lot of experience with fuel rationing from countries that tried to put a price cap on what can be charged for fuel. What is the inevitable and constant result of price caps? Lines and rationing. You get long queues and no fuel. You can buy cheap fuel, but the bowsers are empty; there is nothing there because it is all gone.

The reality of the situation is that the price signal is operating, and we are keeping a close eye on operators to make sure that they do not overstep their bounds.

I move to the impact of this on businesses in Palmerston. Fuel is the lifeblood of a lot of businesses in Palmerston.

For those of us who have to drive to work and drive home we are a bit limited in where we can economise. Maybe we can catch the bus, carpool or take a leaf out of the Member for Braitling's book and get an electric bike, which I am seriously considering.

Wilsons landscaping is a fantastic local Palmerston business that is all about landscaping. It has lawnmowers, whipper snippers and trucks. The people from Wilsons drive all around Palmerston. They maintain the garden at Bellamack Seniors Village and mow the verges of many Palmerston properties. Wilsons has a lot of commercial contracts. Fuel is the lifeblood of that business, so when fuel prices go up, its profit margin goes down. The people at Wilsons will be watching the prices closely.

BlackNuts Mowing—I think the owner will change the name of his business soon—is a landscaping business based in my suburb of Moulden in Blain. He is a fantastic fellow, an Indigenous man, who had a lot of options before him and decided to step out and take out a loan. He has a trailer, a zero-turn mower and a bunch of other gear and is mowing lawns, chasing commercial contracts, servicing housing providers in Palmerston and having a go.

Corrosion Instruments in the Member for Drysdale's electorate is based in the Palmerston CBD. It has an amazing product and was funded by Croc Pitch in 2019. The owner got seed funding to jumpstart his business, plus some helpful investment from his family. Now the people at Corrosion Instruments are working

in the Palmerston CBD. It has an amazing product, but if I tried to explain it you would all fall asleep because it is incredibly technical. It took me quite a while to understand what he is doing, but it is brilliant. Basically, it lets you monitor corrosion on large pipelines and gas and water tanks—all the things we need to keep our society running.

Many other businesses in Palmerston rely on fuel every day.

I thank the Opposition Leader for bringing this motion to the Assembly, but I fully endorse the Member for Namatjira's amendment. I look forward to the motion, as amended, passing.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Mr Deputy Speaker, my contribution will be brief, but I need to put it on the record.

That was an interesting speech from the Member for Blain. I need to look up 'fascist' just to get the definition. We are pretty much supporting what the government of today put forward in opposition in 2022. Unlike the Member for Blain, I will not blame those who come in late; I will put the blame on the seven members who were in the opposition. I did not get quotes from their speeches because I am not that petty.

I just want the government to keep an eye on the ripple effects fuel prices will have on our regional and remote areas. I had a text today from one of my constituents in Pirlangimpi on Melville Island. They said the price of food and alcohol has risen. It is already expensive there. It was $8 for a can of beer, and it has gone up to $10.

I will go through some of the fuel prices in my electorate. These fuel prices are as they currently stand on the MyFuel site. In Jabiru, which is the closest town in my electorate, it is $2.26 a litre. In Pirlangimpi on Melville Island it is $3.17. At NUA, which is the Nguiu association in Wurrumiyanga, it has gone up to $3.30. At Milingimbi, which is the closest to Maningrida in my electorate—about 50 kilometres away—fuel is $3.95. It has similar prices to Maningrida. I could not get the Maningrida prices on the website. Ramingining, which the Member for Mulka commented on, is $3.99, which is 1c off $4.

These are close to the prices that communities already had, so I am concerned that the flow-on effects will affect our community dramatically. I ask the government to keep an eye on the supply chain and the organisations and freight services because some of these communities have people on very low incomes and people who are unemployed. The majority of these people are on Centrelink benefits because of the lack of jobs in communities. I am concerned, and I will keep an eye on these communities.

Diesel and unleaded petrol are the lifeblood of our remote communities; they run our power stations, so fuel prices flow on to the cost of power to the communities which solely rely on that. There is no-one out there with solar with batteries or anything like that. I am definitely keeping an eye on that, and I will contact Mr Edgington and Mr Yan to keep an eye on it.

The Member for Mulka spoke about flights. The fuel price also bumps up the cost of our charter flights and RPTs, our regular service on the Tiwi Islands going to West Arnhem and Maningrida. When I first got on charters after joining parliament in 2023, it cost about $850 from Jabiru to Maningrida; now it has gone up to $1,200.

I want us to fight for Jabiru Airport because that is the middle point where we store our avgas. If that airport closes it will have a dramatic effect because Kakadu Air will have to fly from Darwin to do tours. We are all big on tourism, and now we have amazing waterfalls in the cascades and rock country, so we need to look at saving Jabiru Airport.

Basically, we need to keep an eye on the flow-on effects from the fuel price and our freight service that will affect consumers in the communities. The people in communities are struggling like everywhere else. Hopefully, we will get some reprieve. It goes onto our fuel, food and, in some cases where there are pubs and clubs, beer. Keep an eye on it, and I will reach out if anything bumps up.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, the motion was originally brought on by the Leader of the Opposition and the Treasurer moved to amend it.

I will go back a few speeches and pick up on what the Member for Gwoja was trying to say. It was clear from his contribution, and immediately on introduction of this motion by the Leader of the Opposition, that this issue has become a political football for the Labor Party. It has been a hypocritical night in the Chamber for the Labor opposition. I will pick up on a few of the things that have been said and correct the record, because I was here during that period and debated the fuel legislation.

Ms Uibo: Why did you not pass your Bill?

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Ms BOOTHBY: The Member for Gwoja said over and again that we could not bring our Fuel Price Disclosure Bill to the floor of parliament to be debated. I remember it was brought forward to the parliament during our time in opposition. It was brought forward as a General Business motion and as the first order of the day, and we debated it. Then it was brought forward under Orders of the Day specifically to be debated as a Bill. We had the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel draft it, and it was brought to the Chamber.

What actually happened on the day when we tried to pass the Bill and convince Labor and Territorians to support the Bill was that the Labor members talked it out. They just kept talking until the time ran out for General Business. We have only four hours of non-government business, in any parliament that I have been part of, for the opposition and crossbench to put forward their motions or legislation and debate it. In opposition that is what we did.

At that time Labor members got up and spoke to that Bill. They basically said from the minute someone first got up and spoke about it that they would not support the fuel disclosure Bill brought forward by the CLP opposition at the time. The Member for Arnhem was the last person to speak on that debate. She said in the Chamber today that she still had 16 minutes remaining on that debate, which clearly …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the discussion across the Chamber.

Ms BOOTHBY: … demonstrates the time ran out, so we could not have a vote on the Bill. The time ran out, which Labor members deliberately did, because they did not want to show Territorians that they opposed the Bill we brought forward. That is the first thing I wanted to correct the record on.

The second is that the Member for Gwoja said that the Treasurer, who was in opposition at the time when we talked about the fuel Bill, was against the MyFuel app implementation and commencement. The Member for Gwoja said that at the time Labor brought this forward and said that it would be great, the now Treasurer was against it and argued. The Member for Gwoja is wrong. I know this for a fact because the MyFuel app was introduced, commenced and implemented for Territorians to use in 2017, well before the now Treasurer was elected to this parliament. That was a mistruth on the record, and I am correcting it.

I heard different speakers on that side keep saying that they would support the Bill. It is like they are only saying that now because they want to use it politically, which is disingenuous. It is hypocrisy and playing politics with Territorians. It is a disgrace. You made it clear throughout all the contributions that you would not support that Bill.

The Member for Gwoja tried to table, but failed, the *Price Exploitation Prevention Act 1949*. He said that we can pull the levers in this Act. I want to set the record straight: I cannot pull that lever, nor can the government; it is done by a controller in a separate statutory body, and it can be used in a narrow set of circumstances. If you truly thought, Member for Gwoja, that you could use that Act, why did you not use it in the eight years you were in government? The reason you did not is that you knew you could not.

He could not table this document successfully, but I will table the *Price Exploitation Prevention Act 1949*.

Mr Young: No—just like they did.

Madam SPEAKER: There is no leave required; a minister can table whatever they like.

Ms BOOTHBY: I acknowledge the hurt caused by rising fuel prices. Across the country fuel prices are also rising; there is hurt down there as well, but for Territorians it is worse. It is even worse when you add natural events such as those over the last couple of weeks and those that we are still going through.

In the Territory these price increases hit differently. We are remote and isolated. We travel hundreds of kilometres to get to where we need to go. We live the tyranny of distance every day—distance that affects our freight costs, extends our travel planning, influences whether families take a trip, a tradie quotes a job or a business expands. When fuel prices rise, Territorians do not just notice it; we feel it. We live it—it is in our hip pocket—and pay for it. In the Territory—with distances longer, competition thinner, freight costs much higher, diesel-powered communities and air access often not being an option—fuel prices have the most

impact. You see it at the bowser, in the supermarket when you buy groceries, on freight invoices and in airfares.

While international markets move, Territory consumers must not carry unjustified increases—the gouging. We will not stand for it.

In the Northern Territory we are particularly exposed. We import refined fuel and rely heavily on diesel. Remote communities depend on supply lines. Aviation is one of our lifelines in and out of the Territory and for businesses. Global instability flows directly to the Territory's cost of living.

Yesterday the price of diesel was 205.9c per litre, but today it is 229.9c. That is a 24c jump overnight. For a 70-litre tank it costs nearly $17 more for the same amount of fuel. Territorians noticed that immediately. We know that prices move. We understand global oil prices shift and that conflict and shipping disruption affects benchmarks, but we will not accept unfair price gouging.

If fuel is landing at the terminal at about $1.80 per litre, the retail pricing should reflect genuine wholesale costs, freight, tax and a reasonable margin. That is legitimate and reasonable. The price should not reflect speculation or opportunism or capitalise on global events. The latest explanation from fuel retailers is that they are holding stock and this is a demand issue. If that is the case, retailers should be able to demonstrate when the stock was purchased, what the wholesale rate was, what freight component applied and what margin has been added. Territorians deserve that transparency and to know that movements are justified. When prices jump 24c overnight, in a market as small and as exposed as ours, confidence matters. We understand global volatility, but fairness for Territorians is not negotiable.

We have been paying close attention to the prices at the bowser. Our Treasurer has written directly to retailers and the ACCC. He made it clear that although genuine cost movements are understood, excessive or premature increases are not. Competition can be limited in parts of the Territory, but, as the Treasurer said, we are watching and so is the ACCC. It is the ACCC's job to make sure that Territorians are not being gouged on fuel prices.

Consumer Affairs is responsible for listening to Territorians' concerns about prices that may be unreasonable or gouging. It is a small unit within the Attorney-General's Department, but it is mighty and does a mountain of work. Sometimes there are complaints about the price of things that Territorians are trying to buy. Consumer Affairs is here to support Territorians to avoid price exploitation, and it keeps a close eye on the behaviours and reports it receives.

Today the people at Consumer Affairs told me that they have not received any complaints from Territorians yet, but they are working closely with the ACCC to get advice about options. The way they described it to me is that they are working closely with the commission, and I want them to know that they should send a message to put the big fuel companies on notice. This is why it is important that we are debating this in the parliament. It is why the Treasurer articulately answered a question in Question Time about fuel prices. When leaders of a community, ministers or regulators discuss issues that affect the people they represent, those that need to take notice do so. We see that with the big fuel companies, and that is a good thing because we want them to know that we are watching. It is why we are happy to talk about this issue. Consumer Affairs works hand in hand with the ACCC.

In case they are not watching parliament, listening to the media and hearing what people are saying on the ground or on social media, Territorians can be assured that the Treasurer and this government take it seriously and have written directly to those retailers to put them on notice.

Fuel prices affect many things for Territorians. Given we are so focused on rebuilding our economy, this has a huge impact on Territorians.

Increased fuel prices affect our visitor economy as well. In the last 18 months we have done a lot of work to make the Northern Territory an attractive place for visitors to come, which is one of our five key pillars to rebuild the economy.

Self-drive visitors represent about 40% of total visitation in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Drive campaign is live across our southern states, with an aim to get travellers to choose the Northern Territory for their 2026 travels. We are promoting journeys like the Binns Track, Palm Valley, Reynolds River, the Central Arnhem Way and the Savannah Way.

When visitors want to see places like Gunlom, that is extra kilometres to get there. When you are a self-drive tourist going to remote areas, the price of fuel affects your decisions. As an example, Gunlom is nearly four hours' drive from Darwin. Higher fuel prices can shorten trips. People might choose not to go there. We want visitors to go out to our regions—we want that dispersal—and to increase the length of their stay. Fuel prices impact that. We have many regional members who talk about their regions often and they tell us that businesses in those regions feel the impact immediately and are concerned about visitation being lower.

That is why we continue to invest in demand through events, marketing and experienced development. There is nowhere like the Territory in Australia or the world. We want visitors to come and see what we have to offer, such as the rich military history, the Million Dollar Fish and our natural landscapes and parks. Go and sit in Wangi in the Dry Season—do not go now when it is closed. It is gushing with water. It is spectacular but dangerous now; you would have to watch it from the edge for sure.

It is not just the scenery that tourists come to see; it is our Territory spirit. It is all the locals we have, some of you may know the ones we have alongside the highway like Nathan 'Whippy' Griggs cracking a stockwhip in Mataranka. It is the people, characters and authenticity that make visitors stay longer and come back. Of course, fuel prices affect that.

We want to make sure that Territorians are not being gouged, the ACCC is keeping a close eye on it and our retailers know we are watching them. Territorians expect, deserve and rely on other economic factors to make the Territory a great place, like having a strong tourism industry, which I mentioned.

I look forward to the rest of the contributions to this debate. I hope to hear that the Labor opposition supports making sure the ACCC watches what is going so that Territorians are not gouged. I remember during the contributions we made in 2022 that even Luke Gosling, the Labor Member for Solomon, was on radio basically supporting the work that the CLP wanted the government to do. He said, 'We stand with Territorians', but I remember the Labor government at the time saying that it would not support Territorians. It would continue to back the big fuel businesses. We will not do that. We will make sure that those big fuel companies know we are watching them closely. In our eyes Territorians come first, not the big fuel companies.

The Treasurer called on the Albanese government to strengthen the ACCC's powers. That is a good call because we want stronger action taken when anti-competitive behaviour and price exploitation occur. We have seen it in the past with fuel, and we do not put up with it. We would rather have this conversation now and have retailers know that we are watching and we will do whatever it takes so that they do not gouge Territorians. That is important.

I support the Treasurer's amendment.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, this is an important motion about fuel price disclosure.

That has to be one of the most uninspiring speeches I have ever heard in this Chamber coming from the Attorney-General. She tried to rewrite history, about her own General Business day and the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill that the CLP introduced, by saying that we talked it out. The whole point of General Business day is to have a debate. The Attorney-General forgets that she could have reordered the Notice Paper and brought the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill back to the top.

The hypocrisy coming from the Attorney-General and the CLP government that suddenly the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill does not matter now just shows how little they care about Territory families, mothers driving their kids to the football or sporting events and fathers taking their kids to the footy or sporting events. That is how little the Attorney-General cares about Territorians.

She just said, and I quote, 'We will do whatever it takes'. What did she say it would take? 'We are watching'. That is all she is doing—just watching. The Attorney-General is not taking action to show Territorians that they will have relief at the bowser. The Attorney-General should apologise to Territorians because her government is in the position that it should be able to make the cost of living for Territorians a lot easier. She is not doing that. She admitted that the only thing she and her government are doing is watching. It is a shame that the Attorney-General is only watching on behalf of Territory families instead of acting to make it easier because, as we know, it costs a lot at the bowser.

In Wadeye, for example, fuel costs $2.75. In Palumpa it is $2.81. Thamarrurr Development Corporation subsidises the fuel there so that families can put fuel in their tanks to get to their homelands and traditional lands so that they can practise their culture, language and ceremonies. Being on their traditional lands makes it easier. I thank Thamarrurr Development Corporation for putting in subsidies to make it easier for families to fill up the

tank. The Thamarrurr Development Corporation is doing more for families in the Northern Territory than the Country Liberal Party government. You can only imagine how much fuel would cost if those subsidies were not in place for families in Wadeye and Palumpa. It is still $2.75 with those subsidies in place.

I am shocked at the hypocrisy of the CLP government members not being able to introduce their own fuel Bill from when they were in opposition and then blaming everyone else as though they did not have mechanisms to reorder the GB day, which they have full control over. Shame on you! You cannot rewrite history.

The CLP government has been exposed after abandoning the law it once promised would bring down fuel prices for Territorians. It said that the Bill would bring down fuel prices for the mums and dads and the young people just getting their licence or their new car and wanting to explore our beautiful national parks such as Litchfield National Park in my electorate. At that time, the CLP promised that it would bring down fuel prices. We have just exposed how much the CLP misled Territorians then, and it still is today.

Around the Northern Territory, and in my electorate in particular, fuel prices are quite high. In Peppimenarti it is still $2.95; Daly River, $2.45; Adelaide River, $2.39; Batchelor, $2.35; Wagait Beach, $2.30, Belyuen, $2.35; and $2.15 at Dundee Beach.

I cannot understand how fuel is $2.35 in Darwin, but in Dundee it is $2.15, making it 20c cheaper in Dundee, even though it is more than 100 kilometres off the Stuart Highway. Why is the Attorney-General not acting on that? She said that she is watching and she will act. It seems a bit odd that further out in the bush, in Dundee, it is a lot cheaper. I welcome it being cheaper for the people of Dundee, but why is it $2.35 in Darwin?

Why are all the Darwin and northern suburbs MLAs not questioning why it costs their constituents 20c more than it costs people from Dundee? That should be the question. They should be trying to understand how the different costs are associated, depending on the demographics of the area people live in. It is costing a lot more in Darwin, which is a major city, yet it is a lot cheaper in one of our remote areas. I know that the people of Dundee would be somewhat relieved, but it is still expensive at $2.15.

If the CLP was genuine about believing in this Bill, it would fix the fuel prices and introduce it.

This is about Territory families and all our constituents that the 25 members in this parliament represent. It is about the ability of my constituents to travel out bush, away from Wadeye, take their kids out fishing and on country to show them the sacred sites. I had the privilege of living out there and being shown some of those sacred areas and lands. It is about ensuring that families have a way to connect with culture so that they can be on country. Cheaper prices ensure that people at Dundee who love to fish can take their kids fishing on the weekend.

It is about ensuring that when the Darwin River pump station is flooded—we saw the Treasurer there with all the big generators—that it will not cost taxpayers a whole lot of money to keep the diesel generators running. The Treasurer looks shocked and is probably looking at his Treasury book, but who knows? Maybe he will be fishing at Daly River again. Maybe he should put that forward, so he can get out fishing on the boat and it will be a lot cheaper. Hopefully, this year the Treasurer will put his head down in the budget books and understand how he will make the cost of living lower.

Mr Yan: Maybe you should support the Daly River.

Mr YOUNG: He is arcing up because he got caught out fishing last year, one week before he dropped his budget. Hopefully, this year he will not just leave his public servants behind and not listen to them, because we heard of a few who were upset about that. They were not happy that they were working long hours into the night and on weekends while he was out fishing and enjoying himself, clearly not worried about Territorians and the cost of living.

I welcome the federal government's announcement, Fair go for consumers at the bowser, put out by Jim Chalmers, Chris Bowen and Dr Andrew Leigh, which says:

> *The Albanese Government is taking action to help consumers get a fair go at the petrol pump, with more scrutiny and surveillance of the fuel sector, bigger penalties for misconduct and action to shore up fuel supply.*

Many members mentioned that we do not want to see people taking advantage of what is happening overseas. The announcement continues:

We will:

- *Double penalties for false or misleading conduct … to a maximum of $100 million per offence … across the economy*

- *Task the ACCC to ramp up fuel price monitoring, reporting weekly, with a focus of unusual price spikes.*

- *Work with industry to increase fuel supply to service stations, including by helping the fuel sector secure ACCC authorisation to coordinate supply and unlock bottlenecks.*

We welcome this announcement from the federal Labor government. We are still waiting on the CLP government to make its announcement on how it will make things easier for Territory families across the region, including the Barkly. The Member for Barkly is itching to move one side to his right and face the Opposition Leader. We need real leadership over there; we have seen time and again when there is controversy around the CLP government, the Chief Minister goes into hiding.

It seems that when the tough conversation is about fuel prices she goes into hiding too. I hope that the Chief Minister will come in and speak about this important matter because Territorians expect to hear from their leader when we talk about fuel prices.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! There should not be commentary about a member not in the Chamber. That should be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, it should be withdrawn. You referenced the fact that a member was not in the Chamber. Withdraw that, please.

Mr YOUNG: I withdraw that.

I stated that I hoped to hear the Chief Minister speak on the fuel price disclosure motion because real leadership happens when things get tough. You do not hide and shy away from the media, like we have seen over the last few days, with Territorians doing it tough again out there.

We should be seeing real leadership and a bipartisan approach to ensure that she picks up the phone and calls all members of parliament when it affects their electorate. When there were incidents like the bushfires in the Barkly, I believe that Eva Lawler was in regular contact with the Member for Barkly when she was Chief Minister. He knows it. That is what real leadership looks like. We know that Steve Edgington is not far from sitting one seat to his right. I hope that because the Member for Barkly understands that the fuel price is hitting our families …

Mr Edgington: Where will Ed sit?

Mr YOUNG: Do you know what Ed is doing? He is out talking to families.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: It is good to have a bit of humour in the place—it is 6 pm on Wednesday—but let us keep it down so that we can hear the Member for Daly.

Mr YOUNG: I do not mind a bit of humour coming my way and the snipes they are having; that is fine,. I will tell you what Ed is doing, he is out there talking to the people of Nightcliff about how the CLP government is only watching whether fuel prices will go up. That is what Ed is doing; he is out there letting everyone know, talking to his constituents, about how the Chief Minister has failed Territorians in making it cheaper for them with the cost of living and how the CLP is now reversing on its own Fuel Price Disclosure Bill. Ed is doing his job.

There is a hypocrisy that comes from the CLP members when they say that Labor members talked out the General Business day. I am not sure whether they realise that in this Chamber we are here to debate the issues, which is what we were doing when they introduced the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill. The Attorney-General tried to rewrite history by saying, ‘We ran out of time’. Guess what? You could have reordered your General Business day; you had two years to do it, and you sat there and did nothing because you knew your Bill was flawed. We have come back in here to expose you and show you it was flawed.

Mrs Zio: A waste of time.

Mr YOUNG: No, it is not a waste of time, because apparently you cannot even come in here and defend your own Bill. That is the issue. You could not defend your own Bill, so you sat on your hands for two years and Territorians know it.

Why did you sit on your hands, Member for Barkly? I thought you would have shown real leadership. Over there we continue to see it happen.

We have still not seen the Chief Minister come in here and speak on this important motion. Territorians want to hear from our supposed leader of the Northern Territory how she will make it cheaper at the bowser.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Stating that the Chief Minister should come in here is suggesting that she is not here, and that should be withdrawn.

Mr YOUNG: I withdraw that, Madam Speaker; that is fine.

I want to hear from the Chief Minister, the supposed leader, how she will make it cheaper for Territorians at the bowser, or will she be like the Attorney-General and just sit back, watch, twiddle her fingers and do nothing? There is silence over there; it sounds like all they will do is twiddle their fingers, do nothing and not make it easier for Territory families at the bowser.

We have members who are feeling the cost of fuel. The other day I saw the Members for Blain and Drysdale driving together—cute. I am glad they are looking after each other because it is costing them a fair bit. They understand the cost of living for families, I will admit that.

There are other things they do not understand. Maybe they will throw out the environment; I do not know. I am yet to hear it. We might hear it from an environmental speech one day, but I do not know. I have to wait and see where they stand on that.

They understand the cost to families because …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Please pause for a minute. The background noise is too much. When I had small children I used to call this the witching hour. Let us calm the witching hour and listen to the Member for Daly.

Mr YOUNG: The CLP should explain to people why it will not bring on the Fuel Price Disclosure Bill to relieve the hip pockets of Territory families. That is all we are asking for. The fact that the CLP has taken off the Bill shows that it knows that was a political stunt when it was in opposition. CLP members brought the Bill to the Assembly and did not go back to it for two years. They knew it was a flawed Bill, and we have just exposed their hypocrisy.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I thank the Treasurer for taking real action on this crisis. He has already written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and local retailers seeking closer scrutiny of fuel pricing behaviour affecting Territorians. While the Labor members talk and rant, the Treasurer has taken real action and written to the person in the organisation who can have a look at this and deal with the issue.

Fuel prices affect people across the Northern Territory. I will talk about the effect on farmers and pastoralists. They have to travel great distances. Unlike the Member for Daly who just goes to the local Nightcliff shop to get his milk, farmers have to go a long way to get their groceries. The cost of fuel makes a big difference to them.

I note that the Treasurer's amendment calls on the Albanese government to strengthen the powers of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission so that we can take stronger action when anti-competitive behaviour or price exploitation occurs. Where is Luke Gosling and the Labor federal ministers in relation to this issue? Have they been fighting for the Territory? Have they been doing what they can—our Treasurer has taken real action—to try to ensure that Territorians can access the lowest possible fuel costs across the Northern Territory? No matter where you live in the Territory there are great businesses. Fuel goes across the Northern Territory to small communities and big cities, and it costs money to transfer it. Why are federal Labor representatives not advocating for the Northern Territory, unlike our Treasurer who has taken real action? The Treasurer said that he has written to the ACCC and to local retailers to let them know we are watching them and making sure they do not rip off Territorians at the bowser.

It is important to realise there are flow-on effects from the rising price of diesel in the Territory and across Australia. There is an issue going on in Iran, and there is reason for it, but we need to make sure no-one price gouges and that retailers do not engage in anti-competitive behaviour. I am not saying that is happening, but we need to keep a watchful eye for it.

Our producers need fuel. It is common knowledge across the Territory that they need guaranteed access to forward fuel supplies so that they can keep producing the food that feeds this nation and fibre. They also need fertiliser. Our farmers face soaring prices and possible shortages of fertiliser due to the conflict in Iran. Global oil prices have climbed dramatically since the outbreak of this conflict, and it is disrupting the supply of urea or fertiliser. In 2024–25 Australia imported 2.1 billion tonnes of urea, accounting for 43% of all fertiliser. This fertiliser has to be trucked to the farms. Higher fuel prices put more pressure on these farmers and producers, which has to flow on somewhere. Most of the food and groceries that we buy in Coles, Woolworths and the local corner shops comes from Australian farmers, and we need to support that.

Australia gets two-thirds of its urea from the Middle East. Urea is the world's most commonly used nitrogen fertiliser and is essential for getting high yields out of many crops in the Northern Territory. Urea prices have jumped since the conflict, but there are warnings that the prices may hit a record high and Australia may even run out of urea if it continues for much longer. Fuel and fertiliser have a big impact on agriculture in the Northern Territory.

The Territory is a massive area connected by roads, especially in the land of opportunity. As I said, some pastoralists and farmers have to drive literally hundreds of kilometres just to get supplies and groceries. With the flooding events that have occurred, some pastoralists are flying in food with helicopters which, from my memory, costs about $50 to $100 an hour for an R44, or $2,000 an hour if you want to use a JetRanger. The bigger the helicopter, the more the hourly rate is.

Cattle and food are moved on these trucks. The increased fuel price will affect the movement of cows. The live export trade is an important part of the Northern Territory economy. Lots of cows from across the Northern Territory go out through our port to our Asian neighbours. With the cost of fuel going up, the cost to farmers will also go up because road trains use a lot of fuel, as do the tractors and equipment used on farms to improve pasture to ensure the cows gain weight.

Think about the internal roads of a cattle station. I have spent many hours driving an old grader with no air con on the internal roads of a station, doing the grading. I was cruising along at, I think, two kilometres an hour. I had to keep an eye on it. Those graders use diesel. That is another impact. Territory farmers and pastoralists have to absorb the fuel costs in order to put food on the plates of Territorians.

There are lots of pivot irrigation systems in the Northern Territory, most of which are run off diesel generators. They run for a 24-hour period, pumping out water and fertiliser to crops under those pivots. Those crops end up in Coles or Woolworths.

All these costs—a bit here and a bit there, or a lot there and even more over there—are what farmers and pastoralists have to put up with day-in and day-out. We spoke about fuel prices in Maningrida, Ramingining and places like that—the Member for Arafura went through the costs for those people—but the fuel price for farmers is so important because they do so much for our economy. Farming is one of our key pillars for growing our economy, along with mining and the gas industry.

I will quickly touch on the effects on the mining and gas industry. Mining occurs across the Northern Territory. Most of those mines run on a system that uses diesel to run the generators. Those mines operate 24/7, so the rising fuel price is another cost incurred by miners. In have been to the land of opportunity to see Tennant Mining's system. I have been to Peko, Warrego, the Granites and McArthur River. The mining companies run a tight ship with amazing workers. They rely on diesel to run their plants, loaders, trucks and diggers day-in and day-out. These costs will have to be absorbed by the mining companies and, unfortunately, that will have to be passed on. A lot of these companies have entered contracts, so they have to just absorb the cost of diesel.

I thank the Treasurer for writing to the ACCC to talk about fuel pricing behaviour so that Territorians who are doing their bit to grow the economy and the Territory lifestyle, no matter where they are—if they are locals, on community, in the agriculture industry, pastoralists, cattlemen or in oil and gas—can operate in a cost-effective way.

I spoke about the cattle industry. There were 447,000 head of cattle exported last year, an 18% increase on the year before. More than 313,000 of them were from the Northern Territory. Buffalo exports climbed to

7,200 head, which is a 57% increase from last year. We know that the Territory can increase those numbers, provided the costs do not escalate.

The cost of fuel is an important factor for people who live a rural lifestyle.

Cotton and mangoes are an important part of the Territory's industry. The Northern Territory produces 52% of Australia's total mango crop. Those mangoes do not just grow by themselves; a lot of work is done. There is slashing, spraying, tree trimming, people picking them and processing plants, and then those mangoes are boxed and put into trucks. Every step of the way the amount farmers must pay for fuel affects their bottom line.

We know that businesses are already doing it tough in the Northern Territory because of the vast distances, roads, problems getting labour and good staff and the biosecurity risks of transporting things. All these factors are taken into account by farmers, mining companies and pastoralists in their day-to-day business. You might think that running a small business is easy, but it is not.

I spoke to a pastoralist, Amber from Elkedra Station, who explained to me that the road into her station is damaged, and people at the station cannot get in and out. When they can, they will have to put a lot of money into fixing internal roads, fences and water infrastructure. Diesel will be an important part of all that work. They simply cannot get around those huge areas of land without LandCruisers, other Toyotas and tractors. Some people use helicopters and motorbikes. They all run on fuel.

We need to make sure that people are paying the least amount possible for fuel, no-one is price gouging and the ACCC is keeping an eye on this to protect Territorians.

I feel like a broken record, but the Treasurer has taken real action. He wrote to the ACCC to ask it to keep an eye on this. The federal Labor representatives have done nothing. The Labor members on the other side of the Chamber have done nothing other than sit here and try to pointscore. I have not heard them talk about letters they have written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. It would be interesting to hear whether they have. I hope they have.

What have Luke Gosling and Marion Scrymgour done to protect Territorians' interests? The only people taking real action in Territorians' best interests are the Treasurer and the leader of the CLP, Lia Finocchiaro, who every day is showing leadership and making sure that all Territorians, no matter where they live, can operate in a safe business environment where the economy is growing. We are restoring the lifestyle they are used to and deserve.

Everything people on this side of the Chamber are doing is about reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. All those things rely on fuel. The price of petrol, diesel and avgas—or kerosene if you are using a JetRanger—all tie into it. Nothing can get done without fuel. When the price goes up, it means the cost of providing services and goods or putting cows on trucks to get to the ship will all go up. The CLP is taking real action, doing what we can to help Territorians. We will ensure farmers can get on with business.

Lots of people across the Northern Territory have suffered from the recent floods. It does not matter where you are—in Alice Springs, where you are from Madam Speaker; the Barkly; the rural area; in the communities; Katherine—Territorians are already hard up against it. We had a lot of rain this year across the whole Territory, with slow-moving lows that are plonking down lots of rain. I feel for the people in the west near Victoria River because I think the rain will go there soon, and they may be feeling the effects of that.

There has been solid leadership from Lia Finocchiaro. She has done a great job making sure all Territorians can live, operate and stay in the Territory safely with the lowest cost-of-living impact possible from what is happening in the Middle East.

Food security is important. I shout out to all the farmers and pastoralists doing their bit against massive odds. They seem to be getting hit after hit through acts of God and acts of war. I ask them to keep their chins up and keep working hard. This government has heard what they have had to say.

We are working hard to ensure people in the Northern Territory can live safely and enjoy their families and their lifestyle.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I support the Treasurer's amendment, which:

- acknowledges that the CLP government is committed to ensuring Territorians are treated fairly at the petrol bowser and that fuel pricing transparency and competition remain critical issues for the Territory

- notes the Treasurer has written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and local retailers seeking closer scrutiny of fuel pricing behaviour affecting Territorians

- calls on the Albanese government to strengthen the powers of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission so it can take stronger action where anti-competitive behaviour or price exploitation occurs

The Treasurer has been doing phenomenal work on fuel prices. I am pleased with the amendment to the motion because we all know that should fuel prices increase or be exploited it will affect all parts of the Northern Territory and places around Australia.

I will speak briefly about my electorate. I have been monitoring fuel prices for some time. The Member for Gwoja would acknowledge that when we go out bush we travel long distances, so fuel prices are always on our mind, and not just for us. We talk to locals, and we know the cost of living out bush is higher than in town. We know fuel prices are, on many occasions, higher than in the larger centres of Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin. That has always been the case.

Over the last few weeks we have heard that unexplained increases have happened at some service stations. These are the issues we want to get on top of. Reports I have heard involve the board at the front of a service station displaying one price, but the pump has a different price when you go to fill up your vehicle. That is the sort of behaviour we need to get on top of, because when someone turns up to a service station and sees the price on the display board—digital or whatever—it is important that is the price they pay at the pump. If they pay more than that, effectively it is misleading and deceptive conduct. Displaying a price in one area but charging more at the pump is something we need to avoid.

When fuel prices increase it affects locals, business, transport, tourism and everything in places like Tennant Creek, as well as the larger and smaller communities, because there are such vast distances for everybody to travel in the Northern Territory.

The Treasurer has written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and to local retailers, seeking closer scrutiny of fuel pricing behaviour affecting Territorians. This had to be done because we need to put people on notice.

There are global factors happening, as we speak. The Member for Blain and others spoke about the global conditions, such as war. At some point that will have an effect on the gate price in the Northern Territory, but we do not want exploitation at the pump and misleading prices being displayed.

I found listening to the Member for Daly interesting because he rattled off a number of fuel prices in his electorate and spoke about some of the communities. I did not write down the prices he was quoting, but clearly they were high in his electorate. He seemed to be complaining that the prices were high, but he had not done anything about it. The critical thing is that you can come in here and say lots of things and make accusations, but it is clear to me that the Member for Daly spoke about all these high prices in his electorate—there are high prices in all parts of the Territory—but failed to explain what he had done to try to bring down prices in his electorate. The failure to do that goes to show that this is all politics playing out in the Chamber.

We are getting on with the job. Our Treasurer has already written to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and to local retailers to ensure that there is closer scrutiny of fuel pricing behaviour in the Northern Territory. Rather than going on about the prices, because there are high prices, we are getting on with the job of doing something about it. I commend the Treasurer for the work he has been doing to try to get on top of these issues.

The Member for Nelson spoke about the federal Labor government; while everybody has been talking about fuel prices, I have not heard from the Members for Lingiari or Solomon. I have not seen them in the media advocating for the federal government, which they are a part of, to take stronger action and remind the ACCC that it should be on top of these issues. The ACCC is a federal body that oversees competition and consumer behaviour, but we have not heard a single word from the Members for Lingiari or Solomon.

The only people we have heard from are from the CLP government. The CLP government moved an amendment to this motion to demonstrate not only to the Assembly but also to Territorians that we want to get on top of this issue. I thank the Treasurer for the work he is doing.

The whole Territory is at risk if fuel prices are going up and being exploited. The Member for Nelson touched on a lot of issues that affect my electorate. We have had significant flooding, particularly in some of the pastoral areas. The Member for Nelson spoke about Elkedra and Amber Driver, and I have had similar conversations with her. There is the cost of not only the cleanup but also getting food and the materials to fix fences, watering areas for cattle and the damaged homestead and buildings on Elkedra. That is huge. At the moment goods are being flown to that location so that the necessary repairs can be undertaken.

Fuel prices impact on tourism, transport and the cost of transporting goods. In my electorate people living in remote areas will be affected significantly if fuel prices go up. Fuel prices are high for people in the Aboriginal communities in my electorate. We cannot afford for people to be exploited with price rises in any part of the Northern Territory.

Food security is a big issue, and the cost of transport just to get food into remote areas is substantial. Food generally comes in on a truck, but some roads have been cut and the cost of transport will eventually go up to get food into those areas. We need to do everything we can to ensure fuel prices are not being exploited in any part of the Northern Territory. As I mainly speak about my electorate, these are some of the challenges we face.

The reality is that the CLP is taking action. We are calling on the Albanese government to strengthen the powers of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission so that it can take stronger action. We call upon the opposition and the federal Members for Lingiari and Solomon to lobby the federal government to strengthen the powers of the ACCC.

Everybody has a role to play. We can be the eyes and ears of the people we represent by watching and listening to what is happening in all parts of the Northern Territory to make sure there is no exploitation of people in the pricing of fuel.

I thank the Treasurer for bringing this amendment to the motion, and I commend it to the Assembly.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, petrol prices have risen enormously in the Northern Territory and we are at the mercy of the cost of petrol. Fuel is essential for Territorians, far more so than in many other places in Australia. It is needed for people to get to work, take their kids to school, access medical care, travel vast distances to and from remote communities, supply food et cetera.

Our public transport options are limited and many people have no choice but to drive in the Territory, so when petrol prices rise the impact is immediate and widespread. It does not just affect motorists; it flows through to the price of groceries, freight, construction, tourism and everyday services. It is imperative that this Assembly and this government do everything we can to protect Territorians against rising fuel prices. As we heard from the Members for Mulka and Arafura, in remote communities where prices are already incredibly high, even small price increases place unmanageable impacts on household budgets.

The current crisis is also a clear reminder of why we need to look for alternatives. We are reliant on petrol, and it is expensive, volatile, harmful to our environment, contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and worsens the climate challenges that we already face in the Territory. It is bad for the economy because it creates pressure on households, small businesses and essential services every time prices rise in a way that we have no control over. It is bad for our future because continued reliance on fossil fuels leaves our communities vulnerable to economic shocks and climate impacts.

It is a time that is an opportunity for us to look for alternatives, such as renewable energy-powered transport, electric vehicles, resilient public transport and infrastructure that keeps communities connected without relying on petrol alone. I commend any work that is done in this Chamber to address what is happening now with the impact of rising fuel prices and to look for alternatives so that we do not continue to be in this situation in the future.

I will quickly comment on some of the bizarre claims by the Member for Blain. For the member's reference, the defining characteristic of fascism is not, in fact, telling businesses what to do; it is romanticisation of the past—often imagined versions of the past—in service of ethno-nationalism, weaponising those imaginations of the past to whip up resentment against migration, multiculturalism, equality and fairness. Fascism is authoritarianism and an ultranationalist ideology that rejects democratic processes and suppresses

opposition. It includes attempts to influence or pressure law enforcement and government agencies to align with political goals. It also includes publicly attacking political opponents, often with personal insults and often emphasising an us-versus-them rhetoric and a nostalgic story about restoring the glorious past to mobilise loyalty and suppress opposition. It kind of sounds familiar.

The other thing I comment on quickly is the brief history lesson that the Member for Blain gave us about Iran. First of all, there are many people in our communities in the Northern Territory who are being terribly affected by what is happening in Iran. My thoughts, support and solidarity go out to all of them.

Member for Blain, the Iranian regime came into power on the back of a power vacuum caused by a CIA intervention which deposed the democratically elected government, which it did to stop Iran nationalising its own oil. America deposed that government for greed and created the environment for the regime to prosper. Member for Blain, I do not know where you get your history from. I know we have discussed it before in this Chamber, but if you want to read about the history of Iran or the political definitions of things like fascism, I would be happy to recommend some to you.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16	Noes 5
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Paech
Mrs Carlson	Ms Uibo
Mr Charls	Mr Young
Mr Edgington	
Mrs Finocchiaro	
Mr Howe	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	
Mr Maley	
Mr O'Gallagher	
Mr Patel	
Dr Rahman	
Mr Yan	
Mrs Zio	

Amendment agreed to.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I appreciate all the contributions to the motion. I am disappointed by the radical amendments made by the CLP government. You would think that the olive branch during General Business to debate the motions and proposals put forward by the opposition and crossbench would be looked at as representing the whole of the community across the Northern Territory, not just the government's view and perspective. It is expected, but disappointing.

Some interesting points were raised. Despite all the division and political back and forth—and a bit of fun; as you said, Madam Speaker, it was the witching hour—one thing that was clear from everyone's contribution is that fuel prices affect all of the Territory. Whether we are an urban, regional or remote Member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly that is one thing we all agree on, and we all recognise the impact of fuel prices.

We have seen prices go up by 10c in less than a week. I filled up my car last week on Thursday and the prices have jumped significantly since then, which is not quite seven days. People are noticing it at the bowser, as they travel and, most unfortunately, in their bank balance and hip pocket. We will start to see people make decisions about what they have to sacrifice because of the high fuel prices. Unfortunately, we are not immune; the rest of the country and the globe are also experiencing that pressure.

I do not need to repeat some of the comments and points made during the debate by certain members. The tit-for-tat, the nitty-gritty and the partial information, not the whole of it, presented by people in debate is misleading. That was called out by my colleague the Member for Daly and Deputy Opposition Leader. He picked holes in some contributions because only part of the truth was told by certain members. It is a big

shame on them because the CLP government has the responsibility to provide information and be honest and up-front with Territorians about what it is doing.

We heard a lot about what the CLP is not doing. We heard the CLP shift and blame. We heard a lot about the CLP's inaction. The Deputy Chief Minister said that the only person in the Northern Territory who is fighting and standing up for fuel costs is the Treasurer. When he realised his mistake he said, 'Whoops—and our leader. The Chief Minister is also doing something.' However, he could not tell us what. It was embarrassing that the Deputy Chief Minister made that admission. It is telling that even the Deputy Chief Minister does not know what the Chief Minister, the leader of the Northern Territory, is doing on behalf of Territorians to focus on the cost shift that everyone in the Territory is concerned about. It was a comic episode, and maybe rightly so, during the witching hour. Perhaps that is when people start tell a bit more of the truth as opposed to trying to filter what they say on behalf of their CLP team. Sometimes the truth eventually slips out and CLP members accidentally tell people what they are really thinking.

The inaction is astounding. What is the Treasurer doing? Based on what the Deputy Chief Minister said, it is clear that the Treasurer was telling the ACCC to do its job, which it already is. I do not know whether we have much more than a piece of paper on that. That was quite entertaining.

We will continue to listen to the concerns of Territorians the length and the breadth of the Territory. As opposition members we are extremely fortunate and honoured to do that in our roles. We are local members in large electorates, but we also get the opportunity to speak to people in regional towns and urban centres to hear about the impact of increasing fuel prices on people's hip pockets.

The motion has been amended; the government used its numbers to slap down the past and not even talk about what it is doing to futureproof our Territory and create protections regarding fuel costs and rising prices.

We in the Labor opposition will continue to do our job. We will talk to people, including retailers and companies, about the impact of what is happening globally, nationally and across our beautiful Territory. We will not forget the impact of inaction. We will be measuring that. We are getting close to the midterm of this political cycle. We are 18 months in, and we have only that little bit of a countdown left for the end of the term. Territorians will be judging for themselves and will see the inaction.

Of course, the Deputy Chief Minister claims that only one person in the whole government is fighting for the Territory in regard to fuel prices, and that is the Treasurer. We will be watching the Treasurer. As the Attorney-General said, 'We will be watching'. Apparently, the government is good at watching but not at doing.

We will keep demanding that the CLP government puts in measures for cost-of-living relief to take pressure off Territory families and businesses and ensure that people will not stifle the economy because they are worried about their spending. We want to ensure spending continues locally and that we bring more opportunities for visitors to spend in the Territory, including returning visitors. We want people to choose the Territory to live, stay and play. We want the government to offer a buffer to protect Territorians from rising fuel costs.

I thank all members who contributed to the debate. I look forward to watching—as the Attorney-General said—what the CLP government does. Apparently, only one CLP member will stand up for the Territory, and that is Bill Yan the Treasurer. We will be watching and making sure he is not sitting in a boat fishing on the Daly River, but is out there doing his job and more than just talking.

I do not commend the amended motion, but I commend the work on ensuring that fuel costs do not continue to rise and hit Territorians' hip pockets.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 15	Noes 5
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Paech
Mrs Carlson	Ms Uibo
Mr Charls	Mr Young
Mr Edgington	
Mrs Finocchiaro	

Mr Howe
Mr Kerle
Mr Mackay
Mr Maley
Mr O'Gallagher
Mr Patel
Mr Yan
Mrs Zio

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

PAPER TABLED
Standing Orders Committee Report – Review of Standing Orders Phase 1

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Chair of Standing Orders Committee): Madam Speaker, I am conscious that we have significant adjournment speeches coming up, so I will keep this short and not take up the maximum time I am allowed, which is unlimited.

I table the Standing Orders Committee report, Review of Standing Orders Phase 1.

Standing orders require frequent review to adjust to changing practices and needs and to correct errors and inefficiencies. The Assembly's standing orders last had a complete review in 2016.

The Standing Orders Committee has agreed to undertake a three-phase review of the standing orders of this Assembly.

This first phase is to correct errors, simplify wording and incorporate those sessional orders which have become accepted practice.

The second phase will review the structure of the standing orders to make them easier to use and to more fully and clearly provide for the Assembly's current practices.

The third phase will look at whether any practices should be changed.

This report implements that first phase. It brings into standing orders those sessional orders which have become established practice. It removes some errors or ambiguity and makes the language more consistent. These changes are not aimed at changing any practices of the Assembly but at making the standing orders easier to use.

A draft of proposed changes was circulated to all members for feedback. One change proposed in that draft was to change the time of adjournment speeches from 10 to five minutes. As a member raised objection to that change, it has not been recommended in this report in order to keep the report free of any contentious issues. The committee agreed that I will forward information on the timing of equivalent speeches in other jurisdictions to members to inform further consideration of this matter.

The report also proposes new sessional orders that exclude those that have been moved into the standing orders and renumbers them accordingly. No changes are proposed to the operation of those sessional orders.

At the end of this statement I will move that the Assembly adopts the report, commencing from 21 July 2026. Agreeing to that motion will make proposed changes to the standing and sessional orders effective from that date. This will allow the addition of a comprehensive index, printing and distribution of the revised orders before they are in use.

I acknowledge the work of the committee members who have given detailed consideration to each of these changes. I also thank the members who provided feedback on the committee's proposals, and I give special acknowledgement to the former Chair of the committee, the Member for Blain, who got this process underway.

I move that the Assembly adopts the report, commencing from 21 July 2026.

Motion agreed to; report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome family members of the late Mr Stanley Eustace and family members of the late Mr Bob Hale to the Chamber this evening.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I am grateful that Kaylyn and Robert, her husband, are here.

I celebrate the life of Stanley Alexander Eustace. I knew Stan as a child; he was a good friend of my father. Stan would often come to the farm to help dad repair the chook cages and implement the latest crazy idea that my dad had. As a child, I was always impressed with his van, the mobile tool shed, which I would go over and inspect. That van was chock-a-block with tools and screws and every bit and bob a chippie could ever want or need on a job site.

I found out from his daughter, Kaylyn, that my father, Bluey Kerle, was a witness to the wedding of Stan and Kaylyn's mother, Eva, which took place in Darwin on 28 September 1987. Eva had a long and distinguished career in this Legislative Assembly. Eva Eustace commenced her Northern Territory Public Sector career over 20 years ago and transferred to the People, Performance and Culture Unit in the Department of the Legislative Assembly in 2008. Eva provided great support to members of the Assembly, their electorate office staff and her colleagues in the DLA for 17 years, retiring in July 2025.

This was not planned, but today is Kaylyn's birthday, so it is one of those things that works out. Happy birthday. I hope I do dad justice and that this is a memorable birthday present.

For the record, I will now read Kaylyn's eulogy for her dad. With Kaylyn's permission, I read it from her voice and refer to Stan as Dad. With leave of the Assembly, I will table a photo of Stan wearing his signature hat.

Leave granted.

Mr KERLE: Kaylyn said:

'Dad was born on 22 April 1939, Stanley Alexander Eustace, a twin to my beautiful Aunty Joyce, in Carlton, Victoria, to Henry Stanley Burton Eustace and Grace Evelyn Weatherhead.

'When Dad and Aunty Joyce were about four years old, their mother passed away. Sadly, their father did not treat them well and, as a result, they ran away from home and lived on the streets for some time.

'Dad told me that during those years he stole items to resell for money, stole food so they could eat and stole newspapers so he could teach himself how to read. That tells you a lot about the kind of man he was.

'Eventually, the Red Cross found Dad and Aunty Joyce and placed them into boys' and girls' orphanages. Dad was later adopted by the McMillan family. It took almost 30 years for dad and Aunty Joyce to be reunited.

'Between that time and the time I was born, there is a large gap in what I know about Dad's life. I cannot tell you everywhere he went or everything he did, but I can tell you that whatever those years held they shaped a man who was tough, resourceful and highly skilled.

'Many people remember Dad as having only one eye. Growing up, he told me a few different stories about how he lost it. He wrestled a crocodile or he ate too much rice. Only in his final days did I learn the truth. In his twenties, while working as an apprentice in Victoria cutting fencing mesh, there was an accident. The mesh pierced his right eye, and it was ultimately removed and replaced with a glass eye.

'In 1962 Dad welcomed his son, Graham.'

He was at the celebration of Stan's life. Kaylyn continues:

‘In 1970 Graham and his mum travelled up to the Territory and Dad tagged along. He may or may not have found himself in a little trouble with the good old ethyl alcohol and the Victorian Police. It seems the Territory has always been a good place to go when you are trying to start fresh. They lived in Alice Springs, Mount Isa and then eventually came up to Darwin.

‘Over the next few years Graham’s mother and my Dad had gone their separate ways.

‘In the 1980s Dad bought a house in Adelaide River.’

That is where I know Stan from; he was always an Adelaide River man. Kaylyn continues:

‘He worked for Seymour Enterprises in Yarrawonga, building houses and sheds. Every day he drove almost an hour to work and an hour home, out to 17 Memorial Drive.

‘In 1987 Dad travelled to the Philippines, where he met his wife and my mum, Eva, at the Swagman Hotel. Mum was working there as a waitress. She served him that day, and not long into their conversation, she asked him to marry her. Dad’s response? “Shame on you—asking an old man to marry you!”

‘After a week in the Philippines, Dad returned to Australia. Not long after, he wrote Mum a letter inviting her to come here. She arrived in June 1987, and they were married in September that same year. They are still married, 37 years later.

‘In 1991 I was born. Mum tells me that ever since I could walk, Dad and I were inseparable.

‘I remember going to work with him or heading into Darwin in his Toyota HiAce van—his mobile toolshed—tools rattling, extension cords swaying and bits and bobs sliding across the floor. When I say “we drove”, Dad let me steer, from the age of four, at 100 kilometres an hour down the Stuart Highway. I thought it was great.

‘I can only imagine how Mum felt, coming from the Philippines to Australia, being a passenger from the airport to Adelaide River in this rolling workshop that Dad had masterminded.

‘In 1998 Dad had a heart attack and was flown to Flinders hospital in Adelaide. He underwent a triple bypass and spent three months in hospital. Did that slow him down? Somewhat. He returned to work as soon as he could, but later joined Graham’s business at the time, Darwin Kitchen and Cabinets.

‘Our family moved up to Darwin, and we moved around a bit. Dad worked with DKC right up until 2022 at 83 years old.

‘After retirement Dad still kept busy, doing odd jobs and making rocking horses, rocking chairs and kids’ tables and chairs. Many of these he donated to the Salvos or Red Cross or gave to friends and family.

‘Last year Dad sold all his tools. He spent his final year frequenting his favourite shopping centres, having coffee with friends, stirring up the dogs at home, light gardening and buying lollies and chocolates for his granddaughters, Ava and Amberley.’

I am running short on time, so unfortunately I have to skip forward a bit. Kaylyn continues:

‘Dad also loved playing dirty tricks with his glass eye. He would pull it out to clean it, then pretend to dunk it in your drink. I am betting that some of you were the victims of that prank.

‘He could wiggle his ears—big BFG ears. He would look at you with a completely straight face and just start wiggling them. I honestly think that the size of his ears is the reason he never forgot anything.

‘On Friday Dad would drive into the city to have lunch with me at work. Sometimes he brought my cousin Soni. Sometimes Mum joined us. We would often go out for adventures to Adelaide River, Litchfield Park and out to dinner.

‘Dad was tough—really tough. If you google, “What is the strongest thing in the world?”, he should honestly be in the top three. My niece joked that he would outlive everyone. It never crossed my mind that we would be here so soon.

‘Dad was a hard worker. That is what he did—he worked. People told me he could run circles around them, and I saw it myself the day he and my husband built Ava her bed frame at 6 am on New Year’s Day.

‘He was so courageous and strong, but he was also humble. Dad never thought he was superior. He did not live to be popular, rich or perfect; he was real. He wanted people to do well. He helped others get a headstart or back on their feet whenever he could.

‘In his own way, Dad was thoughtful. He would turn up with a plant cutting, a bruised mango or a bag of mandarins. If he went out for a coffee and the cafe had a bowl of individually wrapped lollies at the counter, he would bring two home—one for each of his granddaughters.

‘Dad was the kind of dad who would do anything for you. You would hear about it until next Tuesday, but he would do it, and if you were lucky you would also get the eyebrow raise and pressed lips to let you know exactly what he thought.

‘At the same time I also know my Dad was a complicated man, and like all of us, he did not always get everything right. Families do not all look the same, and not every story is neat or fair. What matters is the strength it takes to show up and carry yourself with dignity even when life has not been kind.

‘I wrote a letter for Dad last week that I was going to place in his casket, but I thought I would share it instead:

Dear Dad,

The hardest part is not just missing you, it is my brain keeps expecting you to be here, to come back as you always have for the past 34 years. My brain has programmed you as safe and home.

I see your car in the yard down from the road. When I come downstairs or walk into your room, I expect you to be sitting there just for a split second, then reality hits again, and I feel the pain all over again.

If I could have given you anything in life, it would have been the ability to see yourself through my eyes so that you would realise how special you were to me.

‘Dad lived a long life. It is difficult to imagine him not being around. When I was little, I loved sleeping in the middle of Mum and Dad’s bed. If I was put back into my own bed, I would roll out on purpose and wait, listening for dad’s footsteps, knowing he would come and take me back to the middle, back to where I felt safe.

‘Dad spent his whole life being that person for me, strong, steady and there when I needed him. Even now, I know that part of him has not left me. He will always be my home.’

I have a number of comments from a Facebook post that was done in honour of Stan, and I will read a few of them out until I run out of time.

Gill Egan said, ‘Rest in peace, Stan. I regret not keeping in touch over the years. He did a lot of work for me years ago in Halls Creek. He was a salt-of-the-earth Australian and one of the most skillful and hardworking men I have ever known.’

Jeff Rees said, ‘Our condolences to you and your family, Kaylyn. I have good memories of working with Stan in and around Adelaide River in the mid to late 1980s. Stan also helped us build our first house in the Acacia area.’

Roz Flynn said, ‘Such a sweet man. I still have one of his rocking horses at home, that he regularly made and donated to Red Cross op shops.’

Peter Baden said, ‘Condolences to the family of Stan. A true gentleman!’

Rodney Seymour said, ‘Gone but not forgotten, the Adelaide Man, tough as nails. Was a part of the Seymour team for over 20 years. Rest in peace, Stan. We are all the wiser for having known you. Goodbye old mate, Rod.’

Sandy Busuttil said, ‘Very sad to read this. I met Stan when he began making wooden toys and tables and chairs and donating them to his Salvos. Would often talk of his daughter and granddaughter. A real gentleman.’

Billy Roberts said, ‘Condolences to you and your family, Kaylyn. I met you and dad in Coolalinga only weeks ago. I had not seen Stan for a long time and was amazed at how well he was. He was as bright as a button, talking away about things we did in early years at our home in Adelaide River. Your Dad and I did so much work on our house and it was a treat for us when he would come around to work. He was a powerhouse worker, and I found even as a young bloke how hard it was to keep up with him. We enjoyed having

a lunchbreak and listening to his stories. It was always a great time to us, and I still look and remember helping him with the improvements he would make to our home. He will be sadly missed. Thanks for being there when we needed you, old mate. May you rest in peace.'

Bill Besta Luck said, 'RIP, Stan. A regular at the ARI when we had it back in the 1980s. Made a rocking elephant for our daughter's second birthday.'

Part of the celebration of life I did not read out said that in his retirement and throughout the years Stan had a hobby of building toys and chairs to donate to Salvos and Red Cross, helping out those who were less fortunate. He kept working.

I remember running into him. He was doing part of the renovations at Casuarina shopping square, even when he probably should have retired. When I ran into him doorknocking in Bellamack, he had transformed their garage into a new workshop and was still working, building all those things like chairs and rocking horses to give away.

Rest in peace, Stan.

While I am on my feet, I give my condolences to Damian Hale and the family on the passing of Robert (Bob) Hale.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: On behalf of the Assembly, I pass on our sincere condolences to Stanley's family and friends.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening I commemorate the life of Robert John Hale OAM, a remarkable Territorian whose life was defined by service to education, community and the values of fairness and compassion.

Bob Hale was born in Dalby, Queensland, in 1942—the same year as my dad, Mick—the youngest of four children. Bob's early life was marked by frequent moves and modest circumstances, experiences that shaped his deep sense of empathy and fairness.

As a young boy he experienced discrimination at school because of his Irish Catholic background. One moment that stayed with him occurred when he was excluded from an Anzac Day commemoration because the teacher claimed that his loyalty to the Crown could not be trusted. It was a moment that helped Bob's lifelong belief in equality, justice and republican values.

After schooling in Queensland, Bob trained as a teacher and soon discovered his calling in education.

In 1965 he met Beverley Nielsen, a fellow teacher who would become his partner in life and conviction. They married in 1967 and spent 54 years together, raising their family while standing firm for the causes they believed in. Bob and Bev were never afraid to stand up for their values. They protested the Vietnam War and the Springbok rugby tour, sometimes at personal cost, but always guided by a belief in justice and equality.

In 1974 they made the move that would define the rest of Bob's life—relocating to the Northern Territory. They first taught in Maningrida, later moving to Katherine before settling in Darwin.

Bob went on to hold a number of senior roles in the Territory's education system. During the 1980s he interviewed thousands of prospective teachers and helped recruit many of the educators who would shape generations of Territorians.

Perhaps his greatest impact came when he became the Principal of Karama Primary School. Karama was one of the Territory's most diverse schools, with many First Nations students whose families had endured the ongoing impacts of colonisation and assimilation. Bob was determined to ensure that those students were not left behind. He built strong relationships with families and community. He increased the number of Indigenous staff at the school. He celebrated culture in the classroom rather than ignoring it.

Under Bob's leadership, Indigenous attendance rates regularly exceeded 90%, and literacy and numeracy outcomes improved significantly. Bob believed that education worked best when children felt proud of who they were and where they came from.

For some, Bob was seen as a trailblazer; for others, a bit of a cowboy. What no-one could deny was that Bob Hale got results.

After retiring in 2002 Bob did not slow down. He remained deeply involved in the community, volunteering with St Mary's Football Club, the Nightcliff Dragons and the Arafura Games; tutoring English for migrant children; and supporting interfaith and Aboriginal community organisations.

Bob's contribution was recognised with a Centenary Medal in 2001, and later the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2021, for his service to education and the Territory community. In 2025 he was honoured with life membership of the Australian Labor Party.

At the centre of his life was always his family. Bob and Bev raised two children, Jacintha and Damian. Over time their family grew.

Damian Hale, his son, who is here tonight, is the former Member for Solomon. Haley, I know that Bob was extremely proud of your dedication and commitment and reaching the achievement of being a Labor federal member in the Australian Parliament.

Bob has eight grandchildren, Robert, Anthony, Michael, Jaclyn, Christina, Matthew, Gabriel and Dominic; and 14 great-grandchildren, Sebastian, Noah, Indi, Reuben, Lillee, Jaxon, Zoe, Tahj, Bailey, Nelly, Eddie, Valerie, Zarah and Chezarae—a legacy of love.

After Bev's passing in 2021, Bob found the following years difficult.

He passed away—he left us in the Territory—on 23 August 2025, leaving behind his profound legacy of family, a love of the Territory and mostly the love of his family.

Even in Bob's final days, his passion for education never faded. His last conversations were about how students had gone in for their Year 12 exams. That tells you something about the man. Bob Hale shaped the lives of countless young Territorians. He believed deeply in the power of education to change lives, and he devoted his life to making that belief a reality.

Tonight we remember a teacher, a mentor, a community leader, a Labor legend, a great Territorian and a devoted family man. Bob will be deeply missed.

Bob Hale, may he rest in peace.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also offer my condolences to Damian and the family. I just thought I would share a few lighthearted moments about Bob. I joked with Damian following Bob's passing. I am glad Bob got life membership of the Labor Party because he was a terrifying man on the door for a CLP candidate. I had the privilege of doorknocking Bob and Bev—boy! Was that an experience I will never, ever forget. We can joke about it now, but—I tell you what—that bloke, you would not mess with him. He saw me coming. I reckon he knew I was out doorknocking and he waited by the window in the loungeroom for me to stroll up that driveway and tear me apart for half an hour. He was a Labor man, true and true. There was no doubting that. He scared the hell out of me.

There was another campaign activity; I cannot remember exactly, but I think it was some sort of candidate debate at maybe the Uniting or Anglican church. You are terrified as a candidate doing those types of things. I was only new, all of 26 or however old I was. The debate had finished, and you just want to get out of there sometimes in those situations, but, oh no, Bob had other plans for me. He barrelled up to me when I was so close to the door. I thought, 'I'm going to make it. I've got to get out of this church.' No, I was not. Bob came up to me, and we had a conversation about policy and things in only the way that Bob could. He was emblazoned in my mind. I knew to watch for that man on the campaign trail.

Damian has been a big part—they are both a big part of the Palmerston community. Well known and, of course, Bev left us a couple of years ago, but Damian played a big part in the political scene as well. For a long time we have interacted with each other in one way or another, so I wanted to share a few lighthearted moments, and I mean it with the greatest and deepest respect for him.

The Territory needs people like that—people with absolute conviction. It does not matter what it is about; you need people who believe wholeheartedly in the cause. It helped me. I learned a lot from him and it helped me pull my socks up and make sure if there were any more of them Labor blokes crawling around Palmerston, I was ready for them.

To Damian and the entire family, thank you so much for affording the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to honour your loved one in that way, and for us to share in that respect and acknowledge his huge

contribution and legacy, but also the legacy in each and every one of you he leaves behind. I am sure he has been such a huge part of shaping who you are and what you will contribute in the future. Our sincerest condolences, and thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to share a few terribly fond memories of Bob.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also pay my respects to Bob.

Bob was deeply guided by the values he learned from his father, Roy, including the belief that service to others and humility was central to making a difference in the community. These principles shaped his career and his life in the Northern Territory.

In 1990, Bob became Principal of Malak Primary School before moving to Anula and later Karama Primary Schools. At Karama he led a community that was diverse and multicultural, with many First Nations students and families. Bob was determined to ensure every child had the opportunity to succeed at school. He worked closely with students, families and the wider community, building strong and lasting relationships based on respect, compassion and understanding. Bob supported programs that celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and increased the number of Indigenous staff within the school. Through this approach, he helped create a safe and welcoming environment where students from all walks of life felt supported, attended school and achieved their best. During his time at Karama Primary School attendance rates for Indigenous students rose significantly and education outcomes improved.

Bob's work demonstrated the positive impact that strong community relationships can have on education. In recognition of his contribution to education, he was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2001. Even after retiring in 2002, Bob remained an active contributor to the Territory community.

He continued to support Indigenous education through research, writing and advisory roles. Bob was also deeply involved in community life, including through the St Martin de Porres parish and the Top End Catholic Aboriginal Corporation. He served for many years on the Stolen Generations Northern Territory board.

Bob also volunteered with local sporting clubs, including the Nightcliff Dragons and St Mary's footy club, where he became a life member—I recognise his son Damian and grandsons always around St Mary's. I have seen them when I was playing footy as well.

He contributed to many other community activities, including the Arafura Games and local cultural organisations. Bob also volunteered his time teaching English to children at the Islamic Society of Darwin, reflecting his strong commitment to supporting people from all backgrounds. Through education, volunteering and community service, Bob made a lasting contribution to the Northern Territory.

I will add a little personal family perspective on the Hale family. In 1993 Bob became a legal guardian of one of my uncles, Fabian Bush from Milikapiti, who is my grandmother's biological nephew. We have been fortunate to see the Hale family bring him across and see all the families—all the Bush, Brown and Black families from Milikapiti—all descendants from the Bush family tree. Damian took over looking after Fabian in 2018. I have access. Fabian Bush turned 60 this year and has been on this long stretch with cerebral palsy. He has been with your family for 30-plus years, and I thank you from my family to yours. I am part of you.

Rest in peace, Bob, and thank you.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is an honour to speak of Bob. I have a few similar stories that I will tell. I would like to say that Bob proudly told me when I first met him that his nickname was 'Bob the Red' and he set the stage; however, I have to admit my first encounter was much kinder than the Chief Minister's. He might have seen the Irish Catholic in me, I do not know—or he was changing tactics.

It is a real honour as the Member for Drysdale where Bob lived—it is not every day we have an OAM in Drysdale. It is an incredible achievement and a testimony to the service and duty that Bob gave to the Northern Territory. He was a Labor man through and through—no doubt about it. For me it is a real matter of honour to get up and speak about a man who stuck by his convictions, and I deeply admire that. I truly, deeply admire seeing conviction in others. I think it is important that I pay my respects to a man who, though on the opposite side, helped build the Territory and the political environment that we live in. It is a deep honour that I can speak tonight. His service, as has been touched on, covered education but his touch on politics was deep and profound as well.

The story I share is when I first met Bob. I would like to set the scene. I was a relatively new candidate. It was the 2023–24 Wet Season, and I was doorknocking in Gray. It was the middle of the Wet at 3 pm, and

I was properly buggered; I really was. I was hurting, but I kept going door to door. I hit Bob's door, and his first words were, 'I will never vote for you; I am a Labor man, but come in.' What I like about this story is that it is something a politician will understand.

Bob was no fool, and he knew I was out on the campaign trail. If he could tie up an hour of my time, Bob would tie up an hour of my time. There was a bit of a truce, as I was hurting at that moment. I was willing for a break too. Bob brought me in, and I genuinely enjoyed that hour, and I hope Bob did as well. He sat me down and first spoke about his wife, who had passed. He brought a photo of her out, and it was clear there was a deep love and affection for her. Bob spoke of his Catholic faith, about education and what he had done. He also gave advice on where he thought education needs to go, or some of the core principles of it. He went and got his OAM, as he was quite proud of it. It genuinely was a nice hour. He did not once bring up politics, besides telling me about his history in politics and what he had done, but at no point did he bring up anything to argue or what was being pushed at that campaign, so I enjoyed it.

He showed me genuine Christian charity on that day. He could tell I was looking a bit dehydrated and probably had a bit too much heat, and he went and got me cold water. The whole time I had cold water, and before I left he made sure I had filled up my bottle with cold water. That was just a nice moment.

I will always remember it, because I remember thinking that night, 'In 50 years, I want to do that'. In both ways—I want a young Labor candidate to come to my door, I want to bring them in and genuinely look after them, and if I can get an hour of their time, I will. It had that impact on me. I genuinely hope I can show the same hospitality he showed me that day.

I last saw Bob at the federal election, and I got a different reception. I spoke at the start about how much how I respect conviction, and I respect the conviction of Bob Hale and I will for the rest of my life. I hope I can embody that same conviction in my own politics, as different as they may be from Bob's.

His son Councillor Damian Hale is a Labor man and a man I have great respect for. I mean that sincerely, Damian. When times are tough, you see what a man is really made of. Bob was passing during the council election, and Damian rocked up every day and was there handing out his material because he knew he had a duty to the constituents to answer their questions and to represent the Labor Party. This former soldier will respect that for the rest of my life, Damian. It shows that good fathers can embed some of their values, as I am sure Bob embedded what I saw that day. Know you will always have a CLP man that has a deep respect for you. I value Damian's ongoing contributions to Palmerston. He is an active councillor, and his service to politics continues in Palmerston. I thank him for that.

Mr Paech: Will you knock on his door?

Mr HOWE: I did, actually.

Rest in peace, Bob. I know you probably do not want me to be at this table long, but, Bob, I will stay here with the same conviction you had in politics. Rest in peace.

To all the family, my blessings and all the best.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: May I pass on to Damian and the family, I did not know Bob—I will not claim I know Bob—but I am the Member for Karama. Last week I was at Malak and Karama Primary Schools. They are thriving schools and have obviously built on the legacy of a fantastic educator, so thank you very much.

I ask the Assembly to stand for one minute's silence for both Bob Hale and Stanley Eustace.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Rest in peace, Bob. Rest in peace, Stanley.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak about the many engagements I have attended in my capacity as the Minister for Veterans over the past few weeks.

The perfect place to start is with last month's Welcome to the Top End Expo for ADF members and families at the Darwin Convention Centre. This welcoming event was a prime example of the Territory's warm hospitality and generous spirit. I joined with Minister Cahill and the Member for Fannie Bay to enjoy the day. It was truly a pleasure to meet veterans and their families as they explored the things our beautiful Darwin has to offer. It is no wonder we promote our great Territory as an exceptional place to live, work and play.

The Welcome to the Top End Expo seems to get bigger and better each year. There was a huge number of engaging stalls—and merch—for veterans, spouses, youths and children. There was a real buzz in the room. A number of stakeholders were on hand to provide support, services and information. These included Defence Member and Family Support, Human Quotient, Reeling Veterans, Soldier On, RSL and Mates 4 Mates. Having these important stakeholders at this event reassures me, as the Minister for Veterans, that support is out there.

I shout out to the dedicated staff of the Department of People, Sport and Culture, who were onsite armed with their tank, ship and rifle chocolates, locally made by Bumble Bean Chocolates in Stuart Park. Thank you for your contribution in assisting new Territorians to navigate the Defence family space.

As Minister for Veterans, my message to all the newly arrived serving men and women of our great Australian Defence Force and their families is: welcome to the Northern Territory.

Last month was the 84th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin, with commemorations across the Territory. As Minister for Veterans, I recognise the importance of honouring the courage, sacrifice and service of those who have served in the defence of our beautiful Darwin and northern Australia.

Before the official formalities commenced, and as is customary, I had the privilege of attending the USS Peary Memorial Service on the Esplanade. I paid my respects to the departed US soldiers on board that vessel.

The Bombing of Darwin commemorative service is a timely and sombre occasion which highlights the ultimate sacrifice of our Defence community in times of crisis. The Cenotaph was filled with patriotic Territorians paying their respects to sacrifices made so that they can live full and meaningful lives. I was honoured to lay a wreath, along with my colleagues.

Lest we forget.

As part of the Bombing of Darwin commemorations, it was a pleasure to meet with Mr Yamanaka Osamu, Consul-General of Japan, who was on official business from Sydney. We had a constructive and wide-ranging discussion about the strong and enduring bilateral relationship between the Northern Territory and Japan.

I was also privileged to accompany Mr Osamu to the commemorative service for the I-124 submarine, hosted by the Australian Japanese Association of the Northern Territory. I thank AJANT President Janet Truong for the invitation. I appreciated the solidarity at the commemorative site at Dripstone Cliffs on that very windy evening. I thank my colleagues the Members for Casuarina and Wanguri who attended the event, along with the Member for Arafura.

It is important to note that the many raids during World War II were not isolated to Darwin; the devastation extended to the wider Top End of the Northern Territory, even as far inland as Katherine. One of the commemorations I could not attend was the Adelaide River service. I am sure Members would agree that the Adelaide River War Cemetery is an incredibly beautiful and peaceful place. I thank the new assistant minister for Veterans, the Member for Drysdale, who attended the Adelaide River war memorial service on my behalf, along with the Members for Casuarina and Goyder.

Thank you, Member for Drysdale, for your service as a Captain in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, where you led as a Tank Commander with dedication and distinction. I look forward to drawing on your experience and perspective as the new assistant minister.

We recently celebrated Purple Poppy Day. This was a unique opportunity to honour the courage, loyalty and sacrifice of all animals that play vital roles in times of war and peace. Their bravery and loyalty should not go unnoticed. I was proud to attend the commemorative service at Reg Hillier House in Bees Creek, with the Member for Goyder. Veterans, Defence personnel, families and community members came together to remember the animals that served and sacrificed. We were given a glimpse of the incredible work of military working dogs and reflected on the role that explosive detection dogs continue to play in protecting our troops in operational environments. I thank Veterans Australia for hosting the event.

Most recently I attended a significant commemorative service, a milestone to mark 125 years of service by the Australian Army and Royal Australian Navy. It was a time to recognise the generations of sailors and soldiers who have served our nation with distinction. The Deputy Chief Minister and I had the honour of being invited to this celebration with the 1st Brigade of the Australian Army at Robertson Barracks. Thank you to Brigadier Robert Haertsch and Colonel Judd Finger CSC for the invitation.

I look forward to taking up an invitation in the near future to visit Mount Bundey for a close-up view of the live firing exercises.

The NT veterans' affairs ministerial advisory council recently had its first meeting for 2026. We had productive discussions about Operation Thrive, creating smaller working groups to progress options and work plans for the year. The insights from this council allow for constructive and robust discussion which help to inform and shape priorities moving forward.

Whilst speaking about moving forward, I must mention the March On with Soldier On RAAF to Robbo walk in two days' time. On Friday morning I will try my best to attend at zero-dark-hundred and walk the 14-kilometre march to support Soldier On's mental health services to help prevent veteran suicide and save lives. I also welcome any members who are interested in joining that walk early in the morning.

The Northern Territory is home to one of the largest veteran communities per capita in Australia. As Minister for Veterans, I am proud to stand with and support all our veterans and their families. Thank you for your service.

Mr EDGINGTON (Barkly): Madam Speaker, I provide the latest update regarding the water supply situation in Darwin.

As of 6 pm, works to restore the Darwin River Dam pump station have progressed significantly. As of 3 pm, two pumps had been successfully brought back online, enabling us to fully meet the water needs of the greater Darwin region once again. We are progressing to complete full restoration and hope to soon have Darwin River Dam back to normal operational capacity. Although we are meeting demand and the request to reduce consumption has now lifted, we always encourage water saving regardless of the season.

The boil water alert remains in place. We should all continue to adhere to this until the notice is lifted by NT Health.

We are all appreciative of the community, our crews and contractors for supporting us in recent days. I thank all Power and Water staff and contractors who have been making sure our water supply is returned.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I recognise March 15, this coming Sunday, as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. I speak to the urgent need for care, courage and solidarity with Muslim Australians. This day marks the anniversary of the harrowing Christchurch Mosque attacks, an horrific act of terror that targeted Muslims at prayer. It is a solemn reminder of the deadly consequences of hate and our responsibility as leaders to confront it whenever it appears.

This year the anniversary falls during Ramadan. I have been lucky enough to be invited to several Iftar events. I understand Ramadan is more than fasting and Iftar is more than a meal; it is a time grounded in faith, reflection, generosity and community—a moment to pause, give thanks and come together with family, friends and neighbours. However, this year many families are observing Ramadan while carrying heavy hearts. We are witnessing the ongoing genocide in Gaza. We are still grappling with the shock of the massacre at Bondi. We are now watching the war in Iran unfold. Here, at home, many people in our own communities are experiencing rising Islamophobia and racism.

As a Jewish woman I know that we, as Jews and Muslims, share many of the same ancestors and roots. For me, my Jewish identity and tradition are intertwined with the principle of *tikkun olam*, the responsibility to heal the world and work for justice and peace. That responsibility must be a shared one. It calls on us to understand the connects between different forms of hatred and to speak out against all racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and violence.

Today Muslim Australians are facing a disturbing rise in threats, abuse and fear. Mosques across the country have received hateful and threatening letters, some invoking the horror of a so-called Christchurch 2.0. In recent reports of a planned terrorist attack in Western Australia, Muslim places of worship were among the intended targets. Many Australians who are most visibly Muslim, particularly women, are experiencing harassment and intimidation in their daily lives.

I am deeply conscious that many Muslim Territorians, including people living in Johnston, are carrying grief, worry and at times a sense of vulnerability. I say clearly: your safety, dignity and belonging here in the Territory matter.

Addressing Islamophobia is not the responsibility of one community; it belongs to all of us. When any community feels unsafe, the fabric of our society is weakened. Political leaders, media and community figures

all share a responsibility to reduce division and foster unity. Public leadership in these times matters. It sets the tone for how we treat each other.

In the Northern Territory our diversity is one of our greatest strengths. Moments of togetherness like Iftar reminder us that even in difficult times we are strongest when we lean towards each other, not away. This is a time to come together, listen carefully, reject fear and division, and build the kind of community where everyone feels they belong.

I add my voice to the call from the Australian National Imams Council that we formally recognise 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, and that this parliament affirms a clear stance against anti-Muslim hatred and violence. Such steps send a vital message that Australia stands firmly against all forms of religious hatred, and every person has the right to live and worship in safety.

As Ramadan continues, I offer my sincere best wishes to Muslim Territorians and Muslims across Australia, *Ramadan Mubarak*. May this holy month bring peace, reflection and strength to all individuals, families and communities. May the values of compassion and respect guide us all. *Salam Alaikum*.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I speak about something that affects every Territorian—the strength of our health system and the incredible people who keep it running.

Recently I attended Alice Springs Hospital for medical treatment and stayed overnight. I thank the staff who cared for me and my community. The level of service I received was exceptional. It was professional, compassionate and delivered with kindness. From the nurses to the doctors, administrators and support staff, I saw firsthand the dedication of the people who work every day to care for our community.

Alice Springs Hospital has long been a leader in delivering quality healthcare in the Territory. It services not only the town of Alice Springs but also communities across Central Australia and the Barkly—a region that covers vast distances, often different priorities and some of the most complex health challenges people face.

Whilst I was there I had the opportunity to speak with several health professionals about the work they do and the challenges they face. What I heard from them was inspiring—strength, commitment and a passion for caring for their patients—but I also heard concerns. Many staff told me that their resourcing is stretched and support is needed to ensure that they can continue to deliver high-quality care for our community.

One issue repeatedly raised was the shortage of Aboriginal health practitioners and liaison officers. We know that Aboriginal health practitioners and liaison officers are critical to delivering culturally safe care and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal patients, yet we are told that about 80% of those positions across the system are vacant. That should concern us all.

Cultural safety is not an optional extra in the Territory; it is essential. Investing in health practitioners and Aboriginal liaison officers, nurses and doctors is something we must do if we are serious about closing the gap and improving outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

Staff also spoke about the need for more flexible and family-friendly rostering arrangements, which would help retain experienced health professionals and make it easier to attract new staff to the Territory.

There are also infrastructure pressures that cannot be ignored. Alice Springs Hospital continues to deliver excellent care, but we must ensure that its facilities and capacity are there for the future.

The population of Central Australia continues to grow and the demands on our health services continue to increase. We should ask ourselves the serious question: when do we begin to plan for the next Alice Springs Hospital? Madam Speaker, it is a topic I know you have long championed, and it is a topic I support. Planning for major health infrastructure takes years, sometimes decades. If we wait until the system is under critical pressure we will have waited too long.

Central Australian health workers consistently go above and beyond. They care for people across vast distances and respond to complex health needs, and they do so with professionalism, compassion and resilience. If government can provide them with the support they are asking for—more staff, stronger training pathways, culturally safe workspaces and improved infrastructure—there is no doubt that they will deliver even better outcomes for our community.

I want to see more remote health centres operating full-time, more health workers on the ground in our communities and stronger investment in allied health services, which are all critical to prevention, rehabilitation and long-term health outcomes.

Our health professionals deserve more than just words of thanks; they deserve proper support and staffing and planning for the future.

I thank every nurse, doctor, Aboriginal health worker, liaison officer, allied health practitioner, health professional, administrator and support worker who keeps our health system running in the Territory. Your work matters, your care matters and the community is stronger because of you. Thank you for your work and your care.

I acknowledge a recent event I attended. I say *Pongalo Pongal*, which I know the Member for Wanguri knows well. We celebrated the beautiful tradition in the Tamil community when the pot of rice boils over and symbolises an abundance and blessing for the year ahead. It is a powerful reminder to give thanks and honour to the harvest and to celebrate community and culture. Tamil is one of the world's oldest living classical languages, stretching back more than 2,000 years—a rich culture in story, tradition, resilience and pride.

That was on full display at the Pongalo celebrations hosted by the Tamil Society of the Northern Territory, and what a celebration it was with colour, music and dancing. I make the point that the Member for Wanguri and I busted a few dance moves that day. There was incredible food and beautiful community spirit.

A huge congratulations goes to the Tamil Society members for their Indian Food Festival in Palmerston and for being recognised as the community event of the year, which is well deserved.

I give big thanks to Kavi, the committee, all the volunteers and especially the young ones who shared their culture with such confidence and joy. It is what community is all about. It was a wonderful event to be a part of. The young children have been attending language lessons every Sunday. They performed amazing songs and a series of cultural performances, showcasing on the stage their amazing work. There was a game of tug-of-war, and we even saw the Member for Port Darwin do a bit of cabaret on the stage. We had a pinata. It was an amazing event.

Often this place can become quite heated, but it was amazing to be out in the community with members from all sides of parliament. I acknowledge that the Greens candidate for the Nightcliff by-election, Suki, was at the event as well, sharing in the celebration and the festivities.

It was a great event that showcased the Tamil culture and how vibrant, strong and amazing it is. I am thankful that members of the Tamil community can keep their language so strong—2,000 years of tradition and culture—and they call Darwin home. To celebrate that Pongalo Pongal festival was truly amazing.

It was an important reminder for our multicultural communities that we see you, we hear you, we value you and we love the contributions you make every day to the Territory.

Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling): Madam Speaker, I speak about the events that happened on 12 February when after heavy rainfall in Central Australia an emergency warning was issued for the Todd River in Alice Springs. Rapidly rising river levels caused major flooding across our town and the broader Central Australian region. People lost their homes, cars and other belongings were swept away or destroyed, numerous rescues were carried out for people stranded in dangerous floodwaters and roads were cut off.

Countless people stepped up to support the community, keeping people safe and informed during and after this challenging time. They worked tirelessly around the clock, sacrificed their weekends and left their families to travel from Darwin to Alice Springs to support response and recovery efforts. This really showed the strength and resilience of the community of Alice Springs.

The 4th of March marked the official transition into the recovery phase. Many of the people who were involved in the Emergency Operations Centre remain involved as we continue working through the stages of recovery.

I formally acknowledge some of those people whose dedication and support were invaluable during this time, starting with Southern Regional Controller Assistant Commissioner Peter Kennon; Deputy Regional Controller Commander James Gray-Spence; Regional Recovery Coordinator Len Daragh; Deputy Regional Recovery Coordinator Tyler Thurston; local emergency committee heads, Superintendent Terry Simpson of Alice Springs, Superintendents Peter Dash and Michael Fields of the Tennant Creek and Barkly regions and

Superintendent Conan Robertson of the Southern and Western Desert regions; incident controllers from NT Police, Acting Commander Robert Griffiths and Emma Carter; deputy incident controllers, Adam White and Andrew Dunne; operations, planning and logistics by Northern Territory Police, NTES and NTFRS; and local emergency controllers, NT Police remote sergeants.

This major event saw different departments come together from various functional groups to work in the Emergency Operations Centre. I acknowledge the leads of each of these groups, but I know there are many others working alongside them, both in the EOC and from afar:

- Megan Bell of biosecurity and animal welfare
- Karen Weston of digital and telecommunications
- Alec Moylan and Rae Finlay of critical goods
- Samantha Overall of the emergency shelter group
- Tegan Berg and Gunalan Sivachelvan of engineering and transport
- Ian Heale and Tim Steel of the industry group, Power and Water Corporation
- Rebecca Schulz of the medical group
- Sonny McKay of the public health group
- Simone Phasey of the public information group
- Anthony Blakely of survey, rescue and impact assessment
- Kelly Hunter and Monika Jednous of the welfare group
- Suraya Naidoo of the department of Housing
- Jim Rogers and Nick Oliver of the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Belinda Pearson and Erika Sauzier of the Department of Education and Training
- Shenagh Gamble of the Bureau of Meteorology
- Sarah Fairhead of the flood forecasters team, who works in the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
- Bridget Davey of the Alice Springs Correctional Centre
- Jen Hamilton and Brendon Magnoli of Bushfires NT; Jen Hamilton from the Alice Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade is a well-known and respected member of the Alice Springs community who was there throughout the week and the weekend, helping out
- Ian Carlton, Catherine Driver, Harry and the other Catherine and all the staff and volunteers of the Northern Territory Emergency Services Southern Command. They truly stepped up during that time.

I especially mention that Ian Carlton, who was there for the initial incident on 12 February, went away for a week's holiday and came home early from his holiday to assist when we had further flood incidents the weekend afterwards. Someone remarked, 'I emailed you earlier, Ian, and I know that your email might say you are on leave, but you are back already'. Thank you very much, Mr Ian Carlton. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

I also acknowledge the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

A massive shout-out goes to the local councils—Alice Springs, Central Desert, MacDonnell Regional, Barkly Regional, Central Land Council and Tangentyere. A lot of people do not know that Tangentyere played an instrumental role in evacuating some of the people from Abbott's Camp, so I mention them this evening.

I acknowledge the federal government agencies, including the National Emergency Management Agency, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Australian Defence Force and Australian Federal Police. I also thank the federal government for working with us to activate disaster assistance to ensure that those in rural areas can receive support.

I express my appreciation for the efforts of Red Cross, Catholic Care and St John Ambulance.

I thank the people at cattle stations across Central Australia who, while impacted themselves, assisted others affected by the situation.

I also thank those at the aviation companies who assisted with the transport of critical goods, along with the rescue and recovery of stranded and medically vulnerable persons.

I thank the many local businesses that provided food and drinks to support volunteers and those in the Emergency Operations Centre. The new managers at the local McDonald's got in touch and asked how they could help out. I said there were a lot of hungry volunteers, and they donated a number of cheeseburgers which were well and truly appreciated.

A lot of people may not realise that the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association was due to have a meeting in Alice Springs during the flood week. Unfortunately that meeting was cancelled due to members being unable to make it to town, but the catering had already been paid for. The Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association donated that catering to the Emergency Operations Centre. It is just another wonderful story that came out of a time of real struggle for the community. There were lots of wonderful stories when people asked how they could help and lent that kind of help.

I shout out to my electorate officer Rowie Schulz, who told me that there has been an ever-increasing number of phone calls from people asking when river causeways will be open. I thank her for getting out on those early mornings when I had to come up to Darwin for commitments. She was constantly doing the rounds, checking which river crossings were open or closed and relaying that information to me.

I thank the many community members who helped by checking in on neighbours and assisting with sandbagging and cleanup efforts. I saw firsthand how hard all these people and groups I have mentioned were, and still are, working. This is just scratching the surface of the people involved, who put in such a tremendous effort. We wish we could name all of you. No effort has gone unnoticed, and we recognise every one of you.

We know it is not over yet and recovery efforts remain ongoing, but this challenging time demonstrated the resilience and spirit that defines the Northern Territory and Alice Springs.

We are also thinking of everyone in Katherine and in Darwin more recently who have been affected by the flooding.

I once again thank all those who helped during this time.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, a significant weather event is occurring across the Top End of the Northern Territory and I put on the record that our emergency services, police, volunteers, welfare groups and public servants are doing wonderful work to ensure that people are safe.

I have spoken to a number of people from the Darwin River region. We are all aware of the significant flooding event that occurred there. My understanding is that roughly 20 houses went under water. Many people have literally lost everything. I spoke to one pregnant lady who said they got out of there with only the clothes on their back. We are hearing stories of people being stranded on their roof at Darwin River, having to swim across creeks and wade through water. They worried about their personal safety due to the crocodiles that may potentially be in those creek systems and the unknown with the big Wet Season. We know that crocodiles move around, and the anxiety that causes.

I have spoken to a couple of pastoralists and farmers from Douglas Daly who felt like they had been forgotten because the focus is usually on the bigger town centres. They are also along the banks of the Daly River, and had to move their livestock to higher ground. They have lost generators, their bores have gone under and there has been significant damage done to their fencing.

I call on Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro to call an emergency declaration to ensure the safety of all people and that our emergency services on the ground get the support they need. The ADF can complement the

work that our emergency services are doing. I cannot understand why Lia Finocchiaro has not requested an emergency declaration through the federal government to get those boots on the ground. At the end of the day, this is about people's safety and wellbeing, including those in our emergency services who I know are stretched, fatigued and working long hours. Lia Finocchiaro has the mechanism …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, please do not refer to her by name.

Mr YOUNG: Sorry.

Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro has the mechanism to call an emergency declaration to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Territorians across the Top End.

This is not about attacking the Chief Minister. Many of my constituents are raising concerns about why the ADF has not been called in. We have heard the ADF is ready to go. It is ready to have boots on the ground to help coordinate the many emergency responses alongside our emergency services so that when people call for help, they have a timely response. At the moment, the reality is that our emergency services are so stretched it is putting people's wellbeing and safety at risk. That is all we are asking for.

Over the last few days I have spoken to many people in my electorate, such as the people who have been evacuated from Daly River, Palumpa and the homelands around the Thamarrurr region. Many are calling me up wondering why there has not been a coordinated response to ensure that people have food. As the Chief Minister keeps saying, it is an unprecedented weather system, so there are many homelands and pastoralists being cut off. There are people within our rural area wading through water.

The Chief Minister must act. She must show care to the people of the Northern Territory, our emergency services and the people who have lost everything.

I seek leave to table the statement I put out today.

Leave not granted.

Mr YOUNG: Again, the CLP government shows that it does not care about Territorians. I asked to table a statement that requests the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory to show leadership and declare an emergency to ensure that our emergency services, police, volunteers and public servants get the support they need. We hear time and again that they are fatigued and stretched.

You only have to look at what happened at Darwin River yesterday to understand that people's safety was put at risk because this government will not call on the ADF to come in and help. It is a disgrace, and you should all be ashamed of yourselves.

VISITOR
Brad Gaddes

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge in the gallery Mr Brad Gaddes from the Chamber of Commerce in Central Australia. Welcome to this Chamber.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms BOOTHBY (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I also acknowledge Brad Gaddes from the Chamber of Commerce in Central Australia. I have had many meetings with you there, and you always have the lay of the land. It is always on point with similar stories to what the Members for Braitling and Namatjira and Madam Speaker have to share with us. Thank you for coming to Parliament House and having a listen tonight.

On 14 February Feb Fit, the sign-on day for our local sporting clubs in Palmerston, was held at Palmerston Shopping Centre. Many of our local clubs set up their stands to talk to community members about the sporting opportunities and participation available. That time allows for many of our young sporting juniors to have a tryout or chat to the clubs to see whether it is something they are interested in.

In Palmerston and the surrounding area has many fantastic clubs. The Members for Blain and Drysdale and I spent the whole morning at Feb Fit, not only walking around and chatting to all our sporting clubs but also

running into lots of people who were there to see what was on offer. We met a few new families as well, which was fantastic. The shopping centre was abuzz with people and sporting clubs.

A special shout-out to those who were involved, being the Palmerston Saints Hockey Club; Rural Athletics Centre; Sam's Dance Studio; Satellite City BMX Club; Soccajoeys Northern Territory; SpeedDart Australia; St John NT; Territory Quad Association; Top End Calisthenics Club; Waratah Hockey Club Darwin; Hellenic Athletic Club; Level Up Gaming; Litchfield Football Club; Northern Sharks Rugby League Club; the Northern Territory Government sport and rec department, which was there talking about Sports Vouchers; the NT Tang Soo Do Karate Academy; Palmerston Cricket Club; Palmerston Game Fishing Club; Palmerston Raiders Rugby League Football Club; Palmerston Rovers Football Club; Dance Construct; Certified Academy of Dance; Commerce Pints Hockey Club; Gymnastics Northern Territory; Greater Palmerston United Football Club; and Arafura Moo Duk Kwan.

I thank all the staff at the Palmerston Shopping Centre who helped pull that together and, of course, all the incredible clubs, their volunteers and all the attendees. It was a fabulous event.

Friday 6 March was National Dentists Day. Matthew Kerle and Clinton Howe were out and about helping to deliver a small token of our appreciation to our local dentists in and across Palmerston on behalf of the Palmerston MLA team, which includes me, of course, and the Chief Minister.

A special shout-out goes to Your Smile Dental in Rosebery; Darwin Smiles at Bakewell Shopping Centre; Palmerston Dental Surgery on Maluka Drive, Palmerston; NT Dental at Gateway Shopping Centre; and the Palmerston dental clinic at the Farrar medical precinct. Our dentists do an incredible job to keep Territorians smiling by promoting good oral hygiene and health in our community every day. I thank them for the care, professionalism and dedication that they show to their patients across Palmerston and beyond. We appreciate all that they do for the smiles of the Territory.

I say a huge thankyou to Mr Ralph D'Souza who has been a member of the Zuccoli Primary School committee for the last six years. Ralph has been pivotal in helping guide the school throughout his time on the committee, being a professional and respected member. Ralph concluded his tenure as the council Chair and a member of the committee at the 5 March AGM.

I also make special mention of the continuing and new committee parent members on that council, Danielle, Candice, Jodie, Tenielle, Hanna, Grant, another Tenelle, Delia, Hatal and Prasha. I thank all those parents who put up their hands not only for the benefit of their children at that school but also because they want that school to be in the best hands possible and to thrive. They make incredible contributions. They give up a lot of their time to go to after-hours meetings and do a lot of the hands-on work at school functions, activities and fundraising. I thank them very much.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.