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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 8 – Assent to Bills Passed in June 2025

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received Message Number 8 from His Honour the Administrator notifying assent to the Bills passed in the June meeting of the Assembly. The message is dated 2 July 2025.

VISITORS
Larrakeyah Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of students from Larrakeyah Primary School accompanied by their teachers. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

PAPER TABLED
Public Accounts Committee Report – Inquiry into Howard Springs Accommodation Village 2023 Flood Evacuation Costs

Mr HOWE (Chair of Public Accounts Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the Public Accounts Committee report on the Inquiry into Howard Springs Accommodation Village 2023 Flood Evacuation Costs and the associated minutes of proceedings.

This report details the committee's findings regarding its inquiry into costs associated with the 2023 flood evacuation to Howard Springs accommodation village, which was referred to the committee by the Treasurer on 29 October 2024. Noting that the overall cost of $12.7m to the Northern Territory Government was significant, the committee was tasked with investigating the matter to ensure due diligence was exercised in the expenditure of government funding.

As indicated in this report, the costs associated with the March to April 2023 flood evacuation at the Howard Springs accommodation village reflected the prolonged period the centre was required to be operational and the number of people it was required to cater for.

While the Howard Springs facility was the most viable option for an evacuation centre under the circumstances, it is acknowledged that it presented a number of challenges which necessarily impacted on the overall operational costs associated with its use.

Nevertheless, following consideration of the evidence received, the committee is satisfied that appropriate processes were followed and due diligence was exercised in the expenditure of government funding.

On behalf of the committee I thank the agency representatives who briefed the committee. Their advice and commentary was insightful and of great assistance. I also thank my fellow committee members for their bipartisan approach to the inquiry.

I move that the report be noted.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Law and Order

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I deliver the ministerial report on law and order as notified on 28 July 2025.

I move that the report be noted.

In August last year the CLP was elected on a clear platform to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique and beautiful Territory lifestyle. Our government has been clear that reducing crime is our number one priority.

In the past 11 months we have been delivering on our commitment to Territorians to give police better powers, strengthen the law, put the rights of victims first and hold offenders accountable.

On the weekend we saw another manifestation of years of the former Labor government's soft, offender-first policies and priorities. It is not normal nor acceptable for a 15-year-old to allegedly stab another child. We do not apologise for replacing Labor's broken system and putting victims and community safety first. This week we will usher in more necessary changes to support our police and community safety.

I have no doubt that the usual offender apologists will criticise our efforts, but can they look Territorians in the eye and say that kids witnessing senseless violence at a family show is okay? It is madness to suggest that a government should go softer on offenders who willingly and callously break the law.

Before I recap on the reform we have undertaken in the last 11 months—reform that was urgently needed to start to correct two decades of Labor's neglect and decay—I will start with outlining what the next tranche of law and order reform looks like for the CLP government.

On 18 June I announced a major change in Police organisational structure and our antisocial behaviour response with the introduction of police public safety officers. This is an historic move by our government. For the first time our different auxiliary, public housing and transit safety officer roles will be consolidated into one highly operational unit under Northern Territory Police. Transit safety and public housing safety officer roles will be grandfathered, and those officers and functions will transition to police public safety officers, with specialised police training and powers focused on addressing antisocial behaviour in public housing, on buses, at shopping centres, bottle shops, events and in other public spaces.

The newly sworn police public safety officers will wear police uniforms and operate under police command. Key features of this new reform include:

- an increase in highly visible police patrols in public spaces
- quicker response times, with the new police public safety officers patched directly into police comms rather than transit and public housing safety officers having to call 000
- access to police systems to feed in critical information and intelligence, such as whether the person they are dealing with has a domestic violence order or an outstanding warrant.

This move brings us in line with other jurisdictions like South Australia and Victoria, which have had police safety officers in public places like their train stations for many years and have seen a reduction in crime at these public locations.

In October we will make the necessary legislative changes to create the new police public safety officer roles. A structured change-management process will support affected staff and guide the transition. The first intake of our police public safety officers is expected to begin training in December this year, with officers operational in early 2026.

While our new police public safety officer model will see a boost to the number of police on our streets, we will continue to ramp up constable recruitment and training of police. I am proud to say that since coming to government more than 135 police constables have graduated as members of the Northern Territory Police Force. I was proud to attend the Squad 158 graduation recently, which saw 44 recruits graduate in that intake. That included 17 Aboriginal community police officers who transitioned to constable, which was excellent to see.

This week we will also see significant steps forward to address youth crime with our amendments to the *Youth Justice Act* and Youth Justice Regulations which will be urgently passed this week. These changes deliver a raft of election commitments as part of our plan to reduce crime. This includes removing the principle of imprisonment as last resort, allowing for more direct consequences for serious offences and greater discretion for our police. It is about giving our police and courts more opportunity to make the decisions they need to rather than forcing their hand.

This is about prioritising victims' rights in sentencing youth offenders, ensuring that the impact on victims will now have to be considered by the courts. This reinforces the fact that we are a victim and community safety-focused government, not an offender-focused government like Labor was. The impact on the victim matters.

A youth offender's criminal history can now be considered by the court when the young person becomes an adult and continues to break the law. The court can look back at their history as a youth offender and consider it in their deliberations.

Further changes to the Youth Justice Regulations will put a stop to Labor's catch-and-release system. The days of our police being used as a taxi service for youth offenders and dropping them home after their offending to a 'responsible adult' is over. Under Labor's offender-focused system, youth offenders avoided accountability or consequences and often reoffended days, even hours, after being dropped home by police, continuing to put our community at risk.

To stop this nonsense, we are expanding the list of prescribed offences, which will allow police to proceed straight to charge if they deem it the most appropriate course of action to keep the community safe. That is about empowering police, and they can move straight to charge if necessary rather than being forced to go through a diversion process. It gives police broader discretion to divert where it is appropriate and charge where it is required. There will be no more free taxi rides home by police. Serious harm offending, hit-and-runs, driving stolen vehicles, assaulting frontline workers and break-ins will now have the default position to proceed to charge if the police or the courts deem it necessary.

We have also responded because Territorians are concerned about personal safety and their own self-defence. We have listened to the many Territorians who said that they want more choice when it comes to protecting and defending themselves.

From 1 September we will be launching our 12-month trial of OC spray. Under the trial, approved members of the public can carry OC spray for self-defence under strict legal conditions. A similar trial has been undertaken in Western Australia, and it has provided useful insights into how a controlled model of personal use of OC spray can work effectively in a community.

Northern Territory Police has been leading the consultation on the trial with key stakeholders, including industry bodies, licensees and the broader community. We propose that the OC spray will be only available through licensed firearms dealers. Eligibility requirements, purchasing processes and access arrangements are all under consideration, ready for the rollout. This trial will be done properly, and after 12 months we will review what took place and see what the next steps are. This is about giving Territorians more choice and peace of mind when it comes to taking control of their own safety.

We have further plans for legislative changes which aim to tackle the issues at the heart of reducing crime in the Northern Territory. We have been working on a second tranche of *Youth Justice Act* changes to enhance the diversion process and options and provide community service choices for youth boot camps. Changes to the *Traffic Act* will streamline the processes for more common offences and greater penalties—for example, for those who drive off from random breath testing stations. There is much work being done that will be brought to the Chamber in the future.

I will update the Assembly on what we have done already. We are unapologetic about using the law when it comes to serious repeat offenders. Since last year's election more than 600 criminals have been taken off the streets, sending a clear message under a CLP government that we put the rights of the community to be safe and the rights of victims before the rights of offenders.

In April this year we recalled parliament to deliver the strongest bail laws in the country. This is on top of the work we did urgently when we first came to government in October last year when Declan's law, mandatory sentencing for assaults on frontline workers, increased wanding powers for police, ramraid and post-and-boast legislation was passed.

Our strong bail legislation requires judges, for the first time, to put the safety of the community first by being satisfied that an alleged offender would not pose a risk to the community if granted bail. This is a significant step forward. This principle must be addressed and considered before any other presumption for or against bail can be considered. The new laws apply to youth and adult offenders.

These changes were brought forward in response to the tragic death of Nightcliff shop owner Linford Feick, allegedly by a serious offender who was on bail at the time. This event shocked and united our community

over a death that should never have happened. Our laws are sending a strong message: if you are a risk to the community, you do not deserve to be a part of it.

Since passing a range of new laws the safety of victims in the community is being put first for the first time in a long time.

It is important to note that we are simultaneously acting on areas that aim to address reoffending and stop offending from happening in the first place. Corrections has been working overtime and opened and is operating the Tennant Creek bail support facility in partnership with the Patta Aboriginal Corporation. This has led to eight young people from the Barkly region being accommodated at that bail facility for a total of 566 nights. This program allows young offenders to remain connected to family, country and community rehabilitation programs that continue to support them to reintegrate into the community. Previously, young offenders in the Barkly region were transported to Alice Springs for bail accommodation, detention or remand—whatever was required.

It is early days for this facility, but one young person on a sentenced order program is attending the local high school and engaging with service providers to identify a trade pathway. A previous client, under a three-month order at the facility, is now an employee as a youth mentor. We had the chance to meet him when we were in Tennant Creek for the show a couple of weeks ago. It was fantastic to see him with the other kids.

In addition to strengthening bail laws we have boosted police powers in a range of other ways. This year we passed stronger laws which give police the power to enter private premises for domestic violence order compliance checks, including conducting alcohol and drug testing of individual subject to DVOs, and to arrest individuals who have breached parole or had their parole revoked. These changes are about proactive policing and helping police to stop crime before it occurs.

In May we delivered the biggest law and order budget in the Territory's history. Our $1.34bn for Police, Corrections and the Attorney-General's Department, which was $112m more than the last Labor budget, includes a record $608m for Police. Highlights include:

- $95m to continue the police funding package
- $10.2m for the remote policing implementation plan
- $4.7m for the Police Airwing aircraft replacement and leasing
- $1.3m for increased CCTV monitoring
- $1m per annum for the police banned drinker order support team
- $186m over four years for police major works infrastructure, including $143.5m for the remote police infrastructure and housing upgrade program, $35.7m to construct a new multipurpose complex in Maningrida and $6.6m for our Joint Emergency Services Communications Centre.

This investment is in addition to what we are spending to address the root causes of crime. This is about prevention, early intervention and focusing on the factors that our government can control or influence such as education, better housing and meaningful opportunities for our people. We cannot reduce crime only by responding to it after it happens; we must prevent it from happening in the first place. We must break the cycle and give our younger generation a chance at a life beyond crime.

Some of the new measures we have introduced include our Circuit Breaker Program, which is now operating in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine and offers intensive case management support to youths at risk; school attendance officers, of which we now have 21 across the Territory, holding parents accountable and ensuring no child is deprived of an education; almost $2m for qualified school-based counsellors to provide guidance and support to children while they are at school; $36m a year in ongoing funding for the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence; and $18m over five years to continue men's behaviour change programs across the Territory.

We are investing in new homes and major repairs and maintenance under the jointly funded $4bn remote housing agreement to tackle overcrowding and poor housing conditions. We are nowhere near finished; we are just getting started.

Coming soon, we are also making changes to enhance the school-based policing program and major reforms to address antisocial behaviour and crime in public housing. Problem drinking is also a key area of reform that will help address the root causes of crime. Alcohol-related harm is rife across the Territory, but we are committed to tackling this problem in a measured way.

Apart from our review into the Banned Drinker Register, we are also exploring the options for alcohol mandatory treatment, which we will be working on to make sure chronically affected alcoholics get the support they need, whether they want it or not. We will give full consideration to all the options to make sure we get people well and healthy.

Our reforms continue to extend to justice and the Corrections system, all of which were truly broken by the Labor government. This year we have already had to introduce measures to help with the record numbers of people we are seeing through the courts, with increases in the number of Local Court judges and prosecutors and support for Legal Aid. We have created the Targeted Intervention Group – Early Resolution Taskforce to go through the backlog of court cases we inherited from Labor, and 200 cases have already been resolved and finalised. We continue that important work.

Our Corrections master plan is providing more prison beds to meet demand after years of Labor neglect. We are fixing that mess because our justice system is too important to ignore. The work in Corrections includes putting on an additional 202 new Corrections officers in the last financial year, which is the largest workforce expansion in Northern Territory Corrections history. We have experienced South Australian Corrections officers to help boost capacity in Alice Springs; we are rolling out G4S staff for court custody and prisoner transport to free up our important Corrections officers to be behind the wire; and we have added 600 beds to ease capacity pressures.

As part of our reform we will make sure that youth diversion is mandatory and that young people who break the law no longer have an option to decide whether they participate. Our new youth diversion program began on 1 July and provides recurrent funding to 17 organisations to a total of $4.2m annually, an increase of $2.4m.

The program provides rapid case management, intervention and mandatory programs that focus on consequences, accountability, reparation and service to the community; skills development for life to reduce reoffending and support education pathways; skills development for reintegration to address the criminogenic needs and drivers of crime; and victim recognition to ensure young people understand how the victims feel and what impact their choices have on other people. We will monitor those programs closely to track their progress and effectiveness.

We are also delivering our boot camp in the Barkly region, as I mentioned earlier, with the Tennant Creek Mob Aboriginal Corporation. The boot camp will undertake projects like on-country cultural camp activities, community service like cleaning up the Tennant Creek Speedway, volunteering at the aged-care home and supporting cleaner council areas.

This is all on top of the immediate reducing-crime package laws that we passed in October, which are working. We have seen 20 ramraid charges, 16 post-and-boast charges and 141 edged weapons seized over the last 11 months through our increased wanding operations. From January to June this year a total of 191 charges were laid for assault on police and emergency workers.

There is much commentary from those opposite about our law and order changes so far. The mistruths and fears being spread by the opposition, or the Labor–Greens alliance, whatever you want to call it—the activists and the detractors—that is a matter for them, but we have a job to do.

We were elected by Territorians to govern for Territorians and to deliver what Territorians want and need for the future. They want to be safe. Territorians want their government to act, for their laws to mean something and for their community to be safe. They want to know that if you break the law in the Northern Territory, you will be held accountable and there will be a consequence. This is not about anything other than community safety. If you commit a crime, you will be held accountable.

We know we are moving in the right direction, and the crime statistics are starting to show that data, but there is more work to do. When you compare January to May under us with the same period under Labor, the difference is stark. We will continue to listen to and act on behalf of our community, and we will not back down.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, our Territory Labor opposition welcomes the opportunity to speak on this report because today we are confronted with the stark reality of the CLP government's utter

failure when it comes to law, order and community safety. Many of the items and initiatives listed by the Chief Minister were developed by the former Labor government. The CLP government thinks it has reinvented wheel, but it has taken on many of the former government's initiatives. It is great that the Chief Minister likes to take credit for it, but she lacks accountability.

The Chief Minister in 11 months of governing the Territory has failed on numerous occasions to stand up and be a leader taking responsibility for the Territory. If we continue on this path, the Territory will continue to spiral and be less safe under Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro.

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; this parliament listened to the Chief Minister deliver her report in silence, with the only member interjecting being the Member for Barkly. We ask that the same respect be afforded.

Madam SPEAKER: I take your point, Member for Gwoja. I will keep that in mind as the day progresses.

Ms UIBO: Territorians were promised by the Chief Minister and her CLP government safer streets, stronger communities and decisive action on crime. Instead, Territorians have received broken promises, reckless policy changes, funding cuts to community safety and soaring crime rates across the Northern Territory. The CLP lied to Territorians about crime. It promised community safety but delivered chaos. Crime is worse across the Northern Territory. We only have to look at the government's crime statistics released a few weeks ago to see that. Community safety is deteriorating. Unfortunately, Territorians are paying the price.

The Chief Minister's only answer is spin, spin and more spin. Maybe she is trying to spin to keep her leadership. Territorians do not want political games; they want community safety.

The CLP is failing on every front across the NT. The Chief Minister and the CLP came to government promising Territorians that they had a clear plan. The CLP said that it had solutions. The CLP promised real change, safer communities and fewer victims of crime. So far in 11 months of CLP government Territorians have received rising rates across almost every measure of crime—violent crime, domestic violence and property damage.

The court system has been described as 'utterly overwhelmed'. In the Northern Territory there are more people in prison on remand than there are people who are serving a sentence. That is because the justice system cannot keep up. Watch houses are bursting at the seams with remand prisoners, putting enormous pressure on hardworking police officers who are already carrying the load for the CLP's failed law and order policies while being denied the very thing that they asked for—a pay rise. Policer officers deserve that pay rise.

I remind the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of my and the Member for Gwoja's request to visit the Palmerston watch house. We hope that you deal with our correspondence soon and that we can visit that facility to see for ourselves the many concerns that the NT Police Association and Corrections officers are bringing to the fore and talking about publicly. They are concerned about the safety of their officers.

More children are going to prison when every bit of evidence from every jurisdiction around the world tells us that this will simply lead those young people to a path of further crime, thereby increasing the risk to community safety.

No-one is suggesting that people should not face the consequences of their bad behaviour. We have said loudly and clearly that there needs to be a balance, which has fallen on the CLP government's deaf ears. Instead of looking at an endless rollout of punitive laws for the sake of headlines, focus on community safety initiatives and grassroots-led solutions. These are measures that will prevent crime in the first place. We have been asking for early prevention, but the CLP continues to spin that into a bunch of rubbish that we never said. We have always said that we want to focus on crime prevention.

The Chief Minister says that she will not apologise for her approach; no-one has asked her to do so. This new narrative about apologists is pathetic. It is deflecting from the real issue of taking responsibility and being accountable as the leader of the Northern Territory for all of us, not just her team of 17 in this Chamber. For every Territorian, regardless of where they live, the Chief Minister is always the leader, but now she is not taking a shred of responsibility for or accountability to the Territory public.

We are asking CLP members and the Chief Minister to do their work with communities, frontline staff, organisations, experts and Territorians who want to build a safer and better Northern Territory together. Community safety requires investment in crime prevention, diversion programs, rehabilitation programs, evidence-based alcohol management and strong collaboration in domestic violence prevention.

The CLP's simplistic tough-on-crime approach has clearly already failed. Territorians do not feel safer in their homes, neighbourhoods or communities. Territorians want to see policies that deliver the real results that they were promised by the CLP and not the political spin, empty promises and lack of accountability the CLP is displaying. Instead of attacking critics as offender apologists, the CLP must face reality and start doing its job to govern responsibly.

Not once in the Chief Minister's report to the parliament did she take any responsibility for her leadership. The sign of a weak leader is to deflect and not take accountability for their actions.

The CLP promised Territorians immediate action, pledging to reduce crime within its first 100 days of coming to office. We are well past that deadline, and violent crime is rising sharply across the Northern Territory. In the first five months of the year total assaults are up by 1.7%; serious assaults rose by almost 6%; domestic violence incidents increased by 9.3%, with alcohol-related cases up by 10%; sexual offences surged alarmingly by more than 22%; crime endangering Territorians has jumped by 30%, which is a catastrophic failure; and alcohol-related violence is up by more than 8%, directly linking to the reckless policy decisions to remove the alcohol floor price.

Territorians across the board are experiencing crisis in community and safety …

Members interjecting.

Ms UIBO: I find it alarming that CLP members are laughing about alcohol-fuelled violence across the Territory. Come to the streets of Katherine—the Member for Katherine knows this—and laugh in the face of residents in Katherine, then tell me you are doing your jobs …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence! Come on.

Ms UIBO: How disrespectful to Territorians that the government is laughing in the face of community safety, which is the number one issue for Territorians.

This is a community in crisis. Crime is spiralling out of control in communities like Katherine, Palmerston and Alice Springs. Katherine has witnessed an unprecedented increase in violence by nearly 30%, with sexual offences in Katherine up by a staggering 136%. Palmerston is grappling with rising violent property crimes, and Alice Springs residents continue to face increasing violence, undermining security and safety in that town.

Families are rightfully fearful. The tragic recent stabbing at the Royal Darwin Show—an event where Territorians should have felt safe—is unacceptable. The CLP told Territorians that they would see improvements. Where are they? When will the Chief Minister stand up and take responsibility for her decisions and her government's actions under her leadership?

Instead, we have seen the CLP government's genuine lack of respect for evidence-based solutions. We have seen it opt for chaotic, kneejerk reactions rather than community solutions. Youth justice laws have been hastily rewritten four times in less than a year without meaningful consultation. Each time we have been told that these laws will fix it and that it must be a vote on urgency. If it was so urgent, with the government doing its job as it said it has, why did the CLP not put these laws through when it first came to power?

The CLP's decision to scrap the minimum unit price has directly contributed to an 8.1% increase in alcohol-related violence across the Northern Territory. Its untested, politically motivated responses continue to endanger Territorians rather than protect them.

The Chief Minister continually runs down people who spend their lives studying these issues and offering solutions, calling them out as apologists and political players. This sort of Trumpian, anti-science politics in the Territory will not help us in the long run. It might sound like a good media grab for Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro at the time, but in no way, shape or form will it actually improve the Territory in the long run. This sort of rhetoric was fiercely rejected at the last federal election this year, and Australia has chosen that there

is no place for politics like that in our community. It is divisive, deeply damaging and will ultimately cause our community more harm than good.

The CLP's failure to deliver on key Corrections commitments highlights its incompetence and the CLP's broken promises. The CLP promised $10m for two adult prisoner work camps, which have not been worked on or delivered. The new work in the community home detention program remains undelivered. The $5m for the 'sentenced to a skill' program is not delivered. Promises of compulsory rehab programs have been ignored, and boosting the Sentenced to a Job program is another broken promise. Compulsory community service for youth offenders remains unimplemented. New boot camps in Darwin and Alice Springs …

Mr Brown: Where are they?

Ms UIBO: Where are they? They have been quietly abandoned; there have been no announcements in nearly a year of governing by the CLP. It is disgraceful because that is what it promised to deliver to Territorians.

Our prisons and watch houses are at breaking point, with no capacity for rehabilitation or other programs to be run that may actually prevent recidivism. Our Corrections staff are being asked to work in increasingly dangerous environments, and this becomes an ongoing issue. It is a powder keg, and you do not need to take my word for it; the unions, the NT Police Association, legal experts and lawyers are all issuing the same warning to the CLP government. They are crying to deaf ears, though. It is a huge concern when our Territory frontline workers grow further concerned in the community for their own safety. These people leave their families to protect our families and make sure we are safe every day. They are also worried for their safety. This is becoming a crisis.

As we have been saying all along, nothing the CLP is doing with its punitive response will actually prevent crime in the first place. The community wants an approach that is not just the 'lock them up' law and order regime the CLP is focused on. They want to see our community safer, with less crime now and in the future. The CLP just cannot seem to get that message from its own community. In fact, we are seeing the opposite, including recklessly cutting critical funding for crime prevention initiatives such as the significant cuts to law and justice groups, which have been proven to prevent crime and support community safety. It would be great to hear the Attorney-General respond to that. The CLP reduced support for vital victim assistance programs, leaving victims unsupported and vulnerable. Funding has been slashed for critical diversion programs that successfully help youths avoid crime. There are no new youth boot camps, which were promised.

The CLP politicised the Casuarina youth hub. Rather than getting on and building it, the CLP stuffed around with a different location. That is a $5m project from Commonwealth funding just for the points of political spin; it is crazy. This is supposed to be a community initiative to support young people and keep them off the streets, and here we are with a government that is not even willing to do the work. It is crazy; this is disgracefully irresponsible and further evidence that the CLP is all about headlines and political pointscoring rather than what it promised Territorians it would focus on, which is community safety.

The CLP promised evidence-based policy but has delivered rushed laws with zero consultation, undermining community trust, engagement and contributions when it comes to solutions. The CLP abandoned promised prevention measures, like the youth boot camps and rehabilitation programs. Nothing—it is just crickets on that side. Instead, CLP members chose to cut support services for victims; it is shameful.

The CLP's arrogant refusal to engage with experts and communities demonstrates its contempt for transparency and accountability—another broken promise since the election. The Northern Territory Children's Commissioner has been systematically ignored, despite serious warnings about the system that she is working to improve. Aboriginal leaders have been consistently denied genuine consultation, exacerbating community tensions and vulnerability when asking to be part of the very solution that they want to see.

The Chief Minister repeatedly refuses to meet with key community stakeholders, choosing political spin over genuine dialogue and consultation to make the Territory better. The Chief Minister seems to be unable to build respectful collaborative relationships with federal government counterparts despite Territorians wanting both tiers of government to work together to improve community safety.

Territorians deserve much better than the CLP government's hollow promises and failed leadership under Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro. We urgently call on the CLP to restore critical funding to law and justice

initiatives and to reinstate essential diversion programs for early prevention of crime, particularly with young people.

Real safety comes from investing in crime prevention diversion, rehabilitation and evidence-based alcohol management programs. What we see under Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro's approach is not leadership; it is blame shifting and spin, and it is time for immediate and genuine investment in proven crime prevention, community-based rehabilitation and local justice initiatives to be boosted. Territorians deserve a government that values transparency, listens to communities, respects expert advice and prioritises real community safety over the divisive political pointscoring and tactics, empty rhetoric and political spin.

Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro is failing on every count to keep our community safe. Territorians deserve a leader who can accept responsibility and do the job that was promised at the election to make our communities safe again.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I find it rich that the Leader of the Opposition lectures us about our record on crime, being part of a government that for eight years watered down laws and created the crime crisis that we found when we came to government. I find that unbelievable, but Territorians have judged, and that is why you find yourself diminished on that side of the House.

To sum up the previous government's policy on crime, I thank the Member for Daly for his contribution on *The Week That Was* a few weeks ago when he said, 'We would never promise that we would actually fix crime, and that is the difference between us and what the CLP said it would do'.

Thank you, Member for Daly; you nailed it and hit it on the head. The previous government was more concerned with managing the media instead of managing crime, the budget, the economy and all the portfolios that ministers were responsible for. Labor members were focused on media releases, Boundless Possible and, 'What is our next announcement? Crime is going up; let us do a release. What can we do—raise the maximum penalty for this?' In reality, they were eroding consequences for criminals across the board. They were putting victims last.

This government is different. I am proud to stand as part of this government which is putting Territorians and victims first. I spoke to a lot of Territorians during my campaign who had been broken into, been victims of crime, victims of assault and who were traumatised. Some were going through the victim part of the justice process and shook their heads. One story I can relate to concerns someone whose house had been broken into, and luckily the neighbours could apprehend the offender. The police came and apprehended the youth. The victim was then asked to go to the police station and make a statement. The kid was laughing—this stuck with me—and said, 'Haha. I will be out of there before you are.'

They said that did not make any sense, so they went to the police station and gave their statement, which took about an hour. When they were driving home, they saw the same youth offender halfway back to their house walking along the side of the road. They thought, 'He was right; he got out of the police station before we did. Hang on, he broke into our house! How is it that we, as the victims of crime, spent more time inside a police station than the offender did? How does that make sense?' On what planet does that make sense?

When we came to government we found not only a crime crisis but also a budget crisis. Everywhere we looked there was cliff funding. The previous government was good at hiding its shenanigans. It pretended it would not breach the debt ceiling by cutting off funding for programs that it knew it would have to fund. The former government knew that it would have to pay for them, so it just chopped off funding for those programs and pretended it did not exist, and we have to clean up the mess, just like we have to clean up the crime crisis mess. I remind those opposite that every year for the last eight years the stats went up, not by a little but by a lot.

Now we see positive trends in the data. The Leader of the Opposition proudly talked about a 9% increase—well, that is not too bad considering the increases in previous years had been much higher, particularly with the sunsetting of the Stronger Futures law, which her government presided over, even though it had been told about it. The Member for Gwoja was one of the responsible ministers at the time.

One year ago, my electorate of Blain was literally on fire.

Ms Uibo: How is it now?

Mr KERLE: It is not on fire, thank you.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, silence!

Mr KERLE: It is much improved.

Mr Young: Stats do not back that up.

Mr KERLE: You can go to my Facebook and look at 12 months ago; you will see it all there.

One year ago, there were riots across Emery Avenue in my electorate …

Ms Uibo: You were not in government 12 months ago, so we do not need to worry about that. You are in government now. What have you done that is different?

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, the Member for Gwoja drew my attention to Standing Order 20: No Interruption of Debate. If I hear any of you in this Chamber interrupting the Member for Blain or any other speaker, I shall give you a warning. I am not in a good mood.

Mr KERLE: There were riots across Emery Avenue. It was a regular occurrence. On waking and checking the community groups, I would see stories like, 'Be careful. People are walking the streets, checking doors. Masked youths were picked up on my security cameras.' One morning there was security footage and handheld mobile footage of what I can only describe as a riot in the middle of Emery Avenue. It appears that it was because two distinct family groups who came in from community were staying across the road from each other, and they brought their conflict to town.

I was asked to visit people who have private units that join onto public housing. The properties were separated by a five-metre-high chain-link fence with barbed wire on the top. They were at their wits' end because every night they would see stolen vehicles in the car park opposite and children as young as two and three years of age being exposed to violence, domestic violence and people drinking all night. I went there and sat with them at 10 and 11 o'clock at night—check my Facebook—and spoke live about it. Only a week later individuals from that group were tagging a well-known gang tag on things around that area, and there ended up being a stolen vehicle dumped around the corner which was then set alight. The community was up in arms. People asked, 'What is going on here?'

Twelve months later we are doing the best we can with what we inherited—a complete mess. We inherited eight years of people being told, 'Behave how you want; there will not be consequences. We will drop you home to a responsible adult.'

I have three boys. That is not how they are raised. They are raised to know that they have responsibilities and there are consequences for their behaviour. If they behave in a good way, look after their brothers and their mum and are nice to people outside, there are positive consequences. If they hit their brothers and misbehave, there are negative consequences. This is how you raise children; it is not rocket science. On what planet does taking away consequences and returning offenders to the environment that created them deal with troubled youths?

We were clear on our election platform. Yes, we will crack down on crime and offenders. We will also deal with the root causes. You can walk and chew gum at the same time.

I will quickly talk about crime stats. We have positive indicators in regard to property and house break-ins. Robbery, violence and theft is down by 29%—that is home invasions. I have sat with multiple people who have had aggressive invaders inside their home unexpectedly late at night, and it is extremely traumatising for them. People are suffering from PTSD for significant periods. It deeply affects their mental health. We cannot tolerate it.

House break-ins are down by 31%; commercial break-ins are down by 16%; and other theft is down by 15%. There is still a lot further to go. Domestic violence assaults NT-wide are up by 9%, and alcohol-related assaults are up by 8%. We are still dealing with the overhang of the previous government's failed alcohol policy and the consequences. As we roll out our programs, including our police public safety officers, we can intervene earlier and stop things escalating to the point where police must respond to a domestic violence serious assault.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, today we heard from a Chief Minister who is desperate. She is here with her imposter and poser politics, trying to sound tough. The CLP talks tough but fails to deliver what actually works.

The Chief Minister continually says she will not apologise and that her government is unapologetic, but I have not heard anyone in the community or media demanding an apology from the Chief Minister. You have to ask: why do CLP members keep bringing it up? Are they feeling uncomfortable with their own laws? Are their strategists on the fifth floor telling them that it sounds tough and deadly? The people I know are not asking for apologies; they are raising legitimate concerns in regard to the direction this government is taking and the measures being introduced.

These are not political games; they are real questions from Territorians who want to feel safe, respected and heard. They are questions like we heard in Estimates, asking why this government chooses to spend $4.5m over three years on diversion and $52m a year on detention. That is $2,700 per day per child in detention. Is that the best use of Territory taxpayer money? No, because the detention rates keep growing. We must invest in measures to stop people entering detention in the first place.

Territorians have been hit with another round of crime statistics. Let us be honest; the picture is not good. Yes, there are marginal improvements in property crime and home break-ins. That is not a result of this government; it is the result of hardworking Territorians spending their hard-earned cash to secure their homes, preventing crime in their homes.

I welcome the progress in lowering property crime, but we continue to see crime rising. The Territory is in the grip of a worsening crime crisis that this government cannot spin its way out of. In the five months to May 2025, total assaults across the Territory increased, with serious assaults up by 5.7%; domestic violence assaults surged by 9.3%; alcohol-fuelled domestic violence increased by 10.4%; sexual assault offences skyrocketed by over 22%, which is a deeply alarming figure that should stop any government in its tracks; offences that harm or endanger people rose by a staggering 30.8%; alcohol-related assaults increased by 8.1%; and property damage offences are up by 19%.

In Katherine the situation is spiralling out of control. Violent crime has exploded, with offences against the person up by 29.2% and sexual offences up by an outrageous 136.4%. This government is failing the people of Katherine. From April to May alone, assaults climbed by 6.2%, domestic violence rose by 8% and alcohol-related assaults jumped by 13%.

Palmerston is faring no better, with violent crime worsening across nearly every category and property offences continuing to rise.

Meanwhile, my beloved town of Alice Springs is recording significant increases in offences against persons, harm and assaults. These figures are not just numbers; they represent real people, harm and a government that is dangerously out of its depth. The public is not buying spin and nonsense. People want leadership, not excuses; safety, not slogans; and they deserve action. Let me be clear: this is not what success or a government in control looks like; this is a government spinning a story while communities continue to suffer.

CLP members came in with big promises; they said that they would fix crime and bring law and order back on the streets. They made it sound like they had all the answers, but look at what is happening. Assaults are still going up, and people do not feel safe in their homes and businesses or walking around their communities. Too many Territorians are left asking what has actually changed or gotten better. The truth is that the CLP has no real plan. Its members rely on tough talk and kneejerk crackdowns instead of smart policy and meaningful reform. They are more interested in headlines than results.

Crime cannot be fixed by cutting community programs, undermining Aboriginal organisations and ignoring the root causes of crime. Crime definitely cannot be reduced by locking up people without changing the circumstances that led them there in the first place.

Our community is seeking consequences that will change lives. We are seeing the consequences of a government that refuses to listen and act with integrity and courage. We need solutions led by the community and proper investment in mental health, housing, youth diversion, rehabilitation and job creation. We need to support those on the front line, such as our social workers, law and justice groups and the organisations on the ground trying to make a real difference. Most of all, we need real leadership.

The CLP is failing on crime because it fails to understand that people are desperate for this change. It is failing to see that safety does not come from scare campaigns; it comes from building strong, supported and empowered communities. We will not arrest our way out of this or punish our way to peace. We need long-term community-driven solutions, but this government is standing in the way of all that.

To every Territorian feeling the weight of this, I see you, I hear you and I will continue to work for the kind of leadership you want that puts people first, not politics.

The statistics do not lie, but neither do the voices in our streets, homes and communities. They are saying loud and clear that this government is failing. It is time that this government lifts up a mirror and looks at itself. It is time for a change of direction—a real leader. Members for Barkly and Port Darwin, I am talking about you. Step up and be the leader your government needs. We need a government that will listen to community responses and help build a better, stronger justice system, not just punishment. Our law needs to be built for all people, not for politics.

The Attorney-General talks about making our community safer, yet cuts funding to law and justice groups. This government says that it is for all Territorians, yet not every minister of the CLP government has had the decency and respect to get off the bitumen, get into the bush and hear the lived experiences and concerns of victims there because they choose to ignore the bush.

The Attorney-General has not been to a single remote Aboriginal community where there are law and justice groups, peacekeepers and mediators. There are people on the ground who want to work with the government to reform and change our communities, to come into town to help work with people and make sure people can get home and are linked with services. However, they are met with silence, refused applications and reply emails saying the government is too busy to meet with them.

It is fine for the Chief Minister to come to Alice Springs and say it is all good. She gets to walk around with bodyguards; people in Alice Springs do not get a bodyguard. Pull your head out and do your job!

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am lost for words after listening to the Opposition Leader and the Member for Gwoja. The Opposition Leader spoke of more children in jails, yet as one of four Education ministers, under her watch school attendance and literacy and numeracy levels plummeted. I find it interesting that the Opposition Leader, who has lived in Katherine for quite some time, all of a sudden realised that Katherine is the centre of the universe and now wants to talk about it and bring it to the light.

I have been doing that for 35 years, well before I was the Member for Katherine. For 19 of the last 23 years we had a Labor government and have seen crime spiral out of control. A previous government watered down the law, resulting in the crime crisis we inherited.

It was interesting listening to the Member for Gwoja say, ‘I see you, I hear you, and I will work with my community’. Was this a come-to-Jesus moment? Will he be the next Opposition Leader by the end of the year? I find it interesting because for the last eight years the Member for Gwoja did not see or hear his constituents or work with them. Otherwise, he would have stood up for his community and had something to say about the appalling crime that spiralled out of control.

Since coming to government in August last year our Finocchiaro CLP government has taken swift action to make community safety our top priority, delivering on the sweeping mandate we received at the election. Regional towns like Katherine, which I call the centre of the universe, are in the place they are today because of the former Labor government’s soft-on-crime approach.

We had eight years of catch-and-release policies that put the rights of offenders above the rights of victims. Our government has made it clear that we will be putting the rights of victims above those of offenders. We make no apologies. No-one is asking us to apologise, but there is plenty of commentary on what our government is doing, so we will continue to get on with the job of fixing Labor’s broken systems and putting victims and community safety first.

Last August, almost 12 months ago, Territorians voted us in to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle. Since coming to government we have delivered significant bail reforms such as Declan’s law, reinstated breach of bail as an offence and brought in a presumption against bail for all serious violent offences. We also made posting and boasting, ramraiding and public nuisance drinking an offence as well as introduced legislation to give police greater powers for wanding.

After the death of Mr Linford Feick, we recalled parliament and strengthened the bail laws again to strengthen community safety. In our year of action, certainty and security, we launched Strike Force Cerberus in Katherine to work in partnership with local organisations to respond to youth offending, identify local youths at risk and assist in providing support through relevant agencies. Through this collaboration with Strike Force Cerberus, Kalano Community Patrol, public housing safety officers and the Circuit Breaker team, the nightly

patrol group was formed. The patrollers met at 7 pm from Thursday to Sunday in the town square up until recently, and this consistent collaboration has helped police build rapport with the Katherine youths.

I have been fortunate to attend a couple of the meetings, which have been a worthwhile collaboration in shared knowledge through those agencies. These meetings started out in the town square, but after community unrest and conversations with the acting commander they have moved them to the shopping centre. It has given better visibility and safety for people going to the shopping centre.

I commend Acting Commander Terry Zhang for his dedication to Katherine and for working across all agencies in a positive way for our community. In conjunction with the Circuit Breaker team, Kalano and the dedicated housing officers—Sharon, Paul and Blessing—these patroller meetings are going well. All agencies follow up, working together, which has not happened before. I thank all of them for their hard work and dedication.

Attorney-General Marie-Clare Boothby has recognised the court backlog as a major contributor to recidivism. She has appointed an additional full-time Local Court judge and new prosecutors and launched the TIG-ER taskforce to fast-track remand cases. In Katherine we have established a Big Rivers reducing-crime committee to facilitate collaborative cross-sector responses aimed at reducing crime and antisocial behaviour. Since the committee's establishment, 1,038 banned drinker orders have been issued, and public housing safety officers have undertaken multiple joint operations targeting antisocial behaviour, domestic violence, overcrowding and tenancy issues within hotspot public housing complexes.

Recently, a targeted response in Mannion Street has seen this operation lead to six arrests, 59 litres of alcohol tipped out, 132 persons moved on, 29 liquor infringements issued and 13 support link referrals. At the conclusion of the operation, the Mannion Street complex had significantly fewer reports of antisocial behaviour and domestic violence, and tenants have reported positive feedback. It is pleasing to hear the vigorous work that has been happening.

The latest crime statistics for Katherine show that we are making progress, but challenges remain. One thing is clear: we will not hide from those challenges and gaslight Territorians like Labor did. The crime statistics from January to May 2025 compared with the same period in 2024 show a 36% drop in commercial break-ins and a 14% reduction in house break-ins.

While this is positive, it is cold comfort when I speak to the likes of Nikki at the Coffee Club. We acknowledge we have more work to do. I heard of Nikki's shop not only being broken into more than once in one night, but at 6.30 the next morning two offenders walked in and allegedly assaulted Nikki and Mel, one of her staff. By the time I got there, they were in a state of shock and emotion. It was distressing.

The Opposition Leader is only two doors down from Nikki, but when she was asked on Katie Woolf's show the other week it turns out she had not even walked out of her office two doors down and gone there.

Ms Uibo: I was in my electorate!

Mrs HERSEY: I note that the Opposition Leader is yelling out that it is not her electorate.

Ms Uibo: I am in the Arnhem electorate.

Mrs HERSEY: I find it disgusting …

Ms Uibo: That I was in my electorate?

Mrs HERSEY: … that two doors down, she chooses when she will visit someone, whether it is her electorate or not. She is happy to criticise me for what I do and do not do in Katherine. I can tell you, Opposition Leader, it is a far cry from you. Whether somebody is in my electorate or not, it is your position to go and visit them, whether you like it or not, whether it makes you feel good about yourself …

Ms Uibo: Did you call when any of my constituents …

Mrs HERSEY: I note the Opposition Leader is continually interjecting.

EXCLUSION OF MEMBER
Member for Arnhem

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, you can have an hour out.

Ms Uibo: That is fine; she is talking rubbish anyway. Do not have double standards.

Madam SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 49, I exclude the Opposition Leader for one hour.

Ms Uibo: That is disgraceful.

Mrs HERSEY: I note that the Opposition Leader is still going on about double standards and saying that I am disgraceful.

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause, Member for Katherine. Opposition Leader, behave yourself.

Mrs HERSEY: I would call myself far from disgraceful.

Nikki and Mel, like the troupers they are, reopened the shop on Saturday. I was thankful that it was show weekend and many of my colleagues went in to speak to Nikki. I continually go there and support her in good times and bad because that is my role as the local member.

This week we are taking decisive action to fix Labor's broken youth justice system with new laws to put victims first, protect frontline staff and hold serious youth offenders to account. We are continuing to address the root causes of crime. We will see the extension of the Circuit Breaker Program and school attendance officers continue to work across the Territory, getting kids to school.

Under the previous government school attendance rates were unacceptable. We have reinstated the attendance officers, and they continue to work across the Territory. Communities have had a gutful of youth crime, and it is unacceptable. Parents also need to be accountable for their children.

We were voted in to restore safety. This means balancing enforcement and prevention with ongoing evaluation. In our year of action, certainty and security, we will not shy away from the challenges we face, and we will continue to deliver on the mandate Territorians gave us.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I will respond to the report. Chief Minister, I have heard you and your party members say over and again that you will make no apologies. Just like other people have said today, I do not want your apologies; I want you to do your job, which you promised to do and which you say your party was elected to do, which is the job of making communities safer.

Too often you speak as if only some Territorians count. I heard you repeatedly use divisive language, claiming to speak for the community which wants to be safe as though those who support evidence-based smarter approaches to justice do not want to be safe, as though they are not part of the community and their voices do not matter.

Chief Minister, the whole community wants to be safe. Every Territorian—no matter where they live, how they vote or what their background is—wants to feel secure in their home, in their street and in their daily life. You are the Chief Minister for the whole Territory. Your government is responsible for 100% of all Territorians, not just the 48% who voted for you. To dismiss those who advocate for smart, effective public policy as offender apologists and to say you will not even listen to them is not leadership; it is exclusion. It is political posturing dressed up as public safety. It is also economically irresponsible, increasing the footprint of the expanding Northern Territory police state.

We cannot afford the CLP's expansion of the police state because its policies will rob Territorians of hospitals, schools and roads for generations. Leadership is about bringing people together, not writing them off. It is about representing us all even when we disagree. Under this CLP government it is something else entirely. It is a political strategy dressed up as a public safety plan. We were told that the tough-on-crime approach

would turn things around and that tougher laws, more prison time and headline-grabbing crackdowns would reduce crime and restore confidence.

Since the CLP came to power in August last year crime rates have gone up, not down. We heard about that this morning in the Chamber. Police data shows more assaults, property damage and repeat offending. Assaults, harm to endanger a person, total offences against the person and property damage offences are up. As one of my constituents said to me last week, there is also what they called 'felt' statistics—none of us feel safer.

What do we have to show for that? We have dangerously overcrowded watch houses, putting detainees and police at risk. In watch houses, lights are on for 24 hours a day; there is no access to outside time; there are up to 16 people in a cell with one toilet and no privacy; and people have to wait for days for a shower, including children. Yesterday we heard that between August and March, nearly 400 Indigenous children and teenagers were held in NT Police watch houses, some for days at a time. These are not just numbers on a page; these are real children from real families in pain, and they are our future.

We have read reports of women in watch houses having to manage menstruation without privacy and without period products women need access to for their safety, dignity and health. We have to remember that this applies to girls and young women aged from 10 years who are in watch houses. This is shameful. All women in this House know what it means to menstruate and what we have to do to manage this for ourselves. How dare we allow our sisters in custody to have their periods under such inhumane and undignified conditions.

Our courts are overwhelmed, and our communities are still waiting for real solutions. We have more people in prison—the second highest prison population in the world per capita—and this is not something to celebrate. More than half of those who are locked up are on remand and have not been found guilty of a crime. For many of them, by the time they get to court, they have spent more time in prison than if they had been sentenced. Prison overcrowding means that there is no access to programs or rehabilitation.

People serving sentences have written to me and said that they had been in prison for four years without being allowed to engage in any programs to address their offending. People are being told they will only have access to rehabilitation programs at the end of their sentence before parole. This means people could be in prison for years without any attempt to provide rehabilitation or support while they are locked up. What do we expect to happen if we lock up people for a decade, provide six months of rehabilitation and then send them out to the community?

People have written to me and said that they are locked up, suffering from serious substance addiction and being denied treatment. People who successfully managed their addictions on the outside are now unsupported and substance-dependent on the inside. Treating people like this in our prisons helps no-one—not the person, their community or the broader community—on their release.

The CLP's answer to this is lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 10 years; building more prisons; expanding mandatory sentencing; criminalising public drinking; fining parents instead of supporting them; removing human rights protections; introducing pepper spray; arming public and safety transit officers; reintroducing spit hoods; and passing major legal changes, as we will be asked to do this week with amendments to the *Youth Justice Act,* on urgency without scrutiny, evidence or consultation.

None of this is working. The people of the Northern Territory deserve safety. They deserve more than a government which trades on fear and responds to harm with more harm. Calling someone who believes in evidence-based approaches to crime an 'offender apologist' is not leadership; it is fearmongering. We deserve more than politics which trades in anger for social media clicks, while leaving communities to bear the cost.

We all deserve to be safe; we all agree on that. Like other people in this Chamber, I talk to people in my community every day about what safety means to them. For Patricia, who is 82 years old and has lived in my electorate for more than 60 years, it means being able to walk to the shops without fear. For Braydon, who is six and growing up in public housing, it means a safe outdoor space to play and schools which nurture him. For Ellis and Kay, new parents, it means knowing that their baby will grow up in a community which supports young families and has the services they need. For Simi, who has just arrived in Darwin to start a new life, it means feeling welcome, included and protected.

Safety is not just the absence of crime; it is the presence of community, connection and care. We need to address violent crime—no-one is saying otherwise—as people have the right to feel safe in their homes, streets and workplaces, and victims deserve justice and support. Those who commit serious harm must be

held accountable, but accountability is not the same as punishment without purpose. A real plan to reduce violent crime means addressing the causes, not just the symptoms. It means targeted response, evidence-based interventions and systems that reduce the chance of harm happening again.

If our goal is fewer victims, safer communities and a justice system that works, we have to do what works, not what makes the best headlines. Ask any police officer, youth worker or family on the front line. We cannot arrest ourselves out of crime or punish our way to prevention. Every child who ends up in a watch house is let down by systems long before that moment—by housing, education, mental health services or child protection. If we want to reduce crime, we have to fix those systems.

We need to properly invest in early intervention; diversion; domestic, family and sexual violence prevention; drug and alcohol rehabilitation; family support; culturally safe care; the courts; the bail system; and therapeutic justice.

We need to look at what works, like in Glasgow where a public health approach reduced violent crime by more than 50%; on Groote Eylandt where communities led the change, and youth crime has dropped dramatically; or in Baltimore, which had a dramatic drop in violent crime through a public health approach, accountability and community engagement.

There are many real solutions, but they require more than just slogans. All of it is about building safety through connection, not division. Politics of division and fear is not making us safer now and never will. This is not about being soft or hard; it is about being smart and doing what works, not what sounds good on Facebook.

The Chief Minister is right when she says that what is happening is not normal. It is not normal for people to feel unsafe in their homes and streets and for the response to that being to divide people, ignore what will work and listen to some and not all.

I feel scared for all of our futures. Real safety does not come from locking up people; it comes from fewer people offending in the first place. Until this government understands that and acts on it, these failures will continue, and Territorians will keep paying the price.

Mr MALEY (Corrections): Madam Speaker, I will address a few of the things that have been raised by those opposite.

The Member for Johnston just spoke about investing and getting things up and running. I double-down on what the Chief Minister just said. We are spending $1.5bn on community safety. We are investing where it needs to be done. We are spending $495m on Corrections alone.

We are investing where the previous Labor government failed to invest. It had a plan to spend all the money on police, with no money for courts or Corrections. The Attorney-General will speak about what she is doing with the court system which is making a difference. We just found out figures showing that, for the first time in history, there are more sentenced prisoners than remand prisoners in Corrections. Things are working. We have been in office for 11 months.

Unfortunately, those opposite had the chequebook for 19 of the last 20-odd years and put the Northern Territory in a position where the Member for Johnston said that she feels scared. That is one of the reasons I got into politics and the CLP got into office; Territorians felt scared because the previous Labor government neglected them, neglected to invest and put us in a situation where people were not going shopping or were shopping at Howard Springs versus Casuarina because they felt scared.

That is why this CLP government is investing $1.5bn in community safety. We want to make sure that Territorians do not feel scared and that the Territory is a place to grow, have your children, go shopping and walk down the street. We need to make sure there will be a consequence for people's actions.

The Member for Gwoja—the former Attorney-General and Deputy Chief Minister—became fired up and passionate at the end of his contribution. It is a pity he did not do that when he was in office. He spoke about how Alice Springs has been neglected. He was in office. He chose to let Stronger Futures fall away while he invested in shares in an alcohol company. He made money out of misery. It is a bit of an embarrassment for him to rant and rave and get all fired up when he could have done it over the last eight years but failed to. He let Alice Springs burn and go down. I heard from people that they were getting fuel either side of Alice Springs because they did not want to stop in Alice. People would pull in to Alice, be assaulted and have their vehicle stolen.

I have been there and seen young offenders walking around the streets. It was getting worse. This is a big ship to turn around, but we are doing what we can, and we will continue to work hard to make sure the Territory is the best place to work, live and play.

There seems to be a theme from the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Gwoja about the Chief Minister and leadership. The Chief Minister has the support of all on this side. She is a strong leader doing what she needs to do to make sure the Territory is the best place. The Chief Minister recalled parliament and made bail laws stronger to keep the community safe. That is strong leadership, and I commend the Chief Minister for doing what she has done to make sure the Territory is a safer place in the last 11 months.

The Opposition Leader spoke about the Chief Minister being an utter failure, with soaring crime rates and crimes getting worse across the Northern Territory. I will read crime stats to show it is completely not true. Crime stats are, in fact, on the way down in some places. I am not saying we have it right yet, as there is a long way to go, but the figures are trending in the right direction, and we need to do more work. That is why we will pass legislation to give youth justice officers more power.

Territory-wide robbery offences are down by 29%, house break-ins are down by 31% and commercial break-ins are down by 16%. Someone breaking into your house and going through your personal belongings is a terrible feeling. Those figures are on the way down.

It is not correct for the Opposition Leader to talk about the Territory as if crime is soaring. Things are getting better, but there is still a long way to go, and in 11 months the Territory is feeling like a safer place. I went to all the shows. People from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin spoke to us and said that they are feeling safer. They said, 'Things are getting better, but do not stop. Keep your foot on the accelerator and keep working.' We intend to do that.

There is a theme from the opposition about attacking the Chief Minister's leadership. In 11 months the Chief Minister has shown true leadership. She has changed laws, and the Territory is a better place, but we have a long way to go. We continue to move forward. The Lia Finocchiaro CLP government is getting on with the job. We want results, and the results are coming, but there is more work to be done. Let me be clear: the government is backing victims, not offenders. We promised action, and that is what we intend to do and will continue with action.

I am proud to support the Chief Minister, the CLP team and, more importantly, Territorians to go about their business, go to shopping centres, go to work, come home, go to sport, go to places like Freds Pass on the weekend, leave the car in the car park and come back to find their car still there. I am working hard, as are all the people on this side of the Chamber, to make sure the Territory is a better place to live.

I have more good news. In Darwin, robbery offences are down by 33%, house break-ins are down by 50% and commercial break-ins are down by 13%; in Palmerston, all theft except motor vehicles is down by 11%; in Alice Springs house break-ins are down by 37% and commercial break-ins are down by 34%; in Katherine, commercial break-ins are down by 36%; and in Tennant Creek, all theft except motor vehicles is down by 33%. These are not just statistics; these are people's houses and lives that have been interfered with by people committing offences.

We will change the *Youth Justice Act*. We will make it stronger for officers to do their jobs. If people do not want to be in the youth detention centre or a watch house because they do not like it, the answer is simple: do not commit an offence. It is not rocket science.

We need to stand for the community and make sure there are consequences. Over the last eight years there have been no consequences. In fact, the consequences have been watered down. Those opposite changed the law about drinking in a public place; the police only had the power to tip drinks out. They could not do anything else, like proactive policing or asking, 'What is your name? Do you have a DVO? Are you on the Banned Drinker Register? Are you allowed to drink in the presence of other people?'

People were sitting around drinking. Maybe they were allowed to drink when they were separated and there was a history of family violence. Those opposite took the ability to know that away from the police and essentially put them in handcuffs because it did not let them do their jobs. We saw the effects of that no matter where we were in the Territory. The alcohol-related harm and antisocial behaviour was the number one complaint I received when I toured the Northern Territory. That was a direct result of the Labor government changing the law, taking power from the police and making it easier to drink in a public place, with fewer consequences for people drinking and their antisocial behaviour.

We came to office and fixed that. We support the police, Corrections officers and emergency services personnel because they do a good job.

There are 600 more prisoners in custody today than when we took office. That is not something we celebrate. Those 600 people who were out in the community are now behind bars so they cannot commit more offences. They cannot have more victims; we are putting the victims' rights first, unlike the previous government which seemed to allow everyone to do what they want and eroded consequences. We are making sure that if people commit a crime there will be a consequence.

If the court orders people into detention, we will find a bed for them. We will put them behind bars, where they belong, to keep the community safe. That is our number one priority, and we make no apologies for that. We will work hard to make sure the Territory is the best place to live, work and play.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be part of a united government team committed to reducing crime, rebuilding our economy and restoring our lifestyle, as per our election commitments. Do not ever forget that we put the plan out and are now enforcing it.

This government received an overwhelming mandate from Territorians at the last election to reverse the neglect that the previous Labor government inflicted on our community, with promises that failed to make our community safe, let alone prioritise community safety.

The Labor government was a champion of victims-last and offender-first policies. It was also a champion of catch-and-release policies for offenders, where bail was granted as almost a right rather than a privilege—something that attracted the ire of the people in my electorate.

I heard the frustration of residents of Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon as they continually questioned why offenders were being arrested for break-ins, violence against innocent residents and other offences, only to be seen back on the streets the next day—something the Member for Blain also highlighted.

Hence, I am proud to be part of our united government that quickly honoured our election commitments by passing legislation to stop the revolving door of bail by making all serious violent offenders, with or without a weapon, start with a position of no bail. We made breach of bail an offence; introduced mandatory sentencing for assaulting frontline workers—and you know how passionate I am about that, with my son being a paramedic; made ram raids and posting and boasting on social media an aggravated offence; and gave police powers to fine, charge and arrest for public drinking in non-exempt areas.

Yes, we lowered the age of criminal responsibility so offenders do not fall through the cracks and can be sent to meaningful intervention programs to turn their lives around because we put children first.

Believe it or not, it was pleasing when the Member for Casuarina and I were walking around the oval at the Royal Darwin Show last Friday and were called over by one of the stewards managing the entry of horses onto the arena who wanted to chat. This steward is a longtime Larrakia elder who has lived in Karama for 30-plus years. She wanted to congratulate me and our government for standing up for community safety in our area and encouraged us to continue to do so and, in her words, ignore the bleating objections from members opposite.

Her final comment was—the Member for Casuarina can testify to this—'Brian, this has nothing to do with race; it is about community-wide safety.' She said to us, 'If people do the crime they should do the time. Keep up the good work.' I thank her. She gives me the inspiration to keep going. It has nothing to do with race; it is about the benefit to our community.

Last week I hand-delivered my newsletter across the whole of Karama electorate and in doing so spoke to many residents directly. Hopefully, I also lost weight in walking around all those streets. I met a lot of dogs that greeted me.

Like the resident the Member for Casuarina and I met at the Royal Darwin Show, these residents were also pleased with our approach to law and order. They wanted us to go harder. They said, 'You're doing well, but you must do more'. They are in favour of our proposals to give them access to OC spray for personal protection and the introduction of police public safety officers, which I highlighted in my newsletter. When I went to a lot of public housing areas, people welcomed this initiative. They want us to bring it on.

I quote from my opening message in my newsletter:

Dear Residents of Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon

…

Crime and anti-social behaviour continue to be among the most frequent concerns raised with me. I want to assure you that I continue to strongly advocate on your behalf in Parliament and to the Government. While there is still work to be done, we are beginning to see some positive changes, including:

- *Increased proactive policing in Karama and Malak*
- *Stronger enforcement measures and real consequences for offenders*
- *A more focused approach to dealing with irresponsible public housing tenants*

Our Government remains committed to reducing crime, rebuilding our economy, and restoring the Territory lifestyle we all value.

When I talk about increasing police visibility, we have had two episodes where the police have conducted special operations. They have come for four-day operations, gone around the parks in the morning, tipped out alcohol and walked through shopping centres. Everything seems to calm down when they do it. I congratulate the police for doing this. It is proactive policing. They are getting out there on the front foot, they are being seen, the community feels safer and over the last month they have seen it happen twice. They are feeling much better that this government is listening to their concerns because Labor did not.

I heard the Member for Gwoja quoting statistics. He is big on statistics, but we must think about it more widely than just the raw statistics. These are early but important signs of a system turning around after a decade of Labor failure. I pass this on to the Member for Gwoja: success is more than statistics; it is when people feel safe again. That is when we know we are getting it right. We will keep making the hard calls to restore law and order and confidence in our justice system.

At the Royal Darwin Show I had feedback from a Larrakia elder, who has lived in my electorate for more than 30 years, and said, 'We want you to go harder, and we think you are doing a great job. It has nothing to do with race; you are the only ones who are focused on community safety.' I said, 'Thank you very much. We are here for you and for everyone who wants community safety.'

When claims are levelled at me that we are being racist, there is nothing further from the truth; it is all about community safety and expectations. We listen and react to that, delivering what we said we would in the election campaign.

I will not put up with the bleating from those opposite, claiming that we are off track. We need to go harder, but we are also about doing things to rehabilitate people in jail. I am sure other speakers will talk about that. We are proactively trying to stop people offending. We will have mandatory rehabilitation and diversion programs. These are positive moves, and we will do this right.

Mr Young interjecting.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: You can interject, but I do not interject when you speak.

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; interruptions. The Member for Daly is trying to take over from the leader and be loud.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, remain silent.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: We would not want to lose another member of the opposition for an hour, although it might be pleasing.

I am proud to be a part of a united CLP government. We are focused and, despite other claims, we will do the job.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister for giving this ministerial report to update the Assembly and Territorians on law and order.

I will start by talking about today's contributions, in particular from the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Gwoja. For the record, they were both Attorneys-General in preceding governments when the Territory experienced its worst ever crime crisis.

I will talk about leadership and responsibility. The Leader of the Opposition bagged the Chief Minister for her failure to be a leader. This is the first Chief Minister that I can remember—Labor was in power for 19 out of 23 years—who has stood her ground from the start. At the election she and her team promised Territorians that we would change the status quo. We would not accept crime in our community at the levels of that time. We would make changes and rebuild our economy. We had to fix crime and prioritised that as the number one issue, which we would deal with by changing the laws and rebuilding our economy.

She has been steadfast in that and has explained all the steps she and our ministers have taken to take back control of crime. From day one she has been clear and not said that things are perfect or that after 100 days nothing else would be needed. There is so much more work to be done, but we are turning around a Territory that has been failed by a Labor government for many years. It will not be an overnight fix. I take offence that the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Gwoja called her out for poor leadership, given they were Attorneys-General in previous governments.

I heard a number of times from the opposition the words 'evidence-based' and that we need to take an 'evidence-based approach'. I am sick to death of hearing those words from those opposite. For years, the previous Labor government rammed that down the throats of Territorians. The evidence you were working on did not work, otherwise we would not be in this situation that we have to fix, so stop saying it because it is a load of rubbish.

Many contributions were about how the number of remand prisoners as through the roof and how there are too many. For the first time in a long time—decades in fact—the number of sentenced prisoners is now more than the number of remand prisoners. It is only in the last couple of months because of the changes the CLP government has been making. The previous chart looked like a big crocodile jaw; it was going so far in the opposite direction, but in the last couple of months it has turned around, and we are finally seeing it cross over because of the work we have been doing.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition always likes to say—and the Leader of the Opposition mentioned it again today—that crime has gone up because we scrapped the minimum floor price. What a load of rubbish. The fact that drunks are happy to pay $800 for a bottle of rum in a community tells you that the minimum floor price was not working. It was one blunt tool that did not make a skerrick of difference as it should have. We promised Territorians we would scrap the minimum floor price when we came to government, and we did. To say that it is a failed approach and the reason crime has increased just goes to show how out of touch those opposite are.

The language regarding cuts to law and justice groups is also a load of rubbish. The fact is that Labor never funded them into the future. You cannot cut something that was never funded in the first place. To be clear for Territorians, this was a large piece of work done by the Labor government. It cost a lot of taxpayers' money—half a million dollars per law and justice group, which were already established.

We will not expand them and make them the be all and end all until we know that it is working. It is only in the infant phase, and we need to look at the data to see what is working, what is not and how much it will cost because I do not think Territorians want to pay half a million dollars every year for a group that deals with a small number of people. It would be irresponsible so, of course, I will look at the evaluation and determine whether we can fund that into the future. The five law and justice groups that were up and running are still running; nothing has changed there. We will see what happens with that evaluation, so do not tell lies to Territorians about things that are just not true.

The other myth Labor talks about is this failure of diversion. That could not be further from the truth. Under Labor, diversion was optional. A youth could interact with police or a court, be given diversion, and they could choose not to do it. It was never mandatory. They are the kinds of law changes that we will be fixing this week, which are well overdue. Labor saying that diversion is a big failure because of the changes we made is not true.

I could not believe the Member for Gwoja saying that property crime is down only because Territorians are paying for extra security on their homes. That was just baffling. For eight years Territorians were screaming at the former Labor government to do something about crime, and they were spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on commercial property or home security. That part has not changed in the last 12 months. People are still doing that, and that is their right. The reason property crime has gone down is because offenders are

finally being held to account. There are finally consequences for people who break into your home. Before that, they were dropped home; the police were a taxi service. It was appalling. I cannot believe he said that. It is offensive to Territorians.

I heard the Member for Gwoja lecturing the CLP government about several things, like leadership, what needs to happen and what we must do. We will not be taking any advice from the Labor opposition. If those opposite had a clue and knew what would fix things, they would have done it. They had eight long years, and they did not. The things they were working on did not work and made things much worse.

We will continue to work on the broken system we have been left with. As Attorney-General I have done a huge amount of work in that space, and there is so much more to come. We had to appoint new judges—there is a permanent position coming up soon—and we expanded the prosecution staff to make them permanent instead of casual, which they were under Labor, so that they can work in the courts with certainty. We funded Legal Aid, giving it a five-year deal, which is certainty. They asked the Labor government to do that for years, and it never happened. All that work will continue.

We have demand pressures on the courts, and whilst they are working hard to finalise a lot of matters and the numbers show that there are lots of matters being finalised, there is still so much work to be done because the demand is still there. People are still breaking the law, and we are still working on that.

I am looking at the legislation to expand court hours so that courts and judges can work on the weekend to get through the backlog—the demand that is still there—which we are serious about, because we will do whatever it takes to try to make Territorians feel safer. That is what we were elected to do; we will continue that work.

Today's update is just a small part of what is to come. We have our *Youth Justice Act* rewrite, which you will see later this week, and all the changes that we are making, which is important for not only our youth justice officers who work in the facilities but also the youths. They need to know there are consequences and that they cannot climb on a roof and try to burn a place down; they can be dealt with, because that is just not good enough.

The OC spray trial will come in for 12 months. People across the Territory—women, elderly parents and all sorts of people—have told me that they look forward to getting OC spray. The fact that transit safety officers and public safety officers will be transitioned to the new police public safety officer regime under Police and trained by police, under their banner, driving in police vehicles, is a huge shift in proactive policing in our suburbs and for our houses. Our bus stops have a lot of challenges, with horrific things happening, which the minister for Infrastructure is also working on.

There is so much work to come. We have done a lot in 11 months, and we will not stop; we are only getting started.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, the ministerial report on law and order is an important topic to be speaking on. The punitive approach those opposite are taking to law and order, rather than looking at a holistic approach for the Northern Territory, is disappointing. Members on the other side have politicised the issue of children, many who come from poverty and disadvantage.

Instead, we hear about locking up kids and putting spit hoods on them. There was a royal commission into that a few years ago. At the time the Liberal government—Scott Morrison and Malcolm Turnbull—did not fund a cent into the royal commission recommendations that were supposed to be implemented.

I hope everyone here reflects on what they have been talking about today, because we need a holistic approach to health, education, justice, housing and the long-term effects to ensure a safer Territory for all.

Reducing crime is done through effective preventative measures. Crime affects not only the individuals and families but also the social fabric and economic health of our communities. Although law enforcement plays a vital role in responding to crime—all the members of the CLP have spoken about responding to crime—we need to fix the issue before a young person gets in touch with the justice system, so we are not having to respond to crime in the first place. True safety and security is about preventing crime in the first place.

Strengthening community engagement is a focus that the government should have; blaming everyone else—as the Chief Minister has by calling everyone apologists because they do not agree with her—is not the way to go about it.

We have experts in the field who understand the deep issues of crime in the Northern Territory. If you needed an electrician to see you at your house, you would not send in just anyone to fix the problem. You would get an electrician because they are an expert in that field. I would not call the Member for Barkly to come and fix my house unless he was an electrician, because he is not …

Mr Edgington: My son is.

Mr YOUNG: His son is, but he is not …

Mr Edgington: My son is; I will bring him with me.

Mr YOUNG: I would call your son because he is an expert in the field. It is the same for preventive measures.

It takes a long-term approach. We have seen LDM agreements working with many Aboriginal communities on their community aspirations; however, it takes time to see those outcomes.

I am sure you are all aware of the Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement that was signed in 2018 between the Anindilyakwa Land Council and the Northern Territory Government. This has empowered people there to take control over key services, including justice and rehabilitation, housing and local government, as the Member for Barkly would know as the Local Government minister. Investing in long-term solutions is the way to reduce crime.

We are just starting to see the statistics of people being in touch with the justice system now. It has taken roughly six to seven years from 2018 when the LDM agreement was signed to see those outcomes because it takes time to implement programs and work with the community to understand what it wants.

The community at Groote Eylandt set up a healing centre, which is a culturally appropriate community-based residential facility for young men, offering an alternative to imprisonment. That is the type of program we want to see …

Mr Edgington: We are delivering.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up on the interjection by the Member for Barkly agreeing that is what we need to see …

Mr Edgington: I said that is what we are delivering.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mr YOUNG: Member for Barkly, that is great if you are delivering it. You are the one interjecting saying that you are implementing those programs, but I have not seen any proof of that.

The reality is the agreement was signed in 2018, and we now see the outcomes of that. We have also seen Community Court, which is a platform for Aboriginal leaders and community members to engage with the justice system to enhance justice responses and community safety. Embedded in that are the law and justice groups that the Member for Barkly continues to talk about. They are the types of initiatives the Northern Territory needs to provide a platform for leaders and community members to engage with the justice system and enhance justice responses and community safety through local decision-making agreements.

With these initiatives, as I said before, we have seen remarkable results. In 2018 when the agreement was signed, there were about 346 youth crimes against property or a person. In 2021–22 that number had fallen to 17. These are the types of initiatives we should be working with communities on to ensure a reduction in crime.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

NOTICES

Mr MALEY (Corrections): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 31.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 32.

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Gaming Control Amendment (Community Benefit Fund) Bill 2025, Serial 30.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 28.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Lands, Planning and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 34.

Mr YAN (Logistics and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 33.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion calling on the Northern Territory Government to:

1. acknowledge the findings and recommendations of the coronial inquest into the death of Kumanjayi Walker and the impact of this tragedy on his family, the Warlpiri people and the wider community of Yuendumu

2. commit to implementing all of the recommendations from the inquest in full, in consultation with Aboriginal communities

3. establish a community-led oversight and implementation group including Aboriginal elders, legal experts and community advocates to ensure transparency and accountability

4. acknowledge Northern Territory police officers' work in challenging and complex circumstances and that strengthened health and wellbeing support should be prioritised

5. reinstate funding to the Northern Territory Police anti-racism review to ensure Northern Territory Police is properly supported to address any systemic cultural issues within the force

6. call for a pilot program in Yuendumu to be co-designed with traditional owners and leaders to restructure local governance and service delivery based on kinship and cultural authority as a model for other remote communities.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion condemning the Finocchiaro CLP government for failing to address the crime crisis in Alice Springs.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion calling on the Finocchiaro CLP government to work with the community and businesses of Alice Springs to develop a strong economic vision for the town to inspire and generate business confidence and certainty.

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

1. acknowledge the importance of population growth to the Northern Territory's economic future

2. urge the CLP government to outline its clear plans to grow the Territory population, beyond platitudes and hollow commitments.

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

1. recognise the severe negative impacts of secondary supply of alcohol and illicit substances on community residents, homes and businesses

2. call on the CLP government to address the links between health, crime, violence and child protection issues associated with substance abuse.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion calling on the Assembly to call on the CLP government to develop and implement a Territory night-time economy strategy which supports and enhances visitor experiences, events and activities and after-hours businesses.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present an amended notice for General Business notice number 2 standing in my name to move that this Assembly:

1. recognises that all members of this Assembly have firmly committed to addressing domestic, family and sexual violence as a priority

2. acknowledges that domestic, family and sexual violence is our true crime and safety crisis and that this crisis disproportionately impacts on Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory

3. recognises the findings of the coronial inquest into the deaths of Kumarn Rabuntja, Kumanjayi Haywood, Miss Yunupingu and Ngeygo Ragurrk, which highlight urgent reforms needed to protect Aboriginal women and children from domestic, family and sexual violence and ensure victims are seen and heard

4. commits to fully resourcing and implementing all recommendations of the Coroner arising from these inquests as a matter of urgency

5. directs the Attorney-General to provide a report to this Assembly on an update to the implementation progress on the recommendations after six, 12 and 18 months

6. further commits to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities and frontline services to ensure effective implementation of these reforms

This Assembly stands united in addressing the domestic, family and sexual violence crime and safety crisis, and ensuring all women and children are safe, protected and supported.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I will move a motion regarding Commonwealth oversight into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in police and prison custody. I will move that this Assembly calls on the Commonwealth Government to urgently establish a national independent body with the resources and power to investigate, report, monitor and enforce change in relation to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in police and prison custody in Australia.

QUESTION TIME

Law and Order Policies

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

The justice system is in a state of crisis, and the president of the Criminal Lawyers Association said that the court system is entirely overwhelmed. The NT Police Association said that an overload of remand prisoners in the Palmerston watch house is officially out of control. Meanwhile, in the first five months of this year compared with the same time last year, assault offences, including domestic violence assaults, are up across the Territory. Sexual offences are up by more than 22%. Property offences were down slightly, but property damages and offences were up by 19%.

You promised Territorians you would fix crime and make the community safer; instead, crime is going up on your watch, and the justice system is bursting at the seams. When will you admit to Territorians that your law and order policies are a failure under your leadership?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, my goodness; what a joke this Labor opposition is. It governed the Northern Territory for 19 of the last 23 years. We have been in government for 11 months, and those opposite are asking why crime is high. I can buy you a mirror, Opposition Leader, because as the first law officer under the previous

government, you as Attorney-General followed by Chansey Paech—your mate sitting behind you—oversaw the worst laws and outcomes …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 1; the Chief Minister has been here long enough and should know to refer to members by their title, not their personal name.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes. Please refer to members by their title, Chief Minister.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I will. Opposition Leader, you, as first law officer and Attorney-General, and your mate, the Member for Gwoja, failed Territorians and failed to keep people safe. You failed to keep children safe and get kids to school. You were also the Education, Aboriginal Affairs and Housing minister. Between both of you, look at the long tragic list of disasters you left behind.

You want to talk about crime. It is our number one priority. This morning I gave a 20-minute speech detailing the reform that is to come with our police public safety officers and making sure that Territorians have more ways to defend themselves with a 12-month OC spray rollout from 1 September. On urgency, we will move youth justice legislation this week. We have the second tranche of youth justice and *Traffic Act* changes coming. The list goes on.

Do you know what we have done in 11 months that you could not do in 20 years, Opposition Leader? Putting the rights of victims above the rights of offenders. Your offender-focused policies and all the apologists who hang out with you should hang their heads in shame, because victims are sick and tired of being put last under Labor. That is why there is a CLP government.

This Opposition Leader wants to cherrypick crime statistics, and she can do that, but across the board when we compare January to May this year with last year, things are turning around. We have turned around a 20-year Labor legacy in 11 months, with robbery across the Territory down by 29%, house break-ins down by 31%, commercial break-ins down by 16% and other theft down by 15%. In Alice Springs DV decreased by 4% and assaults are down by 7% for the same period.

Is it job done? Absolutely not. That is why we are in parliament fighting for people's right to be safe, for our kids and for the future. We know that what we are doing is working, and we will always put the rights of people to be safe above the rights of offenders. To the apologists and the people who want to set criminals free, we say that you have no place in the future of the Territory.

Police Public Safety Officers

Mr KERLE to CHIEF MINISTER

I receive regular complaints from my constituents in Blain about crime and antisocial behaviour in problem public housing sites. These are well-known hotspots for crime and police callouts. Our public housing safety officers play an important role in managing problem public housing, but their powers are limited, and they end up calling 000 and waiting for police to attend anyway.

Can you explain how the introduction of our government's new police public safety officers, which will include the transition of public housing safety officers to sworn police, will help to reduce crime in our public housing areas?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I hope the Opposition Leader is listening to this. She seems not to understand that our government is putting the rights of people to be safe above everything else.

Unlike the Opposition Leader, I know the Member for Blain understands it. People in the electorate of Blain want to be safe when they go to the shop. They want to live safely and for their kids to be safe in the park; they want to live their lives free. They cannot do that after 20 years of Labor.

We have taken strong action and have already passed Declan's law, stronger wanding powers, post-and-boast and ramraid laws and we will pass youth justice laws this week. We have done a lot of legislative reform and backed our police. There is a next phase to what we are doing to make the Territory a safer place to live, work, visit and invest. Part of that is our police public safety officers.

We have auxiliary streams within police; transit officers, who have powers on bus networks; and housing officers, who have powers in housing. Antisocial behaviour in public housing across the Northern Territory is at out-of-control levels. We are doing that work to have a new policy and rules to put in place and hold people accountable for having a home paid for by the taxpayer. Everyone around them should be able to live in peace and not have to deal with the antisocial behaviour that we see too often.

By allowing the transit safety officers and the public housing safety officers the powers they need to support early intervention on antisocial behaviour, we will get better outcomes for all Territorians.

By December this year we will have a new training program, through the police force, which will be a new stream of policing. The transit, housing and auxiliary streams will be trained to have police powers and resources, and they will be tapped into the system. They will not be calling 000 when they have concerns and issues that your constituents are raising, Member for Blain. Police will be turning up.

That will be a great comfort to the community as we will have the PPSOs deployed across the Territory. If you live in Katherine, Tennant Creek or Alice, they will be at bottle shops; they will also be at public housing complexes, spaces and events. They will have important powers which allow them to get the job done. Currently, it is a mishmash, and it is not fair on the hardworking people who do those roles.

For example, our housing officers have limited powers to issue directions or ask for names, and they end up having to call 000. This will circumvent all that and will mean the right people are rocking up the first time with the right powers to be supported by a government which backs them to drive down antisocial behaviour. We support our transit, housing and auxiliary officers as they do important work. We are about to make them an even better, bigger part of our reducing-crime strategy.

Katherine – Crime

Mr YOUNG to CHIEF MINISTER

In the five months to May, compared with the same time last year, total assaults in Katherine went up by almost 30%. There were 624 property offences, including a 25% increase in property damage. Your government's answer to rising crime in Katherine is to move a taxi rank.

You told Territorians, including the people of Katherine, that you would fix crime and make the community safer. When will you get serious about the rising crime in Katherine and not brush it off or dodge talking about it?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, does the member want to talk about brushing it off? I will tell you about someone who brushes things off. It is the lady sitting next to you—the Opposition Leader—who could not be bothered to visit the Coffee Club, the biggest cafe in Katherine and the first thing we see when we drive into that beautiful place after the bridge. There it is—the Coffee Club—with Nikki and her amazing team serving amazing food and beverages all day every day. The Opposition Leader who was in Katherine at the time—I know because I spoke to her shortly before I went to visit Nikki—could not be bothered to stop in there and see how the staff were after being battered and bruised during an offence.

Do not lecture me about crime. You are leading with your chin. It is unbelievable. These are people who sat here for years, failing to deliver for their communities and the broader Northern Territory community, voting time and again to weaken the law and allow offenders more rights than victims. They agreed with the giant $37m payout that went to youth criminals with zero dollars of restitution attached to it for the victims. These are people who are tried-and-tested failures in law and order.

We are a government that is committed to this issue. Our journey has just begun. We are 11 months into a four-year term. We are, with all of our might, supporting Corrections with the master plan as well as supporting the courts and Legal Aid. We would even support NAAJA if it spent more time doing its job instead of worrying about how I do mine.

Members interjecting.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Madam Speaker, listen to the sound of the apologists opposite. You can all go have lunch later after Question Time. Do not worry. You can all talk about how horrible it is that we put criminals in prison. I just could not imagine being at that dinner party.

Work is being done. In Katherine we saw commercial break-ins drop by 36% in that period, and theft dropped by 17%. We have an exceptional team of police there. We have just sent another nine police officers from the latest squad to Katherine. They have been doing amazing, public-facing, proactive policing. They have been doing good, targeted operations with public housing safety officers, with six arrests in one location and two protective custodies. They have been issuing infringement notices and have gone hard on banned drinker orders, with hundreds being issued. They are working with businesses on how they can protect them. There is a lot of work being done. We have not said that it is over; this is just the beginning.

When Territorians have a chance to believe us as a government or those opposite on whether we care about crime, I know who they are picking every day of the week.

Youth Justice Legislative Reforms

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Can you update the Assembly on how the Finocchiaro CLP government is delivering on its commitment to make 2025 a year of action, certainty and security by restoring accountability in the youth justice system? What legislative reforms are being introduced to better protect youth justice officers, ensure victims are prioritised and send a clear message that serious youth offending will no longer be met with weak consequences?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Goyder understands how important it is to put the rights of victims first. He understands that this government is here to protect Territorians. Community safety is our number one priority.

This week we will introduce legislation which will be debated on urgency that will strengthen the *Youth Justice Act*, support frontline staff and hold serious youth offenders to account.

Our *Youth Justice Act* reforms are long overdue. They will be designed to ensure that detention centres are places which are safe, will offer rehabilitation and, more importantly, give the youth justice officers a place where they can work and go home safely. This is about giving the youth justice officers more power and restraints and about removing detention as a last resort. We need to focus on keeping the community safe. The youth justice officers manage volatile, complex behaviours. We want to ensure they have all the tools available to them to do their job safely and effectively and go home to their families.

Youth justice officers will have more authority and discretion. They can do their job knowing that this government has their backs. We support them. They will have the ability to use spit guards and to prevent reasonable escape and damage and disorder. Can you believe that the previous government put laws in place that if someone was escaping from the youth justice facility, the youth justice officers had to sit back and watch while they escaped or damaged property?

We are here to stop that. We are here to ensure that the youth justice officers have the support of the government to stop an escape and stop juveniles breaking and damaging taxpayer property. We want to make sure there will be a consequence for their behaviour. If they are inside a detention centre, they are there for a reason. They will be offered rehabilitation and education, but we will make sure that they do not damage property paid for by the taxpayer and that prison officers go home safe.

The Corrections Commissioner will have clear authority to respond to emergencies, including deploying Corrections officers and police where needed. This is about the safety of officers and of the young people trying to escape. You should see the size of these walls and the razor wire; if we can stop it early, we will stop the damage, so they do not get out of control and hurt themselves or others. There will be a clear chain of command so we know what the response will be in an emergency at a detention centre.

These young offenders will also have their full criminal history considered when they go to court. It is important that community safety is our number one priority. We want to ensure that Territorians can go home and to work safely.

Alice Springs Correctional Services Infrastructure

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

The Chief Minister might have bodyguards to protect her in Alice Springs from violent assaults, but the people of Alice Springs do not. There were 1,026 assault offences against people in Alice Springs in the first five

months of this year, including serious assaults, sexual assaults and robberies. There were 2,001 property offences in those five months, including more than a 22% increase in property damages. This is all under your watch, despite your government's clear promises to keep people of Alice Springs safe and to fix crime.

What are you doing to invest in infrastructure in Alice Springs that will help prevent crime and provide community safety? What conversations have you had with business owners and peak bodies about what you can do as the Infrastructure minister to improve community safety in our town? I know you have just been passed notes by the Chief Minister to do her talking.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting to ask me about statistics on offending, which is directed to the Chief Minister, but I will happily answer where I can and talk about the infrastructure investment in Central Australia to support the community and keep it safe.

We have delivered another 96 beds to the Alice Springs Correctional Centre behind G block to deal with the demand across the justice system. We make no apologies that if you commit an offence, as the Corrections minister said, we will find a bed for you.

Additionally, there are changes with the infrastructure master plan for Corrections in Central Australia. There is a new women's facility being put in at the correctional centre so the women will be outside of the wire, which is a good move. It gives Corrections the ability to provide better services and better targeted treatment programs for women, because whilst women are specifically not high-risk offenders while in custody, their needs are different from men's. This will give Corrections the ability to deliver those all-important services for women.

In addition to that, work is taking place at the old Paperbark facility, providing youth services and bail support accommodation for youths. I talk to businesses all the time, Member for Gwoja. I am out and about in town on a regular basis. I regularly walk through Yipirinya, talking to businesses to see what is going on.

The Chief Minister passed me the crime stats, and I will happily read some because there is good news in the stats. As the Chief Minister said, the work is not done, but the work we have done to date has made a significant difference in Alice Springs. House break-ins are down by 37% for the period from last year, and commercial break-ins are down by 34%—that is, people in their homes experiencing fewer break-ins, less interference in their lives, fewer issues and more people feeling safe in their homes. That reduction in commercial break-ins starts to drive our economy in Central Australia.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The question is: what conversations have you had with business owners about infrastructure investment and improvements? While the Infrastructure minister is at it, if he wants to talk about stats, raise the assault stats. Is he too gutless to do that because he knows they are bad?

Madam SPEAKER: Take a seat, Member for Gwoja. The minister can answer the question.

Mr YAN: Thefts went down by 23%. If we talk about the same period last year, we are back to seeing assaults down by 7%, which is good to see. The DV stats are not where we want to see them. We want to see those continue to go down.

These are early days, 11 months into a four-year term, and we are already making significant changes in regard to crime in our community. People say that they feel safer in their homes and communities. That speaks volumes to me that we are doing the right thing.

Bail Legislation Reform

Mr PATEL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

After eight years of Labor's soft-on-crime policies, the CLP government has taken decisive action, restoring presumption against bail, strengthening youth justice laws and putting victims first. The strongest bail laws in the country are now in place, and we are starting to see the results. House break-ins are down by 31%, robberies are down by 29% and more serious offenders are being held in custody instead of walking free.

Territorians do not just want better statistics; they want to feel safe in their homes.

Mr Paech: They are getting bashed more under you.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mr PATEL: Can the minister update the Assembly on how these reforms are helping to restore safety, confidence and justice across the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I was speaking to some of the Member for Casuarina's constituents at the show, and they were telling me about worries they still have with crime but that things were starting to improve. I think the member makes a good point by mentioning the laws we have changed in a short 11 months.

We have already heard all day today and for the last 11 months that we are putting the rights of victims above the rights of offenders. There is a big difference between this CLP government and the former Labor government. We are backing a lot of the changes we are making, and we are starting to see that work.

Victims and the community feel like the stats are only stats alone. There are so many more things they use to measure feeling safe in the community. Under our laws, more people are being refused bail. This year alone, more than 3,300 people were refused bail. That is 44% more than the same time last year under Labor. Our new laws are working for more people.

Stronger laws mean that more people are being held on remand. The number of people on remand is up by 40% compared with June last year. This shows that serious offenders are now being kept in custody, not being released back into the community. That is important for victims to know. Bail is still being granted under the new laws but with tight scrutiny, and now the courts must be satisfied to a high degree of confidence that offenders will not commit other offences or endanger the community. As a result, we have seen a 44% increase in refusals of bail, compared with the same time last year under Labor.

For the first time in years, we now have more sentenced adult prisoners than prisoners on remand. That is proof our reforms are working after years of Labor's neglect. We have also been developing legislation that will come later in the year to deal with the demand on our court system, because crime is still at levels that we do not accept. That is to increase the operating hours of the court, looking at weekends or later at night to meet that demand.

Time spent on remand is now shorter, despite more remandees. The average time spent on remand is now 136.5 days, which is 7% less than a year ago. There is still a long way to go, but that is still going in the right direction. This suggests the system is processing people more quickly than under Labor, with even higher numbers going through the system. We have already talked at length about the $1.5bn in the budget for Police, Corrections and courts, which is for much-needed work. We are fixing Labor's legacy with CLP action.

This is a year of action, certainty and security. I look forward to bringing in more legislation as we go through the year.

Alcohol-related Offences

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for ALCOHOL POLICY

In the first five months of this year assaults involving alcohol have risen significantly compared with the same time last year, with more than 2,000 offences recorded. This is impacting your own electorate. In Tennant Creek in the first five months of the year offences against people—including assault, sexual offences and harm offences—were up by 11%. Other than scrapping the minimum unit price, which has seen alcohol-involved crime go up, you have done nothing to improve alcohol policy. Will you admit your law and order approach is not working and that you failed Territorians by doing nothing to curb the misuse of alcohol in our community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear such comments from the Member for Daly, given that Labor was in power for eight years and failed to reduce crime and address alcohol-fuelled violence. It destroyed the Territory and made no effort whatsoever. Under Labor we saw increases in alcohol-related offences, with domestic violence out of control across the Northern Territory. In my electorate alone, domestic violence

went up by about 100% under the out-of-touch Labor government. Labor was in government for not only the past eight years but also 19 of the last 23 years.

We have a lot of work to do to fix the mess that Labor left behind. In July 2022 Labor let the Stronger Futures legislation lapse. It had no plan to tackle the alcohol-related issues across the Northern Territory, including in Tennant Creek. We found out that the only thing Labor did …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question is specifically about what the minister is doing about alcohol misuse to keep our community safer. We do not need a history lesson.

Madam SPEAKER: The minister has the call. I think he was being relevant. He has plenty of time to be relevant.

Ms Uibo: Perhaps people in his own electorate asked us to ask this question.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mr EDGINGTON: It sounds as though we have hit a nerve. To put that in context, the catching up that we need to do as a government is extraordinary.

The only thing that Labor did was invest in shares in an alcohol company. It invested in shares …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. It is a serious topic, and we have asked about the minister's policy on the misuse of alcohol. We would appreciate an answer because people in the minister's electorate have asked us to ask this question.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, he is answering the question. It might not be to your taste.

Mr EDGINGTON: We have brought in new laws to tackle nuisance public drinking. Labor removed drinking in public as an offence, just as it watered down many laws.

Labor closed rehabilitation services, so people with addictions had fewer opportunities to set themselves on a new path. In my electorate alone, the former Labor government committed $5m in 2018—seven years ago—to build a new alcohol rehabilitation centre in Tennant Creek to deal with alcohol addiction, treatment and rehabilitation. Those opposite ask what we are doing. We are working on catching up. We have introduced new public drinking laws. I am trying to catch up on that $5m Labor committed nearly seven years ago. I remind Labor members that in the six years after it promised that $5m facility not one shovel hit the ground. That is Labor's history of dealing with alcohol in Tennant Creek.

OC Spray Trial

Mrs CARLSON to CHIEF MINISTER

Many of my female constituents like to keep fit and healthy and enjoy our great outdoor lifestyle at nearby Lee Point and Casuarina Coastal Reserve. Exercising alone in the dark can make women anxious. Many of these women are busy working mums, wives and business owners who have to manage their exercise around their busy schedules. I also have many constituents who do shift work and often have to walk alone in the dark to and from their car.

Can you explain how the introduction of our government's OC spray trial will help to ease the anxiety of my constituents and provide them peace of mind when it comes to personal protection?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know how passionate the Member for Wanguri is about her community. She is on the ground, listening and being part of the community. I hear the feedback she is getting, particularly from Territory women who are being forced to stay inside. It is not okay. We want people enjoying our beautiful, unique Territory lifestyle and being fit and healthy, yet under 20 years of Labor they have been forced to make the decision of, 'Will I be fit and healthy, enjoy our beautiful outdoors and go for a walk, or will I try to keep myself safe and stay home?' That is a choice Territory women should not have to make.

I thank the Member for Wanguri for asking this important question because it is part of the reason we are bringing in the 12-month OC trial from 1 September. We responded to the concern from members of the community, many of whom are Territory women, saying we need more opportunity to defend ourselves if we have to. We do not want anyone to end up being a victim of crime or to have to resort to self-defence, but the stark reality of the situation we inherited from Labor—which was more focused on the rights of offenders and continues to be—is that we must do something different. The OC spray trial is something different.

It will be strictly regulated; it will have a framework and evaluation. From 1 September law-abiding Territorians can purchase OC spray to use for self-defence. This is an important and powerful way for people to take back control of their lives and give people the confidence to take back our public spaces, taking control of our health and wellbeing to be out in our community.

We are excited about this trial. The criminal apologists and Labor continue to be more worried about the offender in this situation and the poor offender being sprayed in the eyes than about anything else. It is unbelievable. The way Labor outlines its priorities is truly gobsmacking. That is not a concern for us; our concern is how we get Territorians enjoying our beautiful, unique lifestyle. This is one way we can put the power back in their hands.

We are looking forward to the trial. Everything is on track for 1 September. Of course, people can purchase the OC spray from existing authorised firearms dealers because they have a strong regulatory process in place for that. This has been trialled in WA; we have picked up the bits from WA that we can look at and learn from in order to conduct this trial safely.

Like the Member for Wanguri, I want to see more Territorians out and about, taking back control of their lives and our streets. That is why we are supporting them with this strong reform to help reduce crime.

Police Retention Bonus

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

Before the election the NT Police Association said it was repeatedly promised that your government's police retention bonus would run over five years. In fact, you are offering the bonus only for this year, which means only 180 officers will receive the bonus while a whopping 1,700 hardworking police officers will miss out. How can any public servant expect to negotiate in good faith with your government over fair and rewarding pay and conditions when you promise one thing, then turn around and do another?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the police retention bonus does not sit with Public Service; it sits with the Police minister, the Chief Minister. As of this year on 3 February, there have been good-faith consent agreement negotiations ongoing with the NTPA. Three offers have been made to the NTPA. Recently, as of 28 July, the final offer was put to the police, and that is now going out to a vote by those members.

That offer provides an average of 3.5% per annum, compounding salary increase of 14.7% over four years, placing the NT Police remuneration package at the top in Australia for constable to senior sergeant and second for superintendent.

We value our police and the hard work they do every day in our communities. We have spoken a lot today about the hard work they do. I spoke in my contribution this morning about the hard work that the police do in Katherine, with the targeted reforms they have been doing to keep my community safe.

Member for Arafura, we look forward to seeing what happens in that vote. The revised offer put to police was the salary increase of 4%, 4%, 3% and 3% over a four-year term; the removal of the proposal to vary the housing entitlement for Darwin; increasing a number of allowances such as overtime, general policing, freight and relocation; and several less significant improvements across those negotiations.

As I said, those negotiations started on 3 February. As of 28 July that has gone out to a vote, and I look forward to the NTPA and all the police having their say. We will hear what happens when the results of that vote are in.

Police Retention Bonus – Supplementary Question

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE
Can you confirm negotiations will continue if the EBA is rejected by the police members?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, if that negotiation is not accepted then it goes to the Police Arbitral Tribunal.

Corrections – Workforce Recruitment

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Building a safer Territory relies on a strong and supported Corrections workforce. I am pleased to report that this past weekend I had the pleasure of joining a Team NT delegation in Auckland as part of our Global Worker Attraction campaign to try to secure supplementary workforce. We had great interest from people wanting to work in our Corrections sector.

Can you update the Assembly on what other progress the CLP government has been making over the past 11 months to strengthen frontline capacity and particularly to improve staff safety? How has, for example, recruitment of experienced officers from other jurisdictions like South Australia and G4S helped to support rehabilitation programs and deliver a safer, more responsive correctional services system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know the Member for Fong Lim is concerned about public safety and the safety of public servants in the Northern Territory.

I am eager to share the update on the significant work underway to support the Corrections workforce which is a professional service. Over the past 11 months we have achieved remarkable progress, with over 200 extra officers recruited to the service. This is because we have increased the capacity of Corrections facilities in Darwin and the Northern Territory. We are laser focused on community safety. That is the number one priority of our government.

Our new officers will ensure that there is a safer facility with more supervision and rehabilitation programs available, with better outcomes for the offenders. We want to break the cycle of offending. Unlike the previous Labor government which just put them in prison and forgot about them, we want to make sure that there are rehabilitation programs available to ensure that the young people and the people in the adult facilities come out with a better opportunity in life.

There have been standout initiatives. Experienced officers from South Australia have come to the Northern Territory on a rotation out of Alice Springs, using their experiences in South Australia and learning from our staff in the Northern Territory, then going back. It is of mutual benefit for both agencies to work together to make staff safer and offer better programs.

Their presence not only boosted the capacity but also strengthened the operational resilience in the Alice Springs Correctional Centre. Additionally, the G4S contract has been signed, which has freed up prison officers to do their job behind the wire. They are professional officers who work behind the wire, and the G4S are experienced officers who do services outside the wire. For example, they do prison escorts where they will drive from the prison to Local Court. They will sit in the Local Court and deal with the prisoners who sit there for the day while they are waiting for their turn in court.

That contract has been extended to enable the G4S staff go to the hospital when an inmate becomes sick; presently, experienced guard officers go and sit with the inmate. G4S can do that, again freeing up the prison officers to go back behind the wire. This will give us a broader campaign. In Alice Springs there are prison officers coming from New Zealand to boost our workforce …

Madam SPEAKER: Your time has expired, minister.

Air Pollution Levels

J DAVIS to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Minister, the EPA operates air quality monitors at Winnellie, Stokes Hill and Palmerston to measure pollutants, including ozone and sulphur dioxide levels. The Palmerston monitor regularly shows harmful spikes during gas plant emissions, yet over the past four days it has recorded zero readings for both pollutants while the other monitors show dangerously high levels.

Palmerston is the closest monitor to Middle Arm. Is it being disabled to hide the pollution levels people are being exposed to? More importantly, how can the community trust they are being told the truth about the air they are breathing? What steps are the government taking to ensure people can access accurate, real-time data, and what options do residents have to independently verify pollution levels in their area?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Northern Territory Environmental Protection Agency is just that; it is an independent agency that works across the Northern Territory with proponents to ensure that they are doing the right things when it comes to their environmental regulations. There are things they must be following to ensure that the environment is not damaged because of any activities undertaken.

I thank the Member for Johnston for the information regarding the air quality that had not been updated. I will find out what is happening regarding that.

More broadly, I can say what our government is doing regarding the economy. We are getting on with driving development in the Northern Territory. We all know that for the last eight years things have ground to a halt, and we need to see development in the Northern Territory. That development needs to be sustainable, and we need to ensure that we are protecting our environment and following all the regulations.

The NTEPA does an exceptional job, but the department also does an incredible job ensuring that all the environmental regulations are being met regarding licensing. Gas was mentioned by the Member for Johnston; in answer to her question, the department has gone onto sites to ensure people are complying with their regulations. It is ensuring that all the environment management plans are being complied with and the people on the ground are doing the right thing. If they do not do the right thing, there are provisions in place to ensure that fines are executed. In the Northern Territory we are making sure …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I think the minister was saying he would follow it up. If he could let me know when that will happen and how, rather than the rest of the speech …

Madam SPEAKER: You do not get two bites of the cherry; I am sorry, Member for Johnston.

Mr BURGOYNE: I understand the Member for Johnston's concern regarding this, and this is why we have the NTEPA and an entire department whose core work is to ensure that when people are conducting industry in the Northern Territory, they are not impacting the environment in a negative way and that, if they do, we will ensure there is a fine in place and that the issues are rectified. That is the work this government is doing to ensure that not only the environment is protected but also we get on with supporting industry. That is what we have heard loud and clear. Things have been too frustrating for many people to do business. We will get on with it, and we have been creating a regulatory environment where things can actually happen whilst ensuring that we are also protecting the environment across the Northern Territory.

Secondary Education Reforms

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

You recently announced action on major reforms to secondary education—an area I am interested in—with one of the most significant changes to our education system in decades. These reforms impact families and thousands of students across the electorate of Fannie Bay. Students, families and schools have long called for a more contemporary and future-focused approach that better prepares young people for work, further study and life beyond school. Could you outline what these reforms involve and how they will improve outcomes for students, setting them up for success after school as well as helping the communities across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fannie Bay previously worked in the department, and she is passionate, as am I, about education. In our year of action, certainty and security, we are putting Territory students and families first by replacing the outdated middle school model in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs with a modern comprehensive secondary system that supports real pathways to real jobs.

The reform will provide a smoother, more stable journey for students from Year 7 to Year 12. It will mean fewer school transitions, more consistent support and greater access to academic and vocational opportunities. We have acted and are delivering major reform to give our students a brighter future which is more aligned with how young people learn.

In Darwin there will be full comprehensive high schools offering Year 7 to Year 12 education at the current Dripstone, Nightcliff, Sanderson and Darwin Middle and High School sites. At Sanderson, we are developing a new specialist trade and technical college for Years 10 to 12, giving students direct vocational pathways into high-demand industries such as construction, engineering and health.

It was a pleasure two weeks ago for the Members for Karama, Wanguri, Sanderson and Casuarina to join me when we gave a media release on our middle school reform. There were a lot of students from the feeder schools at the Sanderson site, and they were excited about their first year in high school next year.

Casuarina Senior College will be transformed into a higher education-focused college, supporting academic pathways into professions that will shape the Territory's economic future. In Palmerston we are establishing two comprehensive high schools across the existing Palmerston College sites at Driver and Rosebery, strengthening local access to quality secondary education.

In Alice Springs I have listened to concerned people, and I am giving them more time in their plan. Changes will begin in Alice Springs in 2027, with a new Year 7 to 12 school at the Centralian Middle School site and a connected trade and flexible education college at Centralian Senior College, designed with local industry.

We are taking a phased approach with full implementation by 2028, which will ensure schools, families and students have the time and support they need to transition with confidence. Whether a student is heading towards university, into a trade or combining both, this reform is about giving them support, flexibility and clear pathways they need to succeed.

That is what we are doing in education, and it has been a pleasure to listen to the people.

Censure of the Chief Minister – Not Accepted

Mr GUYULA: Madam Speaker, I move to censure the government for its gross neglect to consult with Aboriginal leaders, communities and organisations to create a solution to current problems of crime and disadvantage and the implementation of laws and policies that significantly increase incarceration of Aboriginal people in inadequate and dangerous conditions without any focus on addressing underlying issues, rehabilitation or pathway for community healing. These actions by the government are contributing to increasingly unsafe communities across every part of the Northern Territory.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business, is the censure accepted?

Mr EDGINGTON: Madam Speaker, the government does not accept the censure motion. As we previously indicated many times, our government was elected on a platform to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the Territory lifestyle. So far, we introduced a number of laws delivering our package of reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring the lifestyle. We will continue to do that and support Territorians who elected us on that platform.

Madam SPEAKER: The proposed censure motion is not accepted.

Silkwood Acquisition

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

The Territory's parks and reserves are home to some of our most iconic landscapes. They are an iconic part of our Territory lifestyle. They attract visitors from interstate and overseas, support local jobs and protect our unique environment. You recently made me and many Territorians happy with the announcement of

a significant landmark land acquisition for the Territory. Can you update the Assembly on the recent acquisition of the Silkwood estate and explain how this historic move will support the growth of tourism, help restore our Territory lifestyle and deliver long-term benefits for the Territory's economy and environment?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the recent acquisition of the Silkwood estate is an historic milestone in the Northern Territory. This 30,000-hectare parcel of land, equivalent to 15,000 TIO Stadiums, is the largest addition to the Territory's parks and reserves in 25 years. It truly is significant.

This is not just a land acquisition; it is a strategic investment in our economy, environment and future. This is something truly special about our Territory way of life, our identify. We promised Territorians that we would restore what was once a thriving lifestyle and economy. We promised that we would open more places for Territorians to explore our pristine environment, whether it is more places to camp, swim, hunt or head out in the four-wheel drive, as the Member for Goyder loves to do.

When we came to government last year, we acted on these promises. Earlier this month, through our acquisition of the Silkwood estate, we have delivered. By bringing this land back into public hands, we are opening up a wealth of new tourism opportunities, which continues to be one of our most important and fastest-growing industries.

The acquisition lays the foundation for new ecotourism opportunities, more bush camping and walking opportunities. We know how much everyone loves coming to Central Australia to get on the Larapinta Trail; now you may have your own walking trail in the north to go along with the Jatbula Trail in the Katherine and Arnhem electorates. This creates more local jobs, attracts more investment and gives more people reasons to explore the Territory, which everyone in the Chamber loves to do.

The close proximity of the portion of land to Darwin and access to the Stuart Highway makes it an ideal stop for self-driving tourists, benefiting places like the regional town of Adelaide River. I can confirm that it still does a great barra burger.

This acquisition will preserve and protect our flora and fauna in the area, being one of only three places in the Northern Territory where a rare and threatened orchid, *Zeuxine oblonga*, is known to grow. This land is now protected for the long term. It will not be locked away but managed in a way that balances access, tourism and responsible and sustainable development.

We are backing the industries that drive our economy while protecting and restoring what makes the Territory unique. This investment is a testament to this government's commitment to our lifestyle, landscape and liveability, and we are excited to see Territorians reap the benefits for generations to come.

Aboriginal Consultation

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Why will your government not work with Aboriginal leaders, communities and organisations to create solutions to current problems of crime and disadvantage?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, our government is working hard to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the Territory lifestyle after Labor scrapped community government councils in 2008. It is important to recognise that not only did it scrap local government councils in 2008, but in 2005 it scrapped the Northern Territory law and justice strategy. That set the Northern Territory back a number of years. The Aboriginal Justice Agreement was signed 15 years after the Labor government scrapped the law and justice strategy.

To add fuel to the fire, in 2022 the Labor government allowed the Stronger Futures legislation to lapse, causing chaos, putting women and the community at risk and leading to further alcohol-related harm across the Northern Territory.

We are working closely with Aboriginal peak organisations. I co-chair the Northern Territory Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs with Dr John Paterson from APO NT. We are working with Aboriginal peak bodies that include the four land councils. The work being done across the board not only includes the land councils; it includes NAAJA, the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network and Aboriginal Housing NT.

We are working with many organisations in tackling the root causes of crime. We are working through the $4bn housing agreement to tackle housing in remote areas; working on the $1bn investment in education; and working together to deliver the $842m through the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement.

When it comes to working with Aboriginal organisations across the board, we are doing what is needed. We will continue to work across the board when it comes to tackling these issues, so when …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The Member for Mulka asked directly about community leaders in remote communities, not about organisations.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. Please continue, minister.

Mr EDGINGTON: We are working with Aboriginal organisations and leaders across the board. One example is the establishment of the Groote Archipelago Regional Council. We are restoring real decision-making at the local level after leadership and council structures were taken away in 2008. We will continue to work with leaders …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr EDGINGTON: … across the board when it comes to dealing with local government, restoring leadership and building those structures to work with government in every remote area across the Northern Territory.

Remote Housing

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Labor opposition talks a big game regarding supporting our remote areas, yet the statistics show this to be a shallow claim. For example, the Finocchiaro CLP government is continuing to deliver its commitment to tackle the root cause of overcrowding, with 222 new homes built in remote communities across the Territory. In comparison, under Labor only 206 homes were delivered in 2023–24.

Can you tell us how this remote housing program is delivering meaningful change across the bush? What is the impact better housing has for people who have spent years living in overcrowded homes?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: We are getting commentary from within the Chamber. The minister will be heard in silence, or there will be more warnings and more people asked to leave the Chamber.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Karama is correct in that our government is continuing to deliver our commitment to tackle the root causes of crime and overcrowding in communities. Yes, we delivered 222 new homes in remote communities.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! It will be good.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, that is good.

Mr PAECH: I genuinely care about the Member for Barkly and his good work …

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr PAECH: Standing Order 1; I do not want him to mislead parliament. The reporting period has been 12 months, so it has not been the CLP …

Madam SPEAKER: Sit down, Member for Gwoja; there is no point of order. I think you have run out of points of order. We are at the end of Question Time.

Mr EDGINGTON: I know that the Member for Gwoja is upset about this because we are delivering a record 222 homes in remote areas. I think it was at Estimates when the Member for Gwoja was talking about remote housing and claiming that he had a record of delivering remote houses. Today I am here to announce that we have delivered 222 homes in remote communities. In fact, the federal Labor government recently labelled that a record for the number of homes we have delivered. The federal government said that in its media release. The Member for Gwoja is trying to accuse me of misleading, but it was the federal government that said we have delivered 222 homes compared with 206 delivered by the Labor government.

Members interjecting.

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Goyder, I know what you will say. The noise coming from the opposition is not acceptable. The next person who yells out will spend time reflecting outside the Chamber.

Mr EDGINGTON: Through the joint Northern Territory and Australian Government $4bn 10-year investment, up to 2,700 homes will be built to improve living conditions and reduce overcrowding. A further 48 homes are under construction and scheduled for completion in late 2025 or early 2026.

As the Member for Karama mentioned, this represents an increase on the 206 homes delivered in 2023–24. In our year of action, certainty and security we are achieving real progress in improving housing in the bush to reduce overcrowding and lift living conditions.

As the Member for Barkly I have seen firsthand the impact that better housing has for people who have spent years living in overcrowded homes. Recently, I travelled to Ampilatwatja to inspect eight newly completed homes. It was clear how much this investment will mean to local families. While in the community I spoke to Mr Geoffrey Morton, one of the traditional owners and the chairperson of the Ampilatwatja Health Centre. He told me that these houses were a fantastic development for the community and provided more space for families.

This initiative is a strong example of what is possible when governments work hand in hand with Aboriginal housing organisations and land councils.

This is a game changer for the Territory. The joint funding is delivering and will continue to deliver in remote areas.

Law and Justice Groups

Mr PAECH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

You scrapped funding for law and justice groups despite the fact they have been helping to reduce crime in our communities. You scrapped funding for programs to divert young people from crime. When will you admit that your law and order regime is dangerously failing and that you are likely causing more harm in our communities? How many law and justice groups in remote communities have you bothered to visit since becoming Attorney-General? How many community organisations in remote communities that work to combat crime and antisocial behaviour have you bothered to meet with?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Member for Gwoja pretends that the CLP government has scrapped law and justice group funding because it was actually Labor that scrapped it. There was no continued funding for law and justice groups under Labor's forward budgets; it was cliff funding. It all fell off when we came to government. I do not know what Labor would have done had it won, but the law and justice groups were not funded.

Like I said before, the five current law and justice groups have just commenced; they have only been in operation for a short time since the first Aboriginal Justice Agreement was signed many years ago. We are looking at that data. When we have a full evaluation, which will happen later this year after enough time has passed to see if the law and justice groups are working well in the community and are making a difference to reduce crime, we will look at it.

This is important information for Territorians to understand: the law and justice groups cost Territorians half a million dollars per group. It is a significant investment for Territorians. As Attorney-General I will not just

sign a cheque for more to be expanded and for more law and justice groups across the Territory if we do not know whether they are working. This is a new program for the Territory, and we need to make sure we get it right if we continue to invest in those groups heavily …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. I asked the member a direct question. You are criticising these law and justice groups. How many have you met with in remote Aboriginal communities? How many have you spoken with?

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, point taken.

Ms BOOTHBY: I cannot believe he said that I am criticising law and justice groups. I am not; I am saying to Territorians that we need to make sure they are working.

If something is working well, Territorians will be prepared to invest in it and, as Attorney-General, I will be prepared to sign that cheque to make it happen because we want to reduce crime. Unlike Labor, which was offender focused the whole time, we are putting the rights of victims first. That is why we are slowing law and justice groups to the pace of evaluation …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: It better be good.

Mr PAECH: It is good; I promise. Standing Order 110; relevance. Law and justice group members are Territorians. How many have you met with, Attorney-General?

Madam SPEAKER: No, it is not good! Take your seat.

Mr PAECH: How many have you met with?

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Member for Gwoja. You cannot use a point of order to introduce new content and give your own speech. Minister, you will finish your answer with no interruptions.

Ms BOOTHBY: I pick up on the questioning about visiting law and justice groups. Labor members do not understand that we work as a big team, which is different from them. We used to do that in opposition; we travelled around the Territory, and we do that as government. That does not mean we all have to be in the same place at the same time and visit every place …

Mr Paech interjecting.

Mr Mackay interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: I said no interruptions. Member for Goyder, you can sit down too.

Ms BOOTHBY: We have capable ministers who travel across the Territory. The Barkly is well represented; it is Minister Edgington's home, so of course he represents it. We have Alice Springs, Katherine and across the Territory. We go across the Territory and make no apologies for doing that. We work as a team, which means we talk to each other all the time and get along. You do not get along over there, and you are always infighting. You always have, which is probably why you did not govern for the Territory; you were governing for yourselves; but we are a team.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: There will be no more interjections across the Chamber.

Borroloola Sports and Cyclone Shelter

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

Supporting regional communities with infrastructure that keeps people safe while also strengthening local life is a smart and practical approach, particularly in areas prone to extreme weather. The people of Borroloola have long advocated for better facilities that can serve as community hubs and emergency shelters. Can you update the Assembly on how the CLP government is delivering on that vision and what the recent completion of the Borroloola Sports and Cyclone Shelter means for the community in terms of safety and everyday use?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is great to see this new cyclone shelter completed in Borroloola. My close friend, the Member for Barkly, is happy to see this project completed. He said that he would run on this one to get the job over the line. There were updates that had to be done, which made the end part of the project a bit more complex, but I am glad to see that it is finished. The Member for Barkly is a strong supporter of the communities in his region.

I am proud to say that the CLP government has delivered the brand-new $11.7m Borroloola Sports and Cyclone Shelter. It is a facility that is ready for action, whether it is a game day or cyclone season. We all know the regional weather events in parts of the Territory. This facility is an impressive build in the heart of the community.

This is not just a basketball court with a few extras; it is a purpose-built dual-use facility that can house up to 600 people during an emergency. When the skies are clear it is a place for sports, fundraising, markets and community events which support the community and region around Borroloola. It is built to the highest cyclone safety standards. This shelter means locals do not have to choose between safety and community life; they can get both. It can sustain a community when we have inclement events and cyclones. People do not have to be displaced; there is somewhere safe for them to stay, should they wish to remain in their community.

This is another example of the CLP delivering what matters—practical, smart solutions and regionally focused infrastructure that builds resilience and brings people together. Multi-use facilities are not just a smart solution; they are a great return on investment. Instead of building separate facilities for different needs, we are delivering infrastructure that works harder, lasts longer and provides year-round value to the community. The facility is finished, open and already making a difference.

We funded this project alongside the McArthur River Mine Community Benefits Trust, with $9.8m from the Northern Territory Government delivered through a grant to the Roper Gulf Regional Council and another $1.9m from that trust. This was local jobs, local input and local benefit. The people of Borroloola now have a safe place to shelter and a community-centric place to connect and enjoy.

The CLP government is proud to deliver infrastructure purpose built for the community that supports the community in its future development.

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

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Law and Order

Continued from earlier today.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, on this side of the Chamber we all know that the opposition and crossbench members' roles are to hold the government to account. Bless them; they are trying their best. It is cute—a bit like a bunch of preschoolers on a soccer field.

I have a question for them; yes, it is rhetorical because I do not want to listen to them any more than I have to. When will those opposite start listening to all Territorians? On this side of the Chamber, that is what we have been doing. When it comes to decision-making, we are listening to the majority, not the minority, which again is why we are here and they are there. When will they stop cherrypicking their weak generic statements? When will they stop embarrassing themselves by continually attempting to throw this government under the bus for taking action that is having an impact?

The reality is they will not listen to all Territorians. They have proven that over 19 of the last 23 years. That is why Labor currently sits as a four-member opposition in this Chamber. This morning the Leader of the Opposition was on the radio with Katie Woolf saying that the incident at the Royal Darwin Show over the weekend was shocking and that every Territorian was gobsmacked by the incident.

I could walk out into the mall now and speak with every Territorian and could almost guarantee that at least 95% of the people would not be shocked or gobsmacked that this incident occurred over the weekend …

Ms Uibo: It is not normal; it is not acceptable.

Mrs ZIO: It is not normal, but they are not shocked or gobsmacked by the incident.

Madam SPEAKER: There will be no interaction between members on the floor. You talk to me. You are on a warning, Opposition Leader. Your chitchat and constant interjections are not okay.

Mrs ZIO: Territorians walk past shocking and gobsmacking events every day, but I can assure those sitting opposite they are not shocked and gobsmacked. This kind of behaviour has been accepted in the community for so long now that Territorians are almost immune to it.

This one statement by the Leader of the Opposition should tell Territorians that time and again the opposition remains out of touch with the real world in the Northern Territory. Those opposite continue to fail to see how their inaction has resulted in lawless behaviour.

If that does not trigger any nerves, I can tell you that the Leader of the Opposition also went on ABC *News Breakfast* this morning in an attempt to throw the current government under the bus for Labor's failures. When the presenter asked about Labor's loss at the election last year and questioned whether it was because Labor did nothing for Territorians regarding crime and community safety, the Leader of the Opposition admitted that it is clear that crime and community safety is the number one priority for Territorians and that they felt that the former government did not listen to them. Let us not sugarcoat this: Territorians did not feel as though the former government did not listen to them; the former government did not listen to them.

The Leader of the Opposition went on to talk about how the CLP government now must listen to Territorians and find a way forward for the Territory, particularly when it comes to justice and keeping our community safe. Thank you for your advice, Leader of the Opposition. It is nice to hear that you may have evolved from the last eight years of government and are learning. We are listening.

Recent years have seen many tragic incidents that have galvanised the community demand for action. We responded by introducing the strongest bail laws in Australia, along with many other legislative changes. These changes are not made lightly. They are direct answers to the urgent call for accountability and public protection after system failures pitched innocent lives into danger.

This is not merely about funding and law changes; the reality is stark. Crime rates surged severely under the former Labor government. Drug and alcohol abuse, repeat offenders being released with insufficient bail conditions and social breakdown have all contributed to unacceptable outcomes in our towns and outstations.

Our government will not accept business as usual. We have boosted police numbers, improved remote police infrastructure and are rolling out major upgrades to the youth justice system.

This government is on the side of victims and law-abiding Territorians. Our communities have endured years of upheaval and uncertainty, but today, thanks to the decisive action of the Finocchiaro CLP government, we are finally seeing signs of progress. Offenders are being held to account and, crucially, victims are being put first.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Territory Coroner Inquest Findings

Ms CAHILL (Prevention of Domestic Violence): Madam Speaker, I deliver the ministerial report on the whole-of-government response to the findings of the Territory Coroner Inquests into the Deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurrk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood [2024] NTLC 14, notified on 28 July 2025.

I move that the report be noted.

I am pleased to speak on the Finocchiaro CLP government's response to the report handed down into the tragic domestic violence-fuelled deaths of those four Aboriginal women. The lengthy report, published 17 months after the coronial inquiry commenced and six months after the last hearing was held, contained 35 recommendations. It is not comfortable reading, nor should it be. It not only details the circumstances in which the four women who were the subject of the coronial died but also provides a summary of the horrific deaths of 68 other, mainly Aboriginal women, murdered by men who were supposed to love and care for them over the preceding 25 years.

The retelling of how each of those women were lost by their families is confronting and a stark reminder that Northern Territory Aboriginal women are disproportionately impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence. Approximately 89% of domestic, family and sexual violence victims are Aboriginal women. Aboriginal women are 35 to 40 times more likely to be hospitalised because of family violence and, most tragically, eight times more likely to lose their lives to domestic, family and sexual violence.

It is also a sad reminder that domestic, family and sexual violence has plagued the Northern Territory for far too long. It has destroyed lives, eroded communities, changed how people deal with challenges in their relationships and created generations of children who believe that violence in a relationship is normal when it most definitely is not.

It was then, with some hope and agreement of my parliamentary colleagues, that I as the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence tasked the Department of Children and Families to coordinate a whole-of-government response to the report and determine how the Coroner's 35 recommendations differed from what had come before and so may provide the imprimatur to take a new approach and guidance on how to approach the challenge differently and to find a new path that would finally see a shift in the outcomes for our community.

To that end, careful consideration was given to all 35 of Coroner Armitage's recommendations. Extensive consultation was undertaken across all areas of government as well as with key stakeholders on the recommendations and the report from which they were derived, examined and dissected in search of solutions not previously explored.

In anticipation of that consultation and in recognition that a longitudinal approach would be needed if the dial were ever to shift, the Finocchiaro CLP government announced an unprecedented long-term commitment of $36m dedicated domestic, family and sexual violence funding per year ongoing, demonstrating our commitment to addressing domestic, family and sexual violence today and into the future.

I did not have a preconceived idea of the outcome of cross-government consultation, but I must confess, I had hoped—given the time it had taken from the commencement of the inquiry to the publication of the report—there would be a recognition that more of the same was simply not an option. I did not expect the recommendations would be a panacea to the scourge that is domestic, family and sexual violence, especially having reviewed the recommendations myself. I found them somewhat underwhelming. Neither did I expect, as some would have us believe, the recommendations would articulate a recipe that if scrupulously followed would resolve the domestic, family and sexual violence crisis faced by our community.

Nonetheless, I remained hopeful that through the consultation process something would be found that I had missed. I did not anticipate that following the extensive consultation process it would be identified that 24 of the 35 recommendations made in the report related to programs or processes that were already in place—some for a long period of time, others for lesser periods and others having been completed and transformed into a new iteration.

For example, recommendation 1 of the 35 recommendations proposed a permanent domestic, family and sexual violence ICRO—Interagency Coordination and Reform Office—that would lead consistent and evidence-based domestic, family and sexual violence policy and practice across government agencies. I appreciate that the Coroner is a busy person and may have missed this, but the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction division—which has whole-of-government responsibility for domestic, family and sexual violence policy, monitoring and evaluations in key programs, essentially taking on the work that was commenced by the domestic, family and sexual violence ICRO—was established in October 2023.

Recommendation 2 proposed the establishment of a peak body. In 2021–22 the Department of Children and Families entered into a five-year agreement with the Northern Territory Council of Social Service for a domestic, family and sexual violence officer to enable sector coordination, advocacy and support for domestic, family and domestic violence services across the Northern Territory. This agreement runs until 2026–27. In addition, the domestic, family and sexual violence training and resource centre provides support to the sector.

Recommendation 3 in relation to workforce planning similarly articulated work that is already being done under the NT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce and Sector Development Plan.

Recommendation 4 is covered by community alcohol management plans, which are facilitated under the community-led alcohol harm reduction federal funding agreement, with the Australian Government providing an additional $14.2m over two years.

Recommendation 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33 and 34 similarly refer to programs and services already in place.

Overall, 22 of the recommendations were supported by the Finocchiaro CLP government; 10 were accepted in principle; and three were not supported, being 1, as it is now redundant, and 32 and 35 as they are already accommodated in existing processes.

Of the 22 supported, four did not relate to existing programs and have been progressed. The best example of the four new programs resulting from recommendations not relating to existing programs or services was the introduction of the Circuit Breaker Program, which addressed recommendation 15. As I have now reported to this Assembly on several occasions, Circuit Breaker is designed to break the cycle of violence through early intervention reaching young people at risk of entering the youth justice system, working with them and their families. As of this week, 225 young people have engaged with the program, with 94 of those contacts resulting in direct referral to domestic violence, health and education services to provide intensive family assistance for the young person and their family.

In conjunction with this, the domestic, family and sexual violence co-responder program, which was a time-limited pilot program, has been morphed into the new domestic, family and sexual violence early intervention and co-responder service. Tackling domestic violence requires close collaboration with our service delivery partners.

This model ensures domestic, family and sexual violence specialists work alongside the Northern Territory Police Force and child protection staff to follow up with victim–survivors and people who use violence, ensuring risk is assessed and services are activated as quickly as possible. This follow-up is crucial to breaking the cycle of domestic violence. Trialled in Alice Springs, the program is now being expanded to Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.

The commitment to this program is evidence of our Finocchiaro CLP government's commitment to ensure programs that work and deliver results are maintained. Sadly, overall, the recommendations made were uninspiring, with only a small proportion of the recommendations leading to the implementation of a new and innovative approach or the continuation of what had initially been a trial program.

In considering how such a long-anticipated report failed so dismally to hit the mark, I look to the approach of the previous Coroner Greg Cavanagh, when investigating the loss of other women in similar circumstances, to see whether this was simply the way things are done in the realm of coronial inquiries, with long processes, lengthy reports and an extensive list of recommendations. I found that Mr Cavanagh's investigations were undertaken in a timely manner. His reports were concise, and his recommendations were short, sharp and clearly defined.

This is compared with Coroner Armitage's approach, which has been protracted, resulting in lengthy reports delivered in a manner seeming to lack the humility one might expect from an officer of the court, more focused on the reveal rather than the result. Most notable was in comparing the coronial approaches on this occasion and the process undertaken—protracted as it was—was an opportunity to provide a framework for true reform in this space but, for reasons that were unclear, Coroner Armitage chose not to do so.

Throughout the report Coroner Armitage references the impact of the cultural pressure placed on the four women who were the subject of this coronial. In paragraph 385, reference is made to how one of the four women was pressured by the matriarch of the family of the man who ultimately killed her to stay in the relationship and the community because she was culturally connected to him through her child.

Possibly the most confronting statement in the report appears at paragraph 384 where the Coroner records:

> *I heard extensive evidence about the enormous pressure placed upon Miss Yunupingu by members of Mr Marika's family, in relation to staying in or returning to the relationship, as well as about not speaking to Police or giving evidence at Court about his violence. I heard evidence that Mr Marika's family were known to physically return her to the relationship when she left the area to escape it.*

When looking to break the cycle of domestic, family and sexual violence much is said about coercive control and the many forms it takes, but rarely is culture mentioned as being a tool in the coercive control arsenal. Coroner Armitage was astute enough to observe in paragraph 375 of the report that for an Aboriginal woman, using culture to pressure her to stay in the relationship is a form of coercive control; however, she was not brave enough to call out the behaviour in her recommendations which could have paved the way to empower communities to take a stand on this sensitive and challenging issue.

Similarly, there were many references in the report that noted, in order for change to occur, Aboriginal communities must look within and be empowered to work to address the issue of domestic violence, with one witness stating on page 105 of the report:

> *… I think that's part of the reason why communities are so disengaged at the moment and why there's some turmoil in the community is because the elders have been disempowered.*

Going back to the introduction of the report where the 68 women lost to domestic violence in the preceding 25 years were remembered, the Coroner noted that for many of these crimes there were witnesses to the crime who more often than not did nothing to stop the deadly assaults. In spite of all of this—the noting of the importance of local people being actively involved in shaping local solutions to prevent violence and to respond assertively when it occurs—not one recommendation was made as to how this might be facilitated.

Territorians have had enough. Domestic, family and sexual violence is unacceptable in any form in any community or culture. Territorians deserve to feel safe, and those impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence must have access to the right support at the right time.

Rebuilding the economy, reducing crime and restoring our lifestyle is built upon an integrated system that addresses the root causes of violence and keeps families safe. The Finocchiaro CLP government is building a system that is stronger, more accountable and compassionate. We owe that to the memory of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurrk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood. We owe it to all Territorians.

We are taking an evidence-based, outcome-focused approach that facilitates sustainable integrated services, early intervention, community collaboration and, most critically, accountability for perpetrators. We are working closely with the Australian Government to ensure that funding and policy align with the unique needs of our Territory communities.

Ending domestic, family and sexual violence is not the work of government alone, however. It requires all of us—families, friends, neighbours and community leaders—to speak out, support survivors and challenge harmful behaviours. Similarly, the Northern Territory is not alone in facing this crisis. Across Australia and the world, governments are grappling with how to end gender-based violence.

We are proud to be leading with innovative, community-led solutions. We are committed to a new and comprehensive roadmap that the department has developed. This will commence once consultation has been finalised with key stakeholders. Through authentic collaboration we can ensure that funding decisions are strategically aligned with the needs of both the community and the sector, thereby contributing to a safe and more resilient Territory.

Our vision is clear: a Northern Territory where communities are safe, respected and free from violence. That is the future we are building together.

We must heed the words of the Territory's previous Coroner, Greg Cavanagh, who, in his findings into the domestic violence-related death of Jodie Palipuaminni in 2006, observed:

> *Finally, there is much to appreciate and respect in the way Aboriginal people live their lives in remote communities in the Northern Territory. However, the present day gross violence perpetrated on some women in such communities by some men must be recognised and something done about it.*

Two decades passing since this observation was made with little, if any, change is unacceptable. Those in a position to take action to influence change must do so. There is no more time for rhetoric; a stand must be taken.

As the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence I am willing to take a stand. I am willing to look at how we have been addressing domestic, family and sexual violence and make the changes required to make a difference; to work with our community to understand how we have arrived at this dreadful circumstance; to take measured, well-considered steps to reverse this vicious and destructive cycle of violence; to hold those who perpetrate violence in their relationships to account; and, most importantly, to work with communities to address the root causes and equip them to take decisive action to address those root causes in their communities.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I speak on the Northern Territory Government's response to the Coroner's recommendations.

I am extremely disheartened at the language and commentary by the minister who claims to be responsible for Prevention of Domestic Violence. Her comments that the coronial recommendations are uninspiring is incredibly disrespectful and disappointing. If this government had bothered to meet with the families of those four women, it would have heard a different story.

The testimony of family members, frontline organisations and Northern Territory police in those inquests was incredibly important. To have a minister say that all of that is uninspiring and take aim and attempt to demonise and throw the domestic violence sector under the bus is nothing short of disgraceful.

In speaking on the coronial inquest into the domestic and family violence report, I acknowledge that more needs to be done. We need courageous action. Domestic and family violence is not new in the Northern Territory and, tragically, it is not rare. What the Coroner laid bare was not just a record of individual tragedies; it was a damning indictment of a system that continues to fail the people it is supposed to protect.

The inquest showed what many of us have known for far too long: victims, overwhelmingly women—overwhelmingly Aboriginal women—are being let down at every stage, whether it is government responses, protections or support services that are stretched to capacity. Culturally safe community-led responses are still the exception, not the rule.

These are not just system failures; they are human failures. Every name in that report was a person, a mother, a daughter, a friend, a family member or a cousin, and behind those names are families, communities and children who carry that trauma for the rest of their lives. We must stop treating domestic and family violence as someone else's issue, a private matter, a cultural problem or something that happens 'out there' in the bush. This is a Territory-wide crisis, and unless we respond at every level—from police stations to parliament—we will keep burying victims.

The Coroner's report was comprehensive and made clear recommendations about resourcing, accountability, prevention and the need for greater cultural safety. We cannot afford for these recommendations to sit on a shelf or be ignored, as the minister just said. We need to plan for full implementation, co-designed with Aboriginal communities, with frontline services like our domestic and family violence sector and with survivors. We need the political will to see it through.

We will not fix domestic and family violence by locking up more people. That response comes too late. We must invest in prevention, the early warning signs, safe housing, trauma recovery and building up families before they reach crisis point. We must back community-led programs that are already working and programs designed with culture, kinship and connection at their core. We cannot punish our way out of pain. We cannot rebuild if we are not taking on the evidence and lived experience, as this coronial inquest does.

The inquest was a mirror held up to the system, but it was also a map. It shows us what needs to change. The only question left is whether the government will have the courage to follow it. For the women who have died, the families who have been shattered and the children still living in fear, we must all act not just with words but with commitment, because anything less is betrayal. Every recommendation in this coronial has been carefully designed to be fully achievable and practical, even within the fiscal constraints the government often cites. By agreeing to implement these recommendations, the government would save not only money in the long term but also, most importantly, Territorian lives.

There is a number of standout recommendations for me. Recommendation 2 is to establish a Northern Territory peak body to represent the sector on a national level. One policy person funded at the Northern Territory Council of Social Service is not a peak. Establishing a Northern Territory peak body to represent the domestic, family and sexual violence sector on a national level is essential for ensuring the Territory's unique challenges and voices are heard in national policy and funding decisions.

Unlike other jurisdictions, the Northern Territory does not have a dedicated peak organisation solely focused on domestic, family and sexual violence. This limits the sector's ability to advocate collectively, influence national reform and secure tailored resources that reflect the Territory's geographic, cultural and service delivery realities.

A dedicated Northern Territory peak body would provide leadership, coordination and a strong unified voice for frontline services, victim–survivors and communities. It would strengthen collaboration across the sector, support workforce development and ensure the Territory is represented in those conversations about best practice, system reform and funding priorities. Most importantly, it would empower those working to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence to shape the policies and systems that affect the work and lives of the people they serve.

Recommendation 11 is to provide PARt training to all current police officers, auxiliaries and new recruits, including emergency call centre workers. PARt training was on offer to all current police officers, auxiliaries and new recruits and is a critical step in improving frontline responses to domestic, family and sexual violence across the Northern Territory.

First responders are often the first point of contact for victim–survivors, and how they respond can significantly impact safety, trust in the justice system and a willingness to seek help. PARt training equips police and emergency personnel with the knowledge and skills to respond in a culturally safe, trauma-informed and victim-centred way. This helps to ensure consistency in practice, reduce the risk of further harm and de-escalate conflict and connect individuals where appropriate. Embedding this training in the entire system at all levels signals a commitment to professionalism and compassionate and effective policing that is also responsive to the realities of domestic violence in the Territory.

Recommendation 17 is to replicate the specialist DFSV court in Alice Springs and other regions of the Northern Territory. This is imperative. It improves justice outcomes for victim–survivors. The specialist courts are designed to provide a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approach that prioritises victim safety, holds perpetrators accountable and reduces reoffending through tailored interventions that foster better coordination between the justice system, support services and community organisations.

Expanding this model to other high-needs regions would ensure that more Territorians, particularly those in remote and regional communities, can access a justice system that understands the complexity of domestic, family and sexual violence and responds appropriately. It would also help close the gap in service access between urban and remote areas, build trust in the legal system and support a more consistent approach Territory-wide. Specialist courts are not just about legal processes; they are about changing lives and promoting safer communities.

Recommendation 18 is for culturally appropriate, trauma-informed mediation or peacekeeping for family and community violence. This is essential to creating safer communities, particularly in the Northern Territory where we have many remote Aboriginal communities have longstanding cultural approaches to resolving conflict. These practices are supported and, when resourced appropriately, can offer effective alternatives or complements the formal justice system, especially in situations where a traditional court process may not be appropriate. Investing in these models is important.

Recommendation 20 is for alternatives to custody for perpetrators of domestic and family violence. This is vital to creating a justice system that not only holds offenders accountable but also promotes rehabilitation and reduces repeat offending. Custodial sentences, while necessary in some cases, often exacerbate underlying issues such as substance abuse, trauma and social disconnection without addressing the root cause of violent behaviour.

Investing in community-based programs, such as intensive supervision; behaviour change programs, like the successful behaviour change programs run in Central Australia by the Tangentyere Council; healing circles; and culturally appropriate rehabilitation means there is a greater potential to support perpetrators to take responsibility, change harmful behaviours and repair harm done to families and communities. Alternatives to custody also reduce the social and economic costs of incarceration and can be tailored to respect cultural context, especially in the Northern Territory's diverse communities.

Recommendation 32, the mandatory 12-month trial of the Banned Drinker Register in licensed venues, is an important recommendation, and I wholeheartedly support it. A mandatory 12-month trial of Banned Drinker Register scanners in licensed venues is an important step in strengthening alcohol-related harm reduction across the Northern Territory.

Although takeaway outlets are required to use the BDR scanners, many licensed venues such as pubs, clubs and bars do not consistently screen patrons. This creates a gap in service where individuals who are banned from purchasing alcohol can still consume it on premises, which undermines the intent of the BDR and weakens community safety measures. By introducing a 12-month trial, government and stakeholders can assess the effectiveness, practicality and impact of extending BDR checks to licensed premises consumption.

It creates an opportunity to gather data, identify implementation challenges and engage with industry while prioritising community safety. Alcohol misuse remains a key driver of violence, crime and health issues in the Northern Territory. Alcohol does not cause violence; it exacerbates it; therefore, we must invest in measures like the BDR checks at licensed venues.

Recommendation 34 to increase baseline funding to the DV sector for crisis accommodation and to Northern Territory frontline services is important. The Coroner recommended that 10% is essential to ensure that services can meet rising demand and operate sustainably. Many frontline providers are overstretched, particularly in remote and high-needs communities where rates remain high. A boost in core funding will help them respond to this crisis and effectively work with those in crisis to recognise and create alternatives.

Ensuring the funding agreements for the sector include indexation is another important recommendation. It is critical for the long-term sustainability of the sector. Without indexation the real value of funding declines each year due to rising costs such as wages, rent, fuel and utilities, making it harder for services to do their job.

We have seen a thorough and comprehensive Coroner's inquest into the deaths of four wonderful Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory. For the government members to take aim at the Northern Territory Coroner and say that it is uninspiring and that they are already doing a number of the recommendations is appalling.

That was a long inquest. There were four families with four unique circumstances that deserved the right to be comprehensively reviewed, with individuals giving evidence and testimony on the experiences and circumstances to make sure that we can improve the system. This government is not taking responsibility and is blaming everybody else. The Chief Minister started talking about flagging changes to the *Coroners Act* rather than accept recommendations of coronial inquests. These inquiries are an important opportunity for people to come together to talk. Those inquiries are highly emotional. We are talking about members of our community who have experienced trauma and who have lost people, but this government says, 'This is uninspiring. She'll be right; we know what is best.' This government got rid of the domestic and family violence advisory council. Government members rarely get out and meet with the sector, and today they have shown that they are willing to throw the sector under the bus rather than work with it.

I repeat the call that I am more than happy to stand with all members of this parliament, regardless of who is in federal government, and call for needs-based funding in the Northern Territory. That is a way in which we can overcome domestic, family and sexual violence.

Every recommendation in the Coroner's report is a critical and important step to overcoming domestic, family and sexual violence. It is a roadmap. It is uncomfortable and traumatising, but I am upset at the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence who has come here to erode it and say that it is uninspiring. Kumarn Rubuntja's death was in this coronial, and every one of those people from Central Australia who gave evidence and testimony did so hoping for change and that we would see a government accept all those recommendations.

The Coroner provided an opportunity for the government—regardless of who is in government—to accept all those recommendations, because every recommendation can be accepted. There is no reason that this parliament could not accept all the recommendations, even if the government goes on about fiscal constraints. The Coroner designed all these recommendations in a way that they could be supported.

The minister has not included the sector in the co-design for the additional money for the domestic and family violence space. No, she knows best. She is ignoring the voice of victim–survivors, ignoring the voice of experts and ignoring the data because she thinks she knows best. The sector and the victims know best, and they should not be shut out of any conversation about money and programs.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, the government has brought forward an important ministerial report to deal with an extensive coronial inquiry into the deaths of four women who tragically lost their lives at the hands of domestic violence. It is important to have the opportunity for debate. It is important for us as a government to put on record that, of the 35 recommendations, 22 were supported, 10 were accepted in principle and three were not supported. The Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence has outlined clearly why we made those decisions.

It is an important topic. This is an issue that is plaguing not just the Northern Territory but also our nation and, in fact, the world. At times, it is a difficult debate to have because it obviously impacts people's lives in the most profound and intimate of ways, such is the nature of this scale of violence we see across the Territory. We are proud to be a government that has allocated $36m every year ongoing, which Labor never did.

I find it interesting that the Member for Gwoja wants to grandstand about what we should be doing when, in fact, Labor had been in government for basically the last 20 years. In fact, it was in government only 11 months ago. Pardon me for being a bit cynical about his contribution in the parliament, because at the

end of the day if there is one thing I notice from Labor members it is that they never miss an opportunity to play politics.

The contribution we just heard from the Member for Gwoja was interesting. Obviously I will ignore it because it was meaningless and disingenuous, to put it mildly.

From my perspective as Police minister—the minister for family and domestic violence prevention has given our overarching position as a government, and we will hear from the Attorney-General as well—I want to make a contribution relating to the five recommendations that specifically impacted the Northern Territory Police Force, which Northern Territory Police accepted and have implemented.

Recommendation 8 was about a support link.

Recommendation 10 was about having language speakers and interpreters in our 000 call centre, which is something we are passionate about. I look forward to expanding that into Alice Springs once we get the 000 centre there up and running in the next couple of months.

Recommendation 11 was about the PARt training, which all of our recruits do. We are making our way through the entire police force to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to undertake that important training. Hundreds of police completed that training already.

Recommendation 12 was about having a domestic, family and sexual violence command in Alice Springs, which is headed by an assistant commissioner. We have done a lot of reform in that space as well. We have a DV governance training cell as well, which is being permanently established.

Recommendation 13 was about the expansion of the family harm coordination. We formalised the DV auditing team based in Darwin. That process continues on.

From a policing perspective we have accepted and are continuing to deliver all five recommendations, which have commenced implementation to varying degrees of completion.

This type of violence we are seeing in the data is a significant proportion of the crime that happens in the Northern Territory. It is extremely significant. We see alcohol, poverty and lack of access to education playing a role. It is playing out in our kids. When we look at the youth crime numbers—that is why the minister is so passionate about programs like Circuit Breaker. We know that a lot of the children entering into the child protection system, or the justice system for that matter, have been exposed to or are victims of domestic violence.

It is incumbent on all of us to do everything we can to protect women and children from this unbelievably devastating type of violence in our community.

One point of difference between us and Labor is that we are focused on the kids and making sure we are protecting them from that exposure. We are intervening in families, trying to get kids off the streets and understanding their home situation so we can then work backwards, get into the home environment and try to provide better support.

There are many facets to how we work to drive down these numbers. Of course, a large component of this is personal responsibility of the individuals. Sometimes when we talk about this issue, I feel it is like the offenders are absolved of any responsibility from what we are dealing with.

We get a lot of pushback from the opposition and others about unapologetically making sure that the law protects people and that our prisons have a large proportion of people who are domestic violence offenders. That is why the work we have done in delivering rehabilitation in our Corrections facilities is so important. In fact, last sittings or perhaps the sittings before, I was reading out the data that the Minister for Corrections had given me, and under the CLP government more domestic violence programs were completed by people who were in prison than under Labor in the previous year. That is despite the increased pressure and demand we have put on the system. We are getting much higher completion rates, which is positive.

Part of our election commitment was to make sure there was mandatory behaviour change and drug and alcohol support while in custody, because we have a captive audience. We can get to those people and deliver sustained engagement with them to try to address why they are doing these things in the first place.

Police will continue to make sure that they are providing the right type of response at the right time. The rest of the work across government is to make sure that we try to stop crime from happening in the first place.

This is a significant issue. The numbers in domestic violence under the last eight years of Labor went up by 82%. There are significant challenges ahead. We are committed to this issue as we are reducing crime across the Territory. I commend the minister for bringing forward the report on behalf of the government.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that every member in this Chamber is committed to addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. I know that. I have seen it, and I do not question the intent. But I also know that for the women and children experiencing violence, commitment is not enough.

In November last year I gave notice to this Assembly of a motion committing us to implementing the Coroner's 35 recommendations from the inquest into the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurrk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood.

I gave notice of this motion in the week the coronial report was handed down. That was eight months ago. At that time, I never imagined that I would still be asking in every sitting of parliament for a response to the recommendations. I never imagined that I would sit in this Chamber and hear the lived experience of survivors of violence and the work of the Coroner being dismissed as underwhelming. I never imagined that we would wait eight months only to hear a political speech with no actions, timeframes or accountability.

In Estimates we were told that a report will be tabled in this sitting of parliament. Under section 46A of the *Coroners Act,* the CEO of an agency or the Police Commissioner must provide a written response to the Attorney-General within three months outlining the actions taken, planned or underway in response to the findings or recommendations. On receiving this response, the Attorney-General must report on the Coroner's recommendations and the response without delay and lay a copy of this report before the Legislative Assembly within three sitting days of completing it.

I have not seen this report. I am not sure if it has been tabled in parliament today. That is what the law says. We hear so much regarding accountability. Telling us that recommendations are supported is not enough. We need to know. The law requires you to tell us exactly what you will do to implement these recommendations. Where is the accountability of this government?

I welcome the work that has been done so far and the commitments that have been made, especially the recognition that this is a crisis requiring a whole-of-government response, but I would never imagine we would be told that what we heard today constitutes a government response to one of the most significant coronial findings in the Territory's history.

We are told that there is $36m in the budget for domestic, family and sexual violence. It is great that there is a commitment to ongoing funding. It is great to hear about the work that is being funded, but there is no clear alignment between the budget and the 35 recommendations. Where is the detail? How can Territorians know whether that $36m will deliver the changes required?

When frontline services hear through Estimates that their expected funding has been cut by millions of dollars, when those same services are turning away up to 200 women a month because there is nowhere safe for them to go and when this government hands down a law and order budget that pours hundreds of millions of dollars into locking up people but pulls support from providing a safe place for women and children to go to, we are not doing enough.

We must recognise the scale and urgency of this crisis. It names the truth that this is a real public safety emergency. We just heard the Chief Minister talk about the damage and harm of the crime crisis that domestic violence is in our Territory. I have talked in this Chamber before about the fact that domestic, family and sexual violence takes up most of our police time. The majority of people in prison and all the children who are locked up have been exposed to domestic, family and sexual violence. This is our crime crisis.

Aboriginal women in particular are being failed over and again. When we learn that nearly a quarter of the money dedicated to addressing this issue is being allocated to Circuit Breaker—a program that may well be incredibly valuable but has no evaluation, domestic violence framework or clear domestic, family and sexual violence expertise, we must ask, are we investing in what we know will work?

I have heard the minister say over and again that she is deeply committed to doing what works. Me too, as well as every person in this Chamber, but let us make sure we are doing it. While we debate budgets and frameworks in this House, women are being turned away from refuges across the Territory. That is the truth.

We must act with the urgency of the woman waiting for police to arrive at the scene of a violent incident and the woman calling the shelter who is told, 'I'm sorry; we're full.' What would we say to her about what we are doing? What would she ask of us to make the violence stop?

If she asked me, I would say, 'I believe you. I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and I know that in November last year a woman named Elisabeth Armitage listened deeply for 18 months to women like you, frontline workers, police and families who had already lost loved ones. From that she gave us 35 things to do—not vague ideas but, urgent, practical and evidence-based actions. She gave that report to the Northern Territory and to the nation. I am one of those people responsible for making sure those 35 things happen.'

I would tell her that when I come back to parliament I will speak to the other 24 members in this Chamber who share that responsibility, and I will ask the minister, 'Where is the full implementation plan? Where is the accountability? Where is the funding breakdown? When will you report back to this Assembly with real, measurable progress?'

We cannot keep asking for patience from women who have run out of time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, as we know, the response from the Northern Territory Government into domestic violence has been deemed tabled today in parliament. We heard from a number of speakers, including the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, who has taken carriage of the response from a whole-of-government perspective.

I acknowledge the four women who are at the centre of this inquest: Miss Yunupingu; Ngeygo Ragurrk; Kumarn Rubuntja; and Kumanjayi Haywood. I recognise the pain and strength of their families and communities. These deaths were brutal. They were preventable. As the Coroner said:

> *These deaths were senseless and shocking.*
>
> *…*
>
> *We are complicit if we don't act now*

That is exactly what we are doing; we are acting.

The Northern Territory has the highest rates of domestic and family violence in the country. The system, over many years, has failed too many. The Coroner's job is to examine the truth, expose systemic failings and recommend reform. Not every recommendation will be straightforward to implement, but every life lost must drive action.

The Coroner's report is powerful, but some proposals go beyond what is practical or affordable in the real world. The CLP is committed to reform that is grounded in outcomes rather than outrage. The whole-of-government response is being led by the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, and I acknowledge her strong leadership and deep commitment to victim-focused change.

As Attorney-General, my role is focused on the justice system, the courts, laws and legal protections for victims. Minister Cahill and I work closely to ensure the system responds and reforms. I received the Coroner's report in November 2024 and triggered the formal process required under the *Coroners Act*. I wrote to agency CEOs in January 2025 requesting responses within three months, as required by law. I coordinated a whole-of-government response, led by the Department of Children and Families, which was delivered in April. That response is being tabled in parliament today and will be returned to the Coroner.

I acknowledge Rachael from YWCA in the Chamber today. I met with her and her colleagues last week, who operate a service in Palmerston. Services like YWCA tell us that this is the first time in years that it feels like—I will not paraphrase Rachael's wording—she is seeing real action, and that is a credit to Minister Cahill. She has met with the minister a number of times and values that our government has committed to invest $36m annually ongoing.

We spoke at length about the challenges where the Commonwealth has stepped in and boosted the referral and awareness programs over time. More women are speaking up, seeking help and trying to escape to somewhere safe. This is good on one hand, as we need that to happen, but on the other hand, the same monies are not flowing to the services which are needed as those women and children come through the system. Without the extra funding from the feds, with more people coming through, people will be turned

away, which is a devasting situation. That was my conversation with the YWCA, and I know the minister has had several conversations with organisations that supports these women. It is an awful predicament.

Justice system action is already underway, which is the other part of domestic violence that needs to be done. We backed the specialist DFSV court in Alice Springs; I note the Member for Gwoja mentioned this in his speech, and he too backs it. We support expanding it to Darwin, Katherine and the bush courts. We have supported community-led mediation and peacekeeping initiatives in Alice Springs, West Daly and the Barkly. We are continuing with the new alternative-to-custody programs, such as the life skills camp and Anindilyakwa Healing Centre. We are improving the victims register and exploring practical ways to strengthen the victims charter. We are funding existing law and justice groups to support mediation, education and victim safety on the ground.

I will now turn to specific Coroner's recommendations within the Attorney-General's portfolio.

Recommendation 17 is to expand the specialist DFSV court. We support this and will continue working on those scalable models with proper funding and coordination.

Recommendations 18 and 19 strengthen culturally appropriate, trauma-informed mediation and peacekeeping for family and community violence. The models are already underway.

Recommendation 20 is for alternatives to custody. That support for perpetrators must be built on community safety first and meaningful outcomes to drive change.

Recommendations 21 and 22 improve victim notification systems and rights' compliance, modernising the legal framework and the way services work. We passed those laws earlier this year and expanded the victims register. Every action will be anchored by our priority, which is protecting victims over the perpetrators.

There is no doubt it is a system in crisis, and it is also a budgeting crisis. We talk at length about how we inherited the deeply broken system and debt from Labor, which was on track to reach $13.97bn by 2028–29. Victims cannot wait for that to be resolved, which is why we are investing in what matters and cutting what does not. We will not rubberstamp every idea, but we will fund what works to keep people safe. We will continue to put victims first.

Our government was elected to reduce crime, and that is what we are doing. Domestic violence is a crime. We make no apologies for locking up those violent offenders. We know support and rehabilitation are critical, but only after community safety has been secured. When people are in crisis we have to protect the vulnerable people first. Victims and communities cannot wait, and we will not allow repeat offenders to walk the streets while victims live in fear.

Eighty-seven women have been killed by domestic partners in the Northern Territory since 2000, and 82 of them were Aboriginal women. The NT has the highest intimate partner homicide rate in the country at seven times the national average, with 63% of assaults being domestic violence related and 40% of those involving weapons. Domestic, family and sexual violence accounts for up to 80% of police time and 60% of DPP matters. This is not just a legal issue; it is a health and safety crisis and one of community trust. It is not just an historical problem; it is a growing one. In 2021–22 there were 2,191 breaches of domestic violence orders and 1,840 other DV-related criminal charges. That is 4,031 serious cases. In 2022–23 that jumped to 4,948 and rose again in 2023–24.

This is a justice system under pressure, with domestic violence perpetrators adding to that pressure. We will put the victims first and strengthen the laws so that perpetrators of domestic violence are dealt with, while at the same time work through those recommendations, most of which—as the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence said—we accept either in full or in principle. A lot of the work was already well and truly underway before we read the report. The minister has been clear about the money she has committed and that the funding of programs will continue until she has a chance to review all of them.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I strongly support the Finocchiaro CLP government's response to the Coroner's recommendations following the tragic deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurrk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood. These losses and the harrowing circumstances around them are a sombre call for us all to act with urgency and compassion.

For many years, despite alarmingly high DFSV rates that remain several times above the national average, the Territory has seen a lack of decisive and effective action. Previous governments implemented programs and strategies such as early domestic and family violence frameworks and the emergency response in 2007,

but these measures often fell short of delivering meaningful reductions in violence or improving safety for vulnerable communities. A major failing was that many recommendations and programs were in place for years without achieving the necessary impact. For example, the earlier DFSV strategies, although well intentioned, did not prevent the steady rise in domestic violence assaults over the last eight years, as we have seen under successive administrations.

Vulnerable populations, particularly Aboriginal women and children, were left at disproportionate risk due to inadequate funding, inconsistent implementation and a failure to address the root causes of violence comprehensively. The status quo of previous attempts was simply unacceptable, as it left families and communities exposed to the ongoing cycle of violence.

The Department of Children and Families, under the capable leadership of our Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, is directing the Territory's response. As the lead agency, DCF is ensuring a coordinated whole-of-government approach to combatting domestic, family and sexual violence—a scourge in our communities that demands no less than our full attention.

I welcome the landmark investment of $36m annually, an unprecedented sum that reflects our unwavering commitment to tackling these issues. This funding empowers us to intervene earlier, support affected families and individuals, hold offenders to account and dig deep to address the underlying causes and issues surrounding the violence.

It is concerning to all of us that despite existing programs and good intentions, domestic violence assaults have increased over the last eight years. As the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence said, we cannot keep doing the same thing and expect a different outcome.

This government is listening to families, community leaders, advocacy groups, frontline workers and experts. It is through this extensive consultation that we found 24 of the 35 recommendations were already in place, but crucially we acknowledge that not all these measures have delivered the results desperately needed. This is why the government is developing the DFSV prevention and response roadmap—a bold and strategic shift informed by lived experience and data to map a new path forward for safety in our Territory.

I am particularly proud of the Circuit Breaker Program, which emerged directly from recommendation 15. By prioritising early intervention for at-risk youths and involving families, this initiative has already supported 94 children and their families, providing integrated intensive assistance across health, education and social services. This is innovation in action. It is practical and targeted, and it intends to break the cycle of violence before it begins.

Some will ask about the recommendations not supported. The government's reasoning for that is sound and transparent. We already have a DFSV peak body established through NTCOSS, the DFSV training and resource centre. Licensed venue compliance is actively managed through established channels with the Liquor Commission. As is standard and responsible, grant funding indexation will continue to be considered through the usual annual budget process.

The DFSV roadmap is set to commence following final consultations with key stakeholders. It is more than a response to recommendations; it is a commitment to systemic cultural change. It sets out a vision for a stronger, more accountable and compassionate Northern Territory.

Today we demonstrate that this government is not just reacting; we are transforming. We are putting in place the funding, programs and partnerships needed to make real progress. We honour those whose lives were lost, not just with words but with action to make our community safer and more hopeful for all. Above all, the safety, dignity and freedom of women and children must and always will come first.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I will quickly correct the record. The Member for Johnston talked about tabling the report. I can confirm that tabled paper 314—Report to the Legislative Assembly, In the Matter of the Coroner's Findings and Recommendations Regarding the Deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurrk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood—showed up on Territory Stories at about 11.30 am today, so it is available online for all Territorians to see.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

PAPERS TABLED
Auditor-General's Report No 1 – 2025–26 Results of Financial Audits 30 June and 31 December

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Auditor-General's Report on 2025–26 Results of Financial Audits 30 June and 31 December.

Auditor-General's Report No 2 – 2025–26 Public Information Referrals

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Auditor-General's Report on 2025–26 Public Information Referrals.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Matters of Public Importance

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I will provide a Speaker's clarification, specifically on matters of public importance.

As the Independent Speaker of this parliament, it is my responsibility to promote democracy and to promote practice and debate in this Chamber that serves the interests of the people in the Northern Territory. It is important that I do this without fear or favour.

The rules that govern our proceedings in this parliament are known as the standing orders. It is my job to interpret and apply the standing orders fairly and consistently. This is always subjective and often contentious. Determining what is acceptable as a matter of public importance for debate in this Assembly can also be highly contentious.

Members, usually non-government members, proposing to debate a matter of public importance in parliament send their proposal to me, the Speaker, to decide whether it fits the criteria outlined in Standing Order 66. These rules are vague. Standing Order 66 provides that the proposed matter of public importance is:

> *… within the competence of the Assembly and it is otherwise in order.*

This provides no guidance.

For this reason, I am advising members that from now on I will be using the Australian *House of Representatives Practice* guide to determine the suitability of all matters of public importance for debate. This means that all MPIs debated in this Assembly must be definite, single-focused and specific in scope and precise in language. The main reason for these limits is to ensure that the matter of public importance debate fits into the relatively short two-hour timeframe.

These limits are not designed to thwart, limit or gag debate. In other words, matters of public importance debated in this Assembly will be concise and focused to ensure the matter can be debated neatly in the two-hour timeframe.

I ask members to take note of these requirements for all MPIs. As Speaker, I will work with you.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 29

Continued from 22 May 2025.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, let me state at the outset that the opposition will not oppose this Bill. We accept that the drafted change transferring oversight of public information from the Auditor-General to the Ombudsman has its basis in the 2024 Strategic Review of the Auditor-General's Office. As we heard during Estimates, it also has the support of the current Auditor-General. On that basis, we see no reason to stand in the way.

That being said, it was disappointing to learn that the Auditor-General was not consulted on this Bill. According to his own evidence in the Estimates process this year, the first time the Auditor-General heard that the Bill was going ahead was the day it was introduced into parliament, and we do not think that is good

enough. I do not think that is what Territorians expect when we have a government that promises to consult, particularly with key stakeholders, regarding legislation in the Northern Territory.

The opposition supports this Bill, but let there be no misunderstanding that this is not simply an administrative tidy-up. This reform cannot be separated from the broader context of the government's record on transparency and accountability, and it reflects a missed opportunity to strengthen the Auditor-General's Office and fully implement the recommendations of the strategic review.

Viewed in the context of the strategic review, the timing of this Bill and decisions made in the recent CLP budget, it is hard not to see this as a cherrypicked reform.

What does this Bill actually do? As the Chief Minister outlined when she introduced the legislation, this Bill amends the *Public Information Act 2010* to remove the Auditor-General's role in reviewing public information and transfer that responsibility to the Ombudsman. It also includes transitional provisions to allow the Ombudsman to finalise any ongoing reviews or reports.

The government claims it is implementing the strategic review, but we believe that is a cop-out. Yes, the review found that public information reviews sat awkwardly within the Auditor-General's broader audit role and suggested the government consider whether another body might be better placed to undertake them, but that was just one recommendation—recommendation 14 out of 19. The government selected the narrowest and least consequential of the recommendations. Unlike this Bill, most of the other recommendations go to the heart of integrity and oversight in the Northern Territory. They remain unaddressed by the CLP. We are disappointed.

What is missing from this Bill matters. The 2024 Strategic Review of the Auditor-General's Office, led by respected former Tasmanian Auditor-General Mike Blake AM, delivered a damning assessment of the NT's public sector accountability framework. It concluded that the Northern Territory has the weakest audit legislation in the country and that the NT Auditor-General's Office is the most vulnerable to executive influence of all jurisdictions reviewed.

It identified critical risks, including no protection from ministerial direction; inability to access Cabinet submissions; no statutory mandate for performance audits; severe key person dependency; and chronic funding shortfalls.

The review could not have been clearer. It warned that the legislative framework in the Northern Territory is outdated, our Territory systems are failing and the Auditor-General's Office is under-resourced.

Among the 19 recommendations were proposals for an independent appointment process for the Auditor-General; clear legislative protections against political interference; full access to Cabinet submissions and decisions; performance audit powers, which do not currently exist; and funding to address structural risks and staffing fragility.

Not one of these important recommendations of the strategic review has been acted on by the CLP government. When asked in Estimates, the Chief Minister gave no indication if or when they would be addressed or implemented.

Instead, the one recommendation that the CLP has plucked out of the 19 to adopt happens to remove oversight of political advertising from the very office that caught it out.

Let us not forget that it was the Auditor-General who found the CLP government in breach of the *Public Information Act* over its promotion of the Territory Coordinator Bill—a serious breach, now conveniently shifted to another office. Some might think, 'Well, perhaps the government will get to the rest'. We remain sceptical, because in Estimates we learned that the Auditor-General was not consulted on this change. He found out on the same day we did when the Bill was introduced to the parliament. During the Estimates hearing, when I asked the Auditor-General, 'Did your office submit a funding bid to implement the recommendations of the 2024 strategic review, and what was the outcome?', the Auditor-General's response was direct. I quote from the *Hansard*:

> *Yes. We have put forward a bid as part of the budget process. The bid did not progress any further.*

Let there be no confusion for those listening. The CLP government has zero interest in strengthening transparency or delivering the reforms that the strategic review called for.

This Bill will not improve transparency in the Northern Territory, nor does it address the pressing structural and resourcing concerns that were raised in the review. The Labor opposition will support this modest amendment, but it is hard not to be cynical and critical regarding why this is the only recommendation of the 19 that the CLP government is willing to pursue.

Let us talk about resourcing the Auditor-General's Office. In Estimates, we heard that the Auditor-General's budget was cut in real terms; a full-time staff position was lost; and three planned audits were cancelled, including one of the Ombudsman's Office, which is now expected to take on this new oversight role.

The Auditor-General requested additional funding. He did not get it. He got a staffing reduction, which was confirmed in the CLP's budget papers. That is a stark turnaround from the current Chief Minister, who, when in opposition, described the Auditor-General's resourcing as inadequate and in need of support.

We also know that no additional funding has been confirmed for the Ombudsman to take on this function; there is no detail on how the Ombudsman's Office will manage the increased workload; and there are no safeguards to guarantee independence or transparency in the way the reviews are handled by the new office.

There is also no requirement for proactive reporting to the parliament, no obligation to publish the decisions by the new function in the Ombudsman's Office and no guarantee that politically sensitive matters will be investigated.

Territorians have a right to ask the Chief Minister—who went to the last election in the Territory promising transparency—why she and her government have not used this opportunity to implement the strategic review and the 19 recommendations.

There are still many questions for the CLP government:

- Why has the government acted on just one of the 19 recommendations from the strategic review, despite having this review for the best part of a year?
- Why was the Auditor-General not consulted?
- What new funding is being provided to ensure the Ombudsman's Office can perform this role effectively and independently when the function is transferred to that office?
- Why does the Bill allow the Ombudsman to reject review requests without any reporting or recourse?
- Will the government commit to implementing the full sweep of integrity reforms that the review demands?

I look forward to hearing the Chief Minister's answers when she sums up the Bill in detail.

The opposition supports modernising the framework for reviewing public information, aligning it with the *Ombudsman Act*, which may deliver administrative efficiencies. We do not support selective integrity reform which would weaken the Auditor-General's Office, remove scrutiny from government and fail to deliver genuine transparency in any process.

We call on the CLP government to:

1. commit to implementing all 19 recommendations of the strategic review 2024
2. guarantee funding the independence of the Ombudsman to perform this role
3. introduce statutory reporting requirements to parliament, so Territorians know what is being reviewed and why
4. legislate performance audit powers for the Auditor-General so that they can do their job, which Territorians expect.

If the Chief Minister is serious about integrity she must embrace the full agenda of reform, not just the parts that remove scrutiny out of the government's way. Integrity cannot be selective when we talk about trusting governments, and oversight cannot be optional for a government that promised to be open, transparent and accountable. Accountability cannot be rewritten for political convenience, which is what we are sceptical of.

This Bill is a missed opportunity by the Chief Minister as the responsible minister. It is an opportunity to strengthen public integrity. The CLP has been too afraid and lazy to do the work and the heavy lifting to implement those 19 recommendations. If the Chief Minister was serious about accountability and transparency, which she promised Territorians, the reforms of this Bill should have been much broader to capture the 19 recommendations of the 2024 strategic review. If the Chief Minister supported this Bill properly, she would have seen that it would enhance scrutiny and not just shift it to another part of government.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, this Bill makes a practical and timely change. It transfers oversight of the *Public Information Act* from the Auditor-General to the Ombudsman. It is a simple change but a meaningful one. It ensures the right agency is doing the right job and that government oversight remains strong, independent and fit for purpose.

Currently, complaints about public information, such as concerns about bias or fairness in government advertising, are referred to the Auditor-General, but that is not the Auditor-General's core business. It is not why the office was established. The Auditor-General's job is to audit the use of public money, to report to this parliament on whether agencies are managing their financial responsibilities properly and to independently scrutinise value for money. Assessing content, especially where political messaging is alleged, is not part of that core function. In fact, it can compromise it.

The Auditor-General agrees. In his own words, 'These matters threaten the independence of the office and risk politicising the role'. Earlier this year, the Auditor-General's Office received 16 review requests under the *Public Information Act* in a single day. That is an unacceptable diversion of resources from the financial audit program, and it is unsustainable. Just this year the Auditor-General was forced to remove three agencies from the 2025 assurance program and cancelled planned IT and performance audits, not because they were not important but because the office did not have the resources. He said plainly, 'The ability to do my work is constrained by the resources made available through appropriation'. These are serious warnings that cannot be ignored.

The 2024 independent Strategic Review of the Auditor-General's Office echoed this concern and recommended the oversight function under the *Public Information Act* be moved to another independent body.

This Bill does exactly that. It transfers responsibility to the Ombudsman, another officer of the parliament who already handles complaints about fairness, accountability and government administration. The Ombudsman is well equipped for this role; it aligns with their existing functions. They operate through a complaint-driven model and already investigate concerns about government conduct, including maladministration and service delivery. Importantly, the integrity of the process is preserved.

The Bill gives the Ombudsman discretion to start, continue or discontinue investigations. This is standard practice and protects the system from being misused for political pointscoring. That said, we have also built in a transparency safeguard. If a member of this Assembly makes a complaint under the Act and the Ombudsman chooses not to investigate, they must notify the MLA of that decision. That did not exist before.

This reform does not reduce accountability; it strengthens it. It removes duplication, avoids unnecessary politicisation and allows the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman to focus on what they do best. There is no cost attached to this change, no new bureaucracy and no new office—just a better use of existing resources.

Our CLP government inherited a net debt from Labor projected to hit $12.3bn by 2027–28. In that environment we have a responsibility to ensure every dollar of public spending delivers value, including the cost of oversight and complaints handling. That is why we are streamlining functions, eliminating duplication and allowing our integrity officers to focus on what they do best.

This is also about long-term reform. The Auditor-General has raised consistent concerns about outdated legislation, funding pressures and being the most vulnerable to executive influence of all jurisdictions, according to national rankings. This government, unlike the previous one, is listening to those concerns, acting on the findings of an independent review and making targeted reforms that strengthen integrity and restore good governance.

I thank the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman for their constructive engagement on this Bill and for their ongoing work in support of our parliamentary democracy and transparency. This is a practical, responsible and integrity-based reform.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister)(in reply): Mr Deputy Speaker, we are debating relatively straightforward legislation that came out of the triennial report, as has been discussed by all members.

The Opposition Leader raised a lot of conspiracy theories. If that is her bag, that is a matter for her.

At the end of the day, the Auditor-General made it clear in his media statement on 19 March when he said that it needed to be transferred to another independent statutory officer to stop his role from being politicised. We are delivering on a straightforward component of that reform. Yes, there are many other recommendations as part of the triennial review, but a lot of them relate to the Auditor-General's Office so it is a matter for the Auditor-General to deal with them, not the government. Some relate to government, and some are more ideas than things we could tangibly implement. This is a tangible one; it has been asked for and raised by the Auditor-General, and we are responding. That is most important.

I thank members for their contributions.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

REORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 59, I move that Government Business Order of the Day number 3, Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill, has precedence over Order of the Day number 2.

Motion agreed to.

RACING AND WAGERING AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 27

Continued from 22 May 2025.

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Territory Labor opposition supports this Bill. The legislation clearly builds on the work of the former Labor government to modernise the racing and wagering framework in the Northern Territory. That work was long overdue. For decades our regulatory framework remained largely unchanged, despite the digital revolution and the dramatic rise of online betting.

The old *Racing and Betting Act 1983* was conceived in an era when placing a bet meant showing up in person, either to the racetrack or a retail outlet. It predated the rise of smartphones, online wagering platforms and the enormous expansion of global betting markets. Recognising this, the former government undertook significant reforms to bring our laws into the 21st century. The changes we implemented ensured the Northern Territory remained the national leader when it comes to online wagering regulation.

These reforms included:

- the establishment of the Racing and Wagering Commission with a more robust governance structure, including expanded legal qualifications for members, stronger rules regarding conflict of interest and the creation of the Director of Racing and Wagering, whose role is to investigate complaints and undertake probity assessments, allowing the commission to focus on high-level decision-making

- the new ministerial power to prohibit betting on events that may be deemed offensive or contrary to public interest

- strengthened legal clarity regarding licence conditions, particularly in light of changes such as the 2021 Lottoland case

- the creation of the racing and wagering fund and levy, ensuring a dedicated funding stream for regulatory activities, such as the expansion of review rights for Territory wagering decisions through the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal

- significantly increased penalties for breaches of the law, lifting the maximum fine to 2,500 penalty units.

These reforms laid a strong foundation for continued industry integrity, animal welfare and public trust while maintaining the Territory's competitiveness as the preferred jurisdiction for online wagering operators in Australia.

Turning to the Bill, while this is a relatively minor technical amendment, it is an important one. We understand the need to validate decisions made by Thoroughbred Racing NT between 1 July 2024 and 4 April 2025. We support this Bill because it provides legal certainty to the industry, ensures continuity for Thoroughbred Racing NT and avoids any unintended legal consequences for decisions already made in good faith.

We acknowledge the government's commitment to undertake a broader technical review of the Act. We support the review and look forward to seeing its findings. A modern regulatory regime must be flexible and responsive to the pace of change in this industry. On that basis, and in the interest of supporting integrity and stability in the Territory's racing and wagering sectors, Territory Labor supports the passage of this Bill.

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing)(in reply): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Gwoja for contributing in support of this important legislation. This Bill amends the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024* to validate any decision made or action taken by Thoroughbred Racing NT (TRNT) where that decision or action relates to a power or function of the racing control body under a section of the Act.

As I advised the Assembly when introducing this Bill, transitional arrangements to formally appoint TRNT as the control body for horseracing in the Northern Territory were inadvertently overlooked when the Act was drafted. A racing control body holds several critical responsibilities, including the approval of race days, licensing and registration of participants and animals and the imposition of sanctions such as fines, suspensions and disqualifications.

There is no doubt the horseracing industry plays a vital role in the Territory, not only for the economic opportunities that it brings but for its central place in the Territory's social calendar. We are in the midst of the Darwin Cup Carnival, a month-long celebration of racing, tourism and Territory lifestyle which contributes more than $20m to our economy each year. It draws thousands of visitors to the Top End and showcases everything we have to offer, from hospitality and events to vibrant local businesses.

Without this legislation, every decision and action taken by TRNT between 1 July 2024 and 4 April 2025 would remain invalid and open to legal challenge, a situation that could cause serious ramifications for the industry and the Territory more broadly. This omission affected a number of important matters, particularly disciplinary proceedings, including stewards' inquiries.

One such matter has already resulted in a Supreme Court challenge to a TRNT decision. The court has been informed that this legislation is being debated this week and will await its passage before proceeding. That matter has been listed for hearing on 5 September 2025. It is therefore important that this Bill be passed to enable the Supreme Court to determine that appeal and to restore certainty and integrity to TRNT's decisions made during the transitional period.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly to ensure that all decisions and actions taken by TRNT between 1 July 2024 and 4 April 2025 are validated.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS
Petition No 12 – Immediate Action to Protect Companion Animals

The DEPUTY CLERK: Honourable members, a response to Petition Number 12 has been received from the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. It has been forwarded to the member for distribution to the petitioners.

Petition Number 12—Immediate action to protect companion animals (Evie's Bark)—was referred to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to seek advice on what action has been taken or will be taken to address the concerns of petitioners.

Pursuant to Standing Order 123 I am required to provide a response to the petition by 22 October 2025.

The Northern Territory (NT) has no legislation which regulates the animal boarding industry, other than the requirement to obtain the appropriate planning approvals pursuant to the Planning Regulations 2000.

There are approximately 25 animal boarding facilities in operation who openly advertise their business, of these it appears only nine of them have the appropriate planning approvals.

The NT is the only jurisdiction which does not have companion animal legislation; however, the Local Government Act 2019 *provides councils with powers to make animal management by-laws.*

The Animal Protection Act 2018 *and the Animal Protection Regulations 2022 govern the administration and provide the regulatory framework to ensure animals are treated humanely and regulates persons who use or allow an animal to be used for scientific purposes.*

After two years in operation, a review of the legislative framework was undertaken including a public consultation via the Have Your Say (HYS) website with submissions closing 20 September 2024.

The feedback informed the development of amendments to the Animal Protection Act 2018 *and the Animal Protection Regulations 2022 which are currently being drafted for consideration at parliament in July 2025.*

In response to the HYS submission received from Evie's Bark, it was discovered that the Pet Industry Association have publicly available standards and guidelines for best-practice boarding facilities/establishments and doggy daycare centres. It is anticipated that this standard and guideline will be adopted in the Animal Protection Regulations 2022 to provide animal welfare officers the ability to conduct routine inspections of these establishments to ensure compliance.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) Animal Welfare Branch (AWB) has six officers in total covering the NT to receive complaints, undertake investigations and manage animal welfare compliance and enforcement action, including prosecuting offenders in court (serious animal welfare offending). The AWB responds to more than 700 complaints per year, with this number steadily increasing year on year.

Petition No 10 – Opposing the Berrimah Road Duplication Project

The DEPUTY CLERK: Honourable members, a response to Petition Number 10 has been received from the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure. It has been forwarded to the member for distribution to the petitioners.

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 May 2025 in relation to Petition Number 10—Opposition to the Berrimah Road duplication project—read in the Legislative Assembly on 13 May 2025. In accordance with Standing Order 123, this response is provided for presentation to the Assembly.

As part of the budget review processes to inform the Northern Territory 2025–26 budget, the government reviewed the Berrimah Road duplication project. The review focused on managing budget constraints to rebuild our economy and prioritising infrastructure we need now. Based on this review, the Berrimah Road duplication has been reprioritised.

Further to the petition, I have also been provided negative feedback on the planned works and that in some instances, the forward planning of the road has created delays and uncertainty for stakeholders and their business operations.

In summary, stakeholders and business operators can now proceed based on the current Berrimah Road single carriageway configuration, rather than a duplicated carriageway.

Stakeholders for the Berrimah Road duplication project have been informed of this decision.

I thank the Member for Fong Lim for raising concerns on behalf of the petitioners.

Petition No 14 – Immediate Resurfacing of the Entire Length of Boulter Road, Berrimah

The DEPUTY CLERK: Honourable members, a response to Petition Number 14 has been received from the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure. It has been forwarded to the member for distribution to the petitioners.

Thank you for your letter dated 22 May 2025 providing the terms of Petition Number 14, presented in the Legislative Assembly regarding the resurfacing of Boulter Road.

Boulter Road is identified as a strategic link in the Berrimah North Area Plan, established by the Northem Territory Planning Commission. As the area develops it will require future upgrades to accommodate increasing traffic volumes. Upgrading Boulter Road will require detailed planning, design and dedicated capital funding.

Boulter Road is under the care and control of the City of Darwin. Boulter Road was originally constructed as a rural profile road. As such, it lacks footpaths due to the presence of open, unlined drains along the verges. Boulter Road's surface is currently in poor condition, with extensive patching, cracking and recurring potholes during the Wet Season. I am informed that the City of Darwin installed streetlighting to improve the safety of Boulter Road.

Potential resurfacing via a reseal is an appropriate interim treatment to seal cracks and minimise pothole formation during the Wet Season. I am advised that an order of cost estimate to complete resealing of the full length of Boulter Road is approximately $250,000.

The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure is upgrading the Amy Johnson Avenue and Boulter Road intersection to improve road safety, meet increased traffic demands and improve streetlighting. Amy Johnson Avenue is a government-managed road. The primary objective of the project is to provide a 3.5-metre-wide auxiliary left turn lane from Amy Johnson Avenue onto Boulter Road to improve safety for road users. Construction works are expected to commence in August 2025 and be completed within the current Dry Season.

I will provide notification of this petition and my response to the City of Darwin and continue discussions with the City of Darwin on these priority upgrades to be considered in future funding arrangements.

MOTION
Note Petition No 10 – Opposing the Berrimah Road Duplication Project

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the petition be noted.

This petition regarding the Berrimah Road duplication project is now, in fact, a settled matter. The Treasurer has, as part of his reprioritisation of infrastructure projects, recognised that this matter is not a priority. Notwithstanding, it is worth discussing, particularly in the context of what is infrastructure of necessity, because this initiative is indicative of the lack of a cohesive approach to decisions that were made on infrastructure by the preceding government over a long period. This is why we are dealing with the legacy of ill-conceived ventures such as this.

Without delving too deeply into it, I begin by drawing upon the impact statement regarding the proposed duplication because I think it speaks volumes. With the permission of the Principal of Haileybury Rendall School, Mr Andrew McGregor, I will draw out a couple of key points that were made regarding this project.

These community advocates, representatives of the school community, asked the Northern Territory Government to seriously reconsider this development and see it cancelled or, at the least, suspended for a time so that the school and surrounding businesses could be provided certainty regarding whether to move forward with a range of things. The impact of the proposed duplication would have been devastating to the school environment, businesses and 4,000 community members in that area. They had seen plans that suggested that a strip of varying widths, between five and 10 metres, running almost 800 metres along that property would be taken out on the edge of Berrimah Road.

There were a number of areas of concern as to why this might be a problem. They are worth recognising in their own right in order to understand why this was ever on the books. Firstly, there was the strategic planning impact of this initiative. The school and its board had considered that no serious consideration had been

given to the drastic impact of the proposal and that, equally, no form of amelioration or proper compensation had been considered, which is astonishing. Apart from other serious concerns due to the risk of the project, the board had to freeze all its capital expenditure until all aspects of the duplication matter were resolved, which is a significant thing for it to have to do.

Secondly, the board was concerned about the environmental impact, which was significant. Those of you who know Berrimah Road will know that there is an avenue of big old trees, and 70 to 80 mature trees and bushes would have to be removed from the property with no opportunity to preserve that land or to replace those trees. That barrier of trees not only was aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly but also reduced the impact of air and noise pollution to 1,300 staff and students who are on the campus. The health risks attendant with that was a whole different set of concerns. Increased air pollution would have come with increased truck traffic in that area if you essentially doubled the width of that road.

On the infrastructure impact itself, what was the infrastructure case for it and why were we doing this? It is difficult to know. Again, the extensive loss of land could have been in the order of 5,000 square metres. As well as destroying vegetation, that encroachment would have decimated the parking and traffic flow arrangements on the site; eight to 10 buses would have come off the site every day, twice a day; as well as 100 lost car parks for which there was no strategy to replace.

The traffic and flow disruption in drop-offs and school pickups would mean the entire facility would pretty much have to redesigned. The cost would have run into the millions.

Again, what regard was given to safety concerns? There have already been vehicle crashes through the fence on that property close to where students play and where families and staff walk, and there was real fear that increased traffic flow in that area would lead to further accidents that would affect the community. Numerous students in that space also cycle to and from school, and there was no provision for what was to be done if they lost the external footpath leading to the school.

The impact on teaching and learning, of course, would have been significant as well. The traffic on Berrimah Road is already noisy and affects conversations and hearing on that side of the school. If you brought the road any closer to the classrooms and removed the natural barrier of the trees, you would see a great increase in noise pollution which, frankly speaking, the school was right in suggesting would affect its core business of teaching and learning.

There was a significant case to be made also for the genuine disruption and threat to the school's business model. I remind you what a significant and important school Haileybury Rendall School is in terms of a high-performance private school. We do not have a tonne of them, and this is an extremely well-performing one. We are looking at essentially knocking out its ovals, car parks, trees and business model—for what? Seriously, for what? That is my question to the Assembly.

The financial impact is not insignificant either. Haileybury Rendall School alone, as a stakeholder in that space, spent tens of thousands of dollars planning how to deal with the potential duplication occurring. That included legal fees, the cost of traffic engineers and future design costs. There was never any indication, from the time I have been involved with this, that there would be any compensation for these expenses or that compensation had even been clearly countenanced or calculated.

Then you have the loss of trees, roads, the car park and roadways that need to be replaced and all the new internal roads and infrastructure that would be needed. There was also extensive loss of land. The estimate was that compensation required would run into several millions of dollars in order to simply go ahead with the project.

The reason I raised this, given it is a settled matter, is that it is a fair question to ask how on Earth this initiative ever got to this stage. How is it the case that anybody thought it was a good idea in the last government to do this duplication? Quite seriously, I am still dissatisfied with the answers I had to that question. Part of the reason I entertained debating this is that I welcome contribution from a member of the former government to at least explain the business case underpinning what was going on there or, if they cannot do that, at least the essential underlying logic. What supported the logic behind the Berrimah Road duplication?

The key stakeholders in that space, including one of the most significant senior secondary private schools, and a tonne of businesses up and down that area, could not see the logic behind it. I have given long and interesting—in my mind anyway—speeches about the state of infrastructure, the poor choices that have been made and the *Utopia*-esque folly we have descended into over a long period.

This appears to be one of those projects that was just announced at a time that seemed to make thinly veiled sense—doubling the width of the road will be helpful for going out to East Arm. I do not see where the logic was underpinning this project.

I am here not just to ask that the petition be noted which, of course, we will formally do, but also for us to genuinely contemplate why we build infrastructure, where we put it, what is essential and enabling and what is vanity nonsense.

The Treasurer had to make cuts to the infrastructure spend. Remember a lot of those cuts were literally wiping nonsense off the books—things that were announced with a funding tag attached to them that did not result in anything being built or any money being appropriated or allocated to build these projects.

I have said it over and again: we will not go forward in this place on a range of big issues unless we can work cooperatively. The fact of the matter is that the federal government will not listen to us unless we all sing with one voice about what we would like the money for. What do we want to build? Where do we want to build it? Why do we need it?

This is an opportunity to reflect on something that, frankly speaking, had no sound business case that I could possibly tell, no money underpinning it, no community support, zero stakeholder engagement and no consultation with the relevant parties. It is important to do meaningful consultation. I take it seriously when the opposition and crossbenchers ask the government to engage in meaningful consultation. As a result, I think it is incumbent on you to also recognise that consultation was done poorly in respect to this initiative.

It is a settled matter. It is great that it is not going ahead and that Berrimah Northcrest has the certainty to continue doing good educational work in the place it operates from. It is also an opportunity for us to accept that this was not a good idea. It was indicative of how badly government was running infrastructure.

For all the potshots that are taken at my learned colleague and Treasurer, he has not wiped infrastructure off the books. He has started to wipe nonsense off the books that never had any money attached. With the money we have left, we need to be smarter about what we build because the return on investment for a lot of these things has been negligible to zero; whereas, we could be investing in smart projects, like the one I championed—the Stuart Park high street—which would have a fast return on investment for the Territory.

I will be grateful for a contribution from the members of the former government to explain the logic underpinning why this initiative—if you can call it that—ever got to this stage. If the opposition chooses not to speak, I will take it as tacit acknowledgement that we all agree finally that this was a dumb idea. Hopefully we can move forward to making smarter choices on infrastructure as a parliament.

Mr YAN (Logistics and Infrastructure): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Fong Lim for his input into this important petition. The key stakeholders of this project have made it clear that the Berrimah Road duplication was not something that they supported. The CLP government has listened. That is the difference between us and those opposite. Labor did not listen and the community paid the price for that.

I went to Haileybury School to hear the concerns firsthand. They did not mince their words. They raised serious, thoughtful and valid points. It was not just the management and the principal of Haileybury Rendall School; it was the students as well. It was clear that the previous government had not given them the time or respect to properly engage.

Local businesses in the area simply had enough. They had endured disruption, delays and detours for nearly two-and-a-half years, all thanks to the chaos that was the big, overpromised plan from the Labor government.

Their lifeline of access to their customers was cut off without warning or proper consultation. Their trade took a massive hit, and their confidence in government planning was shaken. That is unacceptable. Let me be clear: that ends now.

The CLP government will not stand by and watch Territory businesses become collateral damage from bureaucratic mismanagement. We stand with businesses. We are not in their way.

Icons of the Territory community, like Tommo’s Pies, rely on predictable traffic, safe access and a government that listens. When I advised the owner that this project was off the table, the sense of their relief was instant. Since then, my office has become a more regular customer of Tommo’s Pies. It is now a ritual for my office during sitting weeks.

This decision was not just about meat pies and traffic closures; it was about common sense and, importantly, listening to communities and businesses bearing the brunt of these impacts.

I have heard from Haileybury Rendall School and neighbouring businesses which were ready to invest their hard-earned money into infrastructure, upgrades and development but could not proceed because of the shadow that this project cast over their plans. The school board had capital projects ready to go but had to freeze all expenditure because of the uncertainty created by this duplication.

This was not just inconvenient; it was actively damaging their ability to grow, improve their facilities and plan for their future. The impacts would have gone far beyond inconvenience. They faced the potential loss of up to 80 mature trees, which are not just part of the school's identity but serve a practical purpose in reducing noise and air pollution, cooling the environment and providing a haven for native wildlife. These trees provide essential shelter from hot and dusty winds that often blow across Berrimah Road, and their removal would have been a serious blow to the school's environment and enjoyment.

On top of that, there were major concerns about traffic flow, parking, pedestrian safety and bus access within the school grounds, all of which would have been compromised had the duplication proceeded, and the school would have lost up to 15 to 20 metres of property frontage.

It was not alone. Other local businesses in the area told us they had development applications sitting in limbo, unable to proceed, invest and improve their own operations because they were waiting on clarity about this road project. The uncertainty was costing them money, time and opportunities, and it was damaging to the Territory economy.

It is not just what is being planned; it is what had already been endured. The school and surrounding businesses have already been forced to work around the drawn-out construction of the Tiger Brennan Drive overpass. They put up with disruption after disruption and were rightly frustrated at the thought of more years of chaos and disruption on their doorstep. Their message to us was loud and clear: they wanted certainty, action and to be heard and treated with respect. That is what we did, and that is what we are delivering.

This government will not continue the disruption and uncertainty that the previous government inflicted upon them. We talk about being open for business and, unlike the last mob, we mean it. The CLP government believes in empowering the private sector, not paralysing it.

To the Haileybury Rendall School community and local businesses, this government and I have heard you. I have stood on your grounds, walked your roads and understood what is at stake. Your safety, investment, environment and confidence in government matters.

Today we draw that line in the sand—no more disruption or uncertainty. Instead, we are delivering action, certainty and security for those people along that road. We are putting local businesses and communities first, where they belong. We are not here to govern from behind a desk; we are out on the ground, talking to people, understanding the real impacts of our decisions on communities.

When it is clear that something does not stack up, we are not afraid to say that and change course if required. That is what responsible governments look like and do. Unlike the previous government, which made decisions based on glossy brochures and photo ops, we are focused on real outcomes for real people and businesses.

To every small business owner, principal and community member who felt ignored or sidelined under the previous government, know this: you have a voice, and this government is listening. We are not in the business of overreach. We are in the business of rebuilding confidence, removing barriers to investment and getting the Territory moving in the right direction. Now we can all move forward together with certainty and focus on real priorities with a government that works with the community, not against it.

The decision to cease the duplication of Berrimah Road between the Stuart Highway and the new Tiger Brennan Drive overpass proves that. We looked at what was planned. This has been sitting on the books for many years. It put business and the future of Haileybury Rendall School at risk. We took a good, hard look at the outcomes for that project. I agree with the Member for Fong Lim; was the project put there for the right or wrong reasons, or was it just another opportunity for a photo and glossy press release?

It would not serve any real purpose for the people and businesses along that road, and we made the decision to cease this project going forward to give certainty to businesses and Haileybury Rendall School so they

can develop their business and education models going forward and businesses along that road can now invest, grow and push our economy forward.

Motion agreed to; petition noted.

MOTION
Note Petition No 11 – Protect and Strengthen the Film Industry

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the petition be noted.

I support this petition presented to the Assembly regarding the funding and future sustainability of the Northern Territory screen industry. I am a great fan of film; my father was a filmmaker, so I grew up in a world talking about filmmaking all the time. We have talked before in this Chamber about what the film industry has brought and continues to bring to the Territory. I have heard everyone in this Chamber talk about how great that is. I am happy to support this petition.

We know that the NT screen sector is one of the Territory's real success stories. It supports local jobs, grows our creative workforce, showcases Territory stories to national and international audiences and delivers direct economic return across multiple industries. However, the sector is also facing ongoing funding instability, and that is what this petition seeks to address.

While the total budget allocation for Screen Territory may appear higher this financial year in the budget, that figure includes approximately $1.1m in carryover funds from the previous year, which has already been committed and spent. The reality is that Screen Territory's actual base budget sits at around $500,000. The remainder of its annual operating funds is secured only after Cabinet submissions are made each year. This leaves the industry with no long-term financial certainty and creates unnecessary competition between Screen Territory and Tourism NT, which are often drawing from the same limited funding pool.

What the petition is calling for is simple: a stable, sustainable base budget of $3m per year for Screen Territory. A $3m base budget would allow Screen Territory to plan confidently, develop long-term industry growth strategies, support emerging talent and reduce the constant uncertainty of annual budget negotiations. It is important to note that this is not simply a matter of creative or cultural value, although these are vital.

The NT screen industry delivers direct and measurable economic returns to the Territory. In the past six years alone, over $49.7m has flowed back into the Northern Territory economy as a result of screen industry activity. Independent modelling shows that the screen sector delivers up to a 10 to one return on investment, meaning every dollar invested by government generates up to $10 in economic activity across the Territory. This economic activity spreads widely; it benefits accommodation providers, transport companies, local councils, catering companies, security services, construction businesses, equipment suppliers and many other local industries.

It also directly supports Territory jobs across all levels of the creative sector—producers, directors, crew, cast, emerging practitioners, Indigenous storytellers, technicians, editors, post-production workers and many more. However, if we do not invest in the development phase of projects, these opportunities cannot grow. Development funding is chronically underfunded, limiting the ability of NT producers, writers and creators to get their stories to market.

Likewise, we urgently need greater investment in training and skills development across all areas of production. This includes training, which is particularly difficult to deliver locally, as well as broader workforce development pathways to ensure the NT screen workforce can grow and sustain itself into the future.

Further infrastructure investment would also help attract larger-scale productions and bring more external projects into the Territory, which I know this government is enthusiastic about.

It is also important to highlight that Screen Territory's equity funding model is a sound financial investment for government. Every equity investment requires productions to spend at least four to one in the NT economy and the full equity amount is repaid to government over time, allowing those funds to continue recycling into future investments.

This petition is not asking for something extravagant or unrealistic; it is simply asking for stable predictable funding to allow an already successful and growing sector to continue to deliver significant benefits for the Northern Territory. We have seen the proven return on investment and the positive flow-on effects to Territory

businesses, jobs and regional economies. With a committed and stable base of $3m, Screen Territory can continue to build on the momentum that has already been created and ensure that the NT screen industry remains a valuable driver of economic and cultural growth well into the future.

Ms BOOTHBY (Tourism and Hospitality): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to respond to the petition, tabled by the Member for Johnston on 20 May 2025, calling for increased support for Screen Territory. I thank the individuals, creatives and businesses who put their names on this petition. It is a strong sign of how much the Northern Territory screen industry has grown and how much potential it still holds.

The CLP government has always backed our screen industry. In fact, it was a CLP government that pushed to establish Screen Territory in the first place. Since forming government we have locked in more than $3.6m for Screen Territory in the 2025–26 budget, exceeding the funding target raised in this petition. That includes $1.16m to support the current Screen Territory funding program, with a brand-new round opening this August to back local productions, career development, games and industry partnerships. This is a serious investment in an industry which has now proven to deliver economic returns, jobs and global visibility for the Territory.

Every dollar we invest in Screen Territory returns at least $4 to the NT economy. That is not an estimate; it is actual economic data. Since 2018 nearly $50m in direct Territory production spend has flowed into our economy, with a 468% increase over the past seven years. This funding does not just go to filmmakers; it drives activity across our economy for accommodation providers, tourism operators, caterers, electricians, costume designers, local drivers, builders and more. It builds careers, keeps Territory creatives in the NT and attracts skilled professionals to work and live here.

We are seeing the results. In the past year alone we have had major productions film here. *NCIS: Sydney* season 2 contributed nearly $3m to the Territory economy in just three weeks of filming; Amazon's *Deadloch* season 2 brought $3.1m in direct spend with filming in and around Batchelor; *Territory*, the Netflix series filmed here, became a global smash with more than 112 million hours viewed in just three months; and the upcoming feature film *Kangaroo*, inspired by the life of Chris 'Brolga' Barns from the Alice Springs Kangaroo Sanctuary, delivered $4.3m in economic return, was produced by Alice Springs-based Brindle Films and is now preparing for worldwide release.

These are not just big budget projects; they are creating real local opportunity. Hundreds of Territorians have been involved, onscreen and off, and dozens of local businesses have seen direct benefit. Companies such as Geoff Johnson Catering and Cast Away NT grow and adapt to support production demand. These are just two examples of Territory businesses expanding because of the screen industry.

We are also backing homegrown storytelling. *Top End Bub*, which is a follow-up to *Top End Wedding*, has been created by proud Territorians, Miranda Tapsell and Shari Sebbens, with filming across the Top End and a global release not far away. The beautiful documentary *Journey Home* captures the *bapurru* funeral ceremony of the late David Gulpilil. It is narrated by Hugh Jackman, was filmed on country on Arnhem Land and produced by Territory-based teams. These are uniquely Territorian stories told by local voices, filmed on country and now being seen across Australia and around the world.

Screen Territory is not stopping there. The industry is growing through strategic initiatives like the SPARK Short Film Initiative, which backs emerging Territory filmmakers with production funding, mentorship and access to world-class post-production facilities.

The NT Screen Summit and community screenings under the NT on screen banner helps build industry connections and local pride and co-production partnerships that bring national and international producers to the NT.

Screen Territory is also embracing digital growth through games development funding, supporting local studios like Salty Games, whose livestock simulation game has attracted major international interest and $1.5m investment with support from the NT Government and the local jobs fund. The Array is a new training institution and co-working lab to grow digital skills and foster more creative enterprise in Darwin. I saw it at the Palmerston Youth Festival Geekfest recently with my colleagues. We look forward to seeing real outcomes delivered through this opportunity available to local Territorians.

This is not just about jobs or stories alone; it is about growing tourism. I recognised that film and TV are key marketing tools, and our agencies will not be working in silos anymore, so we can get the most out of it. Our Real Territory campaign launched alongside the Netflix series *Territory* has shown real results, with 41% of viewers saying they would consider visiting NT filming locations. Now we need to convert them.

Upcoming productions like *Kangaroo*, *Top End Bub* and *Deadloch* season 2 are powerful platforms to draw visitors from around Australia and the world showcasing our landscapes, culture and people on screen. We are promoting our unique Territory to the world, and we now need to get people here to see it for themselves and contribute further to our economy.

The petition called for a base budget of $3m to $5m for Screen Territory. Despite this government inheriting the net debt projected to reach $13.97bn within three years, our CLP government has delivered $3.61m in this budget alone for Screen Territory this year. That includes core program funding plus strategic investments, giving us the flexibility to support long-term industry growth and immediate production opportunities. It is a clear sign of our commitment to growing this sector, sustainably and strategically.

Under our CLP government the screen industry has strong leadership, funding certainty and a clear direction. We are not just supporting the screen industry; we are using it to grow our economy, support jobs, boost tourism and promote the Northern Territory to the world. This is one of the most exciting and dynamic industries we have and under our government it will only grow stronger.

I thank the petitioners again, and I say clearly to the screen sector that this government has your back. We will keep telling our stories, creating local jobs and working together to put the Northern Territory on the global stage.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the petition on protecting and strengthening the film industry to stop funding cuts and increase the budget.

I give a shout-out to Bridget May, who organised this petition; I am sure she is watching this evening, but she is also someone I had the privilege of sitting down with to discuss the industry's concerns about the cuts to the Screen Territory budget.

Territory Labor will always provide its full-throated support to our screen industry because it has become an engine room for jobs, a beacon for our tourism industry, an amplifier for our unique stories and an incubator of creative talent.

Since 2018 the Northern Territory screen sector has grown by nearly 468%, injecting more than $48m into the Territory's economy. For every dollar the Territory invests in a screen project, a minimum of $4 of direct spend is generated in the Territory through employment and use of goods and services. Productions large and small have provided high-value employment for hundreds of Territorians, crew, performers and post-production specialists and created opportunities in sectors as diverse as hospitality, transport and accommodation.

Territory Labor has provided targeted grant programs, ensuring that emerging filmmakers in Alice Springs, Katherine and remote communities could access production funding, encouraging local storytellers, regardless of background, to pick up a camera and bring their visions to life.

I give a shout-out to films that have been shot in the Northern Territory, showcasing our beautiful landscapes and environments we have here: *Rogue; Walkabout; Yolngu Boy; High Ground;* and *Samson and Delilah*. I want to touch on the show *Territory*. I am sure all of us or most of us would have watched that.

I remember there were extras used in that film, with a lot of people from Daly River getting the opportunity to be a part of a high-production film. At that time, my Facebook was going off with all my friends from Daly River sharing their family on the screen. People were proud to see their family on the screen and the world stage on Netflix.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, I place on the *Parliamentary Record* my support for Screen Territory and filmmaking in the Northern Territory.

I come from Central Australia, the proudest place in the Territory to produce Australia's best filmmakers, including Warwick Thornton, Rachel Perkins, Dylan River and Trisha Morton-Thomas. These are all outstanding Central Australians who are recognised nationally and internationally for making quality films.

For every $1 we spend in the film industry in the Northern Territory we generate $4 back in investment. That is outstanding. Every production that has been done in the Northern Territory has been a job-creating exercise, whether it is creating sets, acting or producing. All of this is amazing work. There are so many young, inspiring filmmakers out there as well.

The Northern Territory should be the best place to come to make a movie. Our country is amazing, our people are fair dinkum, and we want to attract that investment.

Members have spoken about a number of films. I acknowledge that phenomenal films have been made in the Territory: *Sweet Country*; *High Country*; *MaveriX*; and *Territory*—all amazing films. Most importantly, proud Central Australians I acknowledge are Delroy Tranter, Steve Tranter, Bec Cole, Tanith Glynn-Maloney, the amazing Warwick Thornton, the Territory's best Miranda Tapsell, Danielle Loy.

I acknowledge Bridget May for bringing this petition to the House to say to the government that the more money you spend on making films, the more money will come back into the Northern Territory. We heard that; the stats do not lie. For every $1 we spend, we get $4 back, plus we get to show off the best place in Australia, the Northern Territory.

We need to see greater investment into the film industry. We also need to look at what organisations across the Territory we can work with to support the next generation of amazing filmmakers.

I remember the days when CAAMA in Central Australia pumped out the most amazing filmmakers. This is jobs with kids in remote communities acting for the first time, seeing what they can be. You cannot be what you cannot see. The film industry provides a valuable opportunity for kids to see themselves on the big screen and to see their communities as places of love, hope and aspiration.

We all need to back the film industry; it is a no-brainer. It delivers fair dinkum jobs in the Territory and showcases the best place in Australia.

I give a huge shout-out to everyone—producers, executive producers, stage managers and everyone who does the important work bringing it all together. Thank you; it is not an easy job, and you do a phenomenal job.

Motion agreed to; petition noted.

MOTION
Note Petition No 12 – Immediate Action to Protect Companion Animals

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that Petition Number 12 be noted.

Those who know me know how much I love dogs, including my own, Sunny and Thunder. Like so many in this Chamber, I know the joy and unconditional love that pets bring to our lives. Today I rise not only with my own voice, but with the voice of Evie's Bark and the 2,096 people who have signed the petition as of this morning. I speak on behalf of Dean and Anitra Jackson, Evie's loving family. I acknowledge Dean's presence in the gallery, and I believe Anitra is watching the livestream.

When I first met Dean and Anitra to hear about their dog, Evie, I expected heartwarming stories of companionship. Instead, I—like many Territorians—was deeply moved by the heartbreak they endured. Our first official meeting in November 2024 was emotional and informative. Although Dean and Anitra had beautiful memories, stories and keepsakes of their cocker spaniel, a series of horrific events led to their loss of Evie and the shocking discovery of the lack of regulation for animal boarding facilities in the Northern Territory. For those who do not know Evie's story, I will try to do her memory justice and share it with you.

Evie was dropped off with her best mate, Waffie, to a boarding facility so that they could be looked after while Dean and Anitra travelled interstate to attend a funeral. This was the Jacksons' first time using a pet boarding facility. Having met the business owners previously, reassured by the promise of comfort, air conditioning and personal care, they trustingly placed their beloved family members in the hands of the facility.

Three days later, while the Jacksons were on a plane home from the funeral, they received a call to advise them that Evie had broken a bone but that she was at the vet and that everything was under control. They were understandably upset by this news and concerned with the minimal information provided. They contacted the vet clinic and were unexpectedly told that Evie was in a critical condition, unresponsive with major blood loss and wounds indicating that she had been mauled. Evie's family has been through an ordeal I would not wish on any pet owner, stuck in an airport with a long plane ride ahead, filled with worry about the welfare of their family member. Sadly, despite the efforts of the veterinary team, Evie passed away that evening. Worse, all these months later, the Jacksons have been unable to obtain clarity on what happened to Evie to cause her fatal injuries.

When this petition was tabled on 22 May 2025 it had 1,495 signatures. Today, that number has grown to nearly 2,100. Representing Territorians, Australians and animal lovers from across the world, each signature is someone who has heard Evie's Bark and is calling for change and better protection for our pets. Evie's story has captured the hearts of Territorians and animal lovers across the nation. Through Evie's Bark, Dean and Anitra have turned their unimaginable grief into action, shining a light on the need for higher standards of care in pet boarding facilities. Our government has listened to their actions, activism and courage, and we are committed to ensuring that pets entrusted to boarding facilities are protected, cared for and treated with the dignity they deserve.

Our government is determined to deliver a framework that ensures Territorians can have confidence in the care their pets receive when they cannot be by their side. The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries is already progressing reforms to strengthen animal welfare laws, which he will introduce later this week, including amendments to the *Animal Protection Act*, Animal Protection Regulations and the *Criminal Code Act*.

Not to take the minister's good news away from him, but these changes will introduce a code of practice for boarding kennels, boost compliance powers and deliver stronger safeguards for animals across the Northern Territory. Without the strong advocacy from Dean and Anitra, it is unlikely this code of practice would have been picked up, as it was included in their submissions.

These reforms will strengthen oversight, introduce enforceable standards for pet boarding facilities and ensure that the safety and welfare of animals are front and centre. We understand the deep connection Territorians have with their pets. They are not just animals; they are family members, companions and loyal friends.

Evie's life was cut short far too soon, but her story is now driving real change. Dean and Anitra have shown extraordinary courage in turning their grief into action so that others will not face the same heartbreak.

To everyone who signed this petition, to those who have also lost beloved pets and to Dean, Anitra and Waffie, I say this: Evie did not have a voice that could speak in this Chamber, but today we hear her bark loud and clear, not as a cry of pain but as a call for compassion, accountability and change. Do not stop barking, Evie.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing this petition back to our attention. The member is particularly passionate about protecting wildlife and animals, ensuring they are properly cared for. This was evident last year when he adopted a greyhound. I also acknowledge Dean Jackson, from Evie's Bark, who is in the Chamber, and I understand Anitra is watching by video stream.

When I became the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, with the responsibility for animal welfare, one of my first meetings was with Anitra and Dean Jackson from Evie's Bark. I heard the story of how their beautiful dog Evie tragically lost her life in a Northern Territory boarding facility. I have seen how much pain Evie's death continues to cause them.

We have been in government for nearly 12 months and have been working hard to ensure that such tragedies are not repeated. Members know that we have been considering a range of measures to strengthen the *Animal Protection Act* and have been consulting extensively with key stakeholders, Territorians and animal organisations about how we can improve safety and protection for all our animals.

A number of issues have been raised with me and my team, including lack of regulation in boarding kennels, the powers of authorised officers and how we can make penalties tougher for those who mistreat or are cruel to animals. Members would know that over a four-month period in 2024, a Have Your Say was undertaken. It received a total of 229 submissions. Overwhelmingly, there was significant support for change that would simplify and strengthen penalties which are currently under development and will be dealt with later this week.

All animals in the Northern Territory are entitled to a standard level of care for their welfare, health and safety. If you are in charge of an animal—whether it is wild, farm or family—you must make sure they have the right food, water and quality living conditions; get proper treatment if they are sick or injured; are allowed to exercise and are handled appropriately; will not be harmed by confinement or restraint; are worked, ridden or used in ways that are appropriate; and are not used in organised animal fights or abandoned.

Members of the public are encouraged to contact the Animal Welfare Branch to report suspected cases of animal cruelty or neglect. We all have a duty of care to protect our companion animals as well as our livestock,

including chickens, horses, goats and cattle. My department works hard to educate Territorians in how to properly care for animals. We have a dedicated team of animal welfare officers who respond to calls from the public and are responsible for investigating, educating and, if necessary, prosecuting those who mistreat animals.

We have an Animal Welfare Advisory Committee of eight dedicated members with significant veterinarian, animal rescue, rehabilitation and stock management experience. They provide me with important advice on animal welfare issues in the Northern Territory. We are also working closely with my colleague, the minister for Local Government, Steve Edgington, to ensure local councils are providing animal management through their jurisdiction. This includes removing strays from public areas, responding to animal attacks and dealing with animal noise complaints.

This petition, brought bravely by Evie's Bark, highlighted the work that needs to be done to protect animals, pets and livestock. I know that many people in this Chamber have pets and livestock. This brought to light the lack of care at those boarding facilities. Our legislation will ensure that there is a standard of care for all animals.

We will not shy away from our responsibilities, and my department will work hard to make sure any gaps are addressed and practical solutions can occur as we move forward. Through the work done we need to ensure we strike a balance between providing modern, efficient and flexible animal welfare compliance enforcement with outcomes with available resourcing while meeting community expectations to strengthen animal protection laws.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this petition, which is close to my heart and that of many Territorians.

Anyone who spends time with me, including on my social media, will have met my dog, Billy, who is my great companion and listens to me patiently as I often reflect on what is happening in this Chamber. She listens to me when no-one else will, so I am grateful for that. I cannot imagine how I would feel if anything happened to her, especially if I had left her in the care of people who were meant to be looking after her.

I am also lucky to have met Dean and Anitra, and our sons Zeph and Dylan have had wonderful adventures together.

The Member for Goyder told us the story of Evie, a beautiful dog, who was killed in March this year while staying at a pet boarding facility. She was mauled to death, and her story is devastating. We also know that she is not the only one. All animals who have been lost or hurt were loved, and they should all still be here.

We know from this petition that in the Northern Territory commercial pet boarding facilities and pet sitters, including those booked through popular apps like Mad Paws or Pawshake, are not covered under the *Animal Welfare Act* which means they are unregulated with no licences, inspections, oversight or clear way for families to seek justice and information when something goes terribly wrong.

The law that this petition calls for, Evie's Bark, is practical and compassionate. I will not go through the details of what it said; we have already heard that. They are smart commonsense reforms, and it was great to hear from the Member for Goyder and the Deputy Chief Minister that the government has a commitment to addressing this issue. These laws exist in other places, and it is time that the Northern Territory caught up.

To those who fought so hard to make this visible and those like Dean and Anitra, who experienced such an unnecessary and great loss, thank you for your advocacy and hard work. Thank you to all the people who supported this petition. We can see that what you have done has already and will make a difference.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this petition. I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing this important petition to the government's attention. I thank the Deputy Chief Minister for providing the response on behalf of our government.

There is no question that Territorians love their animals, whether it is their pet dog, cat or bird. If you are a rural member, as many of my colleagues are, that love is often extended to horses, goats and all sorts of other wonderful animals that are part of your family and, of course, livestock. When you have a pet, you do everything you can to keep them safe. They are a part of your family.

In this country we have extremely high rates of pet ownership, particularly compared with the rest of the world. According to the RSPCA, there are almost 29 million pets in Australia, which is amazing. Sixty-nine per

cent of Australian households have a dog whom they love, and 33% have cats. A 2017 survey by Animal Medicines Australia showed that the Northern Territory had the highest rate of pet ownership in the country, with 82% of Territory households owning a pet. Those figures are extremely high but unsurprising.

When it comes down to it, we need to support our beloved pets because they are a part of families. Just like our dog, Milo, who is our family member, Evie was an important part of Anitra and Dean's lives. I acknowledge that Dean is in the gallery with us. That is why this petition has been so important. People have already talked about the courage it takes to use a tragedy to be a force for good. That is no small task. You are dealing with your own grief. Every time you talk about the issue, you are having to relive the trauma and horror of it all.

That power has been so profound and important that it resulted in legislative change. We will hear more from the minister about it this week in parliament, which is fantastic. It is a great outcome not just for Dean and Anitra and Evie's legacy, but for pet owners to make sure there are the right regulatory processes in place to protect them. This has exposed sections that are unregulated need to be. People have an expectation that they are, which is fair. We have met that expectation by delivering for Territorians.

We received approximately 250 submissions on the *Animal Protection Act* consultation, and we are proud to be delivering this reform for all Territorians.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I support the Evie's Bark petition brought to this Chamber by the Member for Goyder on 22 May 2025. This petition is from 1,495 petitioners praying for immediate action to protect companion animals. It requested that the Legislative Assembly take immediate action to protect companion animals through the implementation of Evie's Bark. The reforms are crucial to preventing further tragedies, provide peace of mind to pet guardians and uphold the values of care and respect that our community holds for its animals.

Evie was a cherished pet and entrusted to a pet boarding facility in a rural area near Darwin. Days later, her family learned she had sustained critical injuries and subsequently died as a result of the tragedy, made possible by the absence of licensing, oversight and legal protections in the NT pet care sector.

Pets like Evie are family to their owners. On a day-to-day basis, many of my constituents and Territorians use pet-minding facilities when they need to be away from their homes, yet in the NT the absence of oversight means our current laws do not ensure safety, accountability and care guarantees. I have three pets—Charlie, Cody and Captain—and we have just inherited four chooks. They are very much a part of our family.

The petition has grown now to over 2,000 e-signatures. Although the new signatures added have not been tabled, it shows just how sensitive and well supported this matter is to the community. Protecting companion pets is important, as they provide emotional and physical support and may reduce stress, anxiety and depression. They provide emotional companionship, support during trauma and recovery and encourage physical health benefits, including lower blood pressure and heart rate. They also encourage physical activity. Companion animals can improve social developmental benefits by enhancing social connection. They can improve a child's development. They support neurodiverse individuals by providing structure, calm and sensory regulation for individuals with autism, ADHD and PTSD. There are benefits for older Australians. They combat loneliness and provide therapeutic service roles, providing emotional support as trained service and therapy animals.

I support this petition to protect vulnerable pets, support responsible guardians and hold providers accountable.

I thank Dean, Anitra and the Member for Goyder for bringing this petition to the Assembly.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the opposition I acknowledge the petition calling for urgent regulation of the animal boarding industry in the Northern Territory. Let me begin by recognising the tireless advocacy of Anitra and Dean Jackson, who launched this petition in memory of their beloved dog Evie.

The heartbreak of losing Evie, a trusted companion, while in the care of a pet boarding facility is something no pet guardian should have to endure. The tragedy of Evie's death and others like Marco, Badger and Bella have struck a chord with Territorians. That is clear from the more than 1,400 people at the time—which is now growing—who signed the petition, calling for reform to ensure their pet members of their families are kept safe when entrusted to others.

In the Northern Territory there is currently no licensing, code of conduct or regulatory framework governing pet boarding facilities or commercial pet-sitting services. The sector operates without standards, oversight or accountability, and that is simply unacceptable. The opposition supports the principle at the heart of Evie's Bark that our laws should reflect the reality that animals are sentient beings capable of joy, pain, loyalty and fear and should be treated with care, dignity and protection.

Territorians should have confidence that their pets will be cared for. That means proper standards, mandatory reporting of incidents, a code of practice backed by enforcement and clear consequences for those who breach the community trust.

This petition is not an attack on pet businesses; it is a call for responsibility. Many in the industry already do the right thing, but it is not good enough to rely on goodwill when the consequences of failure are so devastating. The government now has a clear mandate to act. The opposition urges the minister for animal welfare to take this petition seriously, consult with the industry and animal welfare groups and bring forward reforms that reflect the values of a community that cares deeply about its companion animals.

We thank the petitioners for their advocacy. We stand with you in calling for change.

Motion agreed to; petition noted.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Broken Election Promises

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received correspondence from the Member for Arnhem as follows:

I propose for discussion this day the following definite matter of public importance:

Since August 2024, the CLP government has failed Territorians with multiple broken election commitments, including scrapping underground power in the northern suburbs; reneging on renewables and climate change targets; failing to deliver on community safety; and cutting critical funding to Aboriginal rangers. Meanwhile, the 2025–26 budget lacks a clear economic vision for the Territory, with deep cuts to key infrastructure projects in roads, health and education that will have a significant detrimental impact on many Territory communities.

The letter is signed by the Member for Arnhem. Is discussion supported? Discussion is supported.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, at the last election the people of the Northern Territory were promised honesty by the CLP. They were promised transparency and leadership with integrity, but so far they have a CLP government that lies, hides, cuts and runs. Let us call it for what it is: a betrayal of Territorians, a deliberate pattern of deception, broken commitments and cowardice. The Chief Minister did not just fail to deliver; she failed to front up and take responsibility as the leader of the Northern Territory. She ripped away vital funding for communities and then ran for cover every time.

Let us start with the underground high-voltage power for the Darwin northern suburbs—a promise that was funded and would have made a real and positive impact for local communities in a tropical climate. Before the election there was not a word about cancelling the project. After the election it was cancelled, with a fabricated cost blowout used to cover the CLP's tracks. The CLP lied to Territorians to justify one of its first major cuts and broken promises to Territorians.

On the ministerial share scandal, the Chief Minister claimed her shadow Cabinet divested all their shares, but that was a lie too. The Member for Katherine, Jo Hersey, was still holding onto her Telstra shares after taking office and only divested them once it became an article in the NT Independent. It is hypocrisy of the highest order, especially after the moral outrage that the CLP, when in opposition, created about shareholdings.

Let us talk about integrity. The CLP government promised transparency then tried to sneak through its Territory Coordinator Bill, which gave sweeping powers to an unelected bureaucrat without proper scrutiny. So far, $21m has been spent on the Office of the Territory Coordinator with not a single outcome to date. Let us not forget that Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro appointed the Territory Coordinator to an executive contract officer role as one of the highest-paid public servants in the Northern Territory. She appointed this person without a process of open recruitment.

The CLP promised a lobbyist register, but we got a dodgy tokenistic list in paper form that does not pass the Territory pub test. This mob would not recognise real transparency if it hit them in the face. The CLP promised Territorians that having an assistant minister would not cost the taxpayer extra dollars, and now we are discovering that they have been added to junkets with no explanation of the benefit, reporting process or role of the assistant minister to provide certainty to the Territory. They are using taxpayer dollars, but there is no scrutiny of any of this travel.

The CLP promised to get kids back to school, but so far it has spent $20m on a truancy program, and it has seen fewer kids go to school in every region across the Northern Territory except Darwin. The CLP promised Territorians that each child in the Territory would get free swimming lessons, and so far we have discovered that schools have had to pay for the travel and logistics. Unless schools in our remote regions buy Clark Rubber pools, drive to Queensland or are flown to Darwin, they will not see the benefit of the free swimming lessons program.

In Corrections, the CLP has made a shopping list of promises, including two new work camps, compulsory rehabilitation, boot camps for young people and new programs to cut reoffending. No-one has delivered or funded any of this in the new budget; not even one of these promises has been funded in the CLP budget. Meanwhile, police are begging for support for the watch houses which are overflowing, and the police are burnt out.

What the CLP is doing to our police is utter disgrace. Let us call it for what it is: a betrayal of Territorians. The CLP government promised to stand with police no matter what. It promised to fix the system and to keep frontline officers where they belong—out protecting our streets. Instead, it has broken that promise. Across the Northern Territory, police officers are being pulled off the beat to manage overflowing watch houses and turned into de facto prison guards because the government cannot get Corrections under control even though it promised it had a plan.

The Palmerston watch house is packed, with 92 detainees in a facility that was never designed for that number of people. Police officers are working emergency rosters and are now doing 12-hour shifts, not because there is a cyclone but because the CLP government created this crisis. What do they get in return? Nothing—no recognition, support or even the retention bonus they were led to believe prior to the Territory election. Only a small fraction of police will receive the CLP's so-called retention bonus, being only those with anniversaries that fall in this financial year, which is about 180 officers. What about the 1,700 other police officers who were led to believe that this election promise would benefit them? They have been left behind—another broken promise by the CLP government.

This was used as a political prop before the election, then the police were abandoned. The NT Police Association has been clear that this scheme is divisive, unfair and failing to retain police officers. It is causing more resignations, not fewer. The Chief Minister, who is the Police minister, has brushed it off, pretending it is all part of its plan and that promise was never made. Who do we believe?

If the plan is to burn out police officers, destroy morale and gut the front line, congratulations to the CLP. It has done it; it is working. We are seeing the consequences play out in real time, including fewer police on our streets, more crime, watch houses at breaking point and a CLP government that would rather spin its way out than take responsibility.

Every government has a responsibility to protect its people and to protect those who protect us. This government is doing neither. Our police deserve better. They deserve respect, support and a government that does not turn its back the minute the election is over. The CLP is failing us all in regard to crime, and it is failing on staffing and integrity. It should front up, admit the mistake and fix it or step aside for a new leader to see what the CLP can do when it is not micromanaged. Territorians cannot afford to wait.

Perhaps the biggest failure of the CLP government to date is law and order. The latest crime statistics confirm what Territorians have been telling us for months: the CLP government's promise to make the Territory safe has already been broken. No amount of spin from the Chief Minister can change the reality facing our NT communities. No glossy media release can hide the truth that, under the CLP government, violent crime is surging, and no name-calling can change that fact.

Across the Northern Territory total assault numbers are up by 1.7% in just five months; serious assaults have increased by 5.7%; domestic violence assaults have jumped by 9.3%, with alcohol-fuelled domestic violence rising by a shocking 10.4%; sexual offences have soared by 22.2%; offences that harm or endanger people are up by more than 30%; alcohol-related assaults have risen by 8.1% across the Territory; and property damage is also spiralling out of control, up by 19%.

The numbers alone do not tell the full story. We are seeing the real impact on the ground, especially in places like Katherine. Violent crimes in Katherine have exploded, and long-term residents say that they have never seen the town as bad as this. Offences against the person are up by nearly 30%. Sexual offences in Katherine skyrocketed by a staggering 136%.

In the last week we have seen the consequence, with a stabbing near the Katherine Showgrounds and a fatal car crash involving a stolen vehicle. This is what is happening in our communities, and what is the CLP's response? Issuing media releases, members patting themselves on the back—shocking.

They are pretending that everything is under control. This is a slap in the face for the people of Katherine and everyday Territorians who say they do not feel safe in their own community and want to see police supported. I would not be doing my job if I did not call this out. Territorians deserves honesty. They deserve a government that fronts up and takes responsibility for what is happening across the Northern Territory. They deserve a government that will be accountable and does not hide behind spin and self-congratulation at every opportunity.

We need real leadership. We need a plan to tackle the crime and community safety crisis in the Territory. We need a government that listens, not one that dismisses the people who are sounding the alarm and have been doing so for months. The message from the CLP is sad but clear: it is more focused on saving face than saving Territorians and keeping them safe.

We will not let them off the hook. We are calling this out because communities deserve better, and this is what the CLP promised Territorians. The CLP government has cut over $1bn in infrastructure funding from hospitals, school projects, domestic violence shelters and critical roads. These cuts are hurting Territorians in every corner of the NT.

The CLP has broken its word on voluntary assisted dying. It broke its word on abortion rights, claiming no changes were on the table, only for one of its own MLAs to table a petition to repeal them. This was backed by the Deputy Chief Minister. The CLP said no austerity measures, but now every government department is being told to find $20m in cuts. That is austerity by stealth.

The CLP is flip-flopping on its hiring freeze in the public service, with the Chief Minister saying one thing and being contradicted by her Minister for Public Service. The Chief Minister has to take accountability. The CLP has sidelined the Minister for Health; sent the Treasurer fishing; gutted climate commitments, renewable targets and accountability; and lied about the cost of renewables. The CLP has broken its key election promise on the premium FiT for solar and kept gamba grass funding stagnant despite promising more.

The CLP promised in black and white—the Member for Namatjira was shameful that he pushed out in front to do this—that it would deliver on the commitment of $12m over four years, $3m per annum for a four-year commitment, to Aboriginal rangers. Election commitment 101 when governing is that when someone makes a commitment, the responsibility is on that person, when elected, to fund the commitment in the budget. That is how it works—commitments, election and funding. The CLP quietly struck out the $12m, which was committed openly and publicly by the Member for Namatjira, and took no responsibility or accountability in scrapping that commitment, affecting over 47 Aboriginal ranger groups across the Northern Territory.

The CLP promised to improve aged care, then cut funding to the Palmerston aged-care facility. It promised to ban gillnet fishing and flip-flopped since coming to government, and it cut approval wait times. When the Chief Minister was asked why, she could not give a reason. This is a pattern; it is not an accident. It is becoming clear that the CLP has a pattern of bad governing.

This CLP government is not only dishonest but indifferent. Its members do not care who they hurt or who is accountable when they are avoiding scrutiny. The most galling part is that they do not even have the decency to look Territorians in the eye when they admit that they got it wrong or have made a decision and lied about an election commitment. They do not have the guts to face the people affected by their decisions.

The CLP members hide, deflect, point fingers to the past and, most recently—another pattern of behaviour led by Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro—name-call, like petty schoolkids who cannot get along. They name-call and point their fingers, but not at themselves. They never take responsibility, which is a sign of weak leadership.

Territorians deserve better. They deserve leadership that keeps promises, a government that keeps its election commitments and leadership with integrity that focuses on Territorians' needs and what they asked

the government to do and that fronts up and does not run away when things get tough or tricky. The CLP promised the world and, so far, has only delivered excuses.

One of the most plaguing forms of violence across the Northern Territory is domestic violence. In October last year, the CLP, through its leader, promised to bring together a bipartisan delegation of this Northern Territory parliament, which was supported by the DV sector, to call on the federal government to fully and properly fund the Northern Territory on a needs basis regarding domestic, family and sexual violence prevention.

We have not seen anything since because, at the time, the Chief Minister was put under the spotlight and had nowhere to hide or run—she has learned how to do that since—and she promised she would work in a bipartisan way. So far, since the federal election in May, she has not taken leadership on this core area of focus in the NT. NT Police said, 'If domestic violence was properly funded and reduced in the Northern Territory it would support the workload of Police and Corrections, as well as youth justice officers'.

The CLP continues to deflect and try to dodge accountability and responsibility—not the leadership of any government. The credibility of the CLP in just 11 months—one month short of the first anniversary since being elected—is in tatters, as is the trust of Territorians, the people it swore it would serve once elected. Our Territory Labor opposition will continue to hold the CLP government to account every step of the way for the three years and one month left. Whether the CLP likes this or not, Territorians deserve better.

When it comes to ensuring Territorians have a government that is accountable, open and transparent, like the CLP promised—regardless of the disrespect from the CLP and the name-calling regarding the work we do, the organisations and experts who are on the ground day-in and day-out facing the pressures of the justice system or the horrific reality of family, domestic and sexual violence across the Northern Territory—we will be there to call out the government on what it promised, stays silent on and is complicit in. We see all the name-calling and petty politics in the world by the Chief Minister. When the CLP members do not like what someone says, there is an attack or they ignore it.

We saw last week the extraordinary move by the four Aboriginal land councils in saying that they will not accept the bad behaviour and ignorance of the CLP government anymore and want to be involved in the leadership decisions that affect Aboriginal Territorians. The work they want to do with the government has been ignored and disregarded.

That comes from the leader, Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro, who is running scared and name-calling like a spoiled little child, running around telling everyone what to do. Everyone in her team is obviously too frightened to speak up. When they speak up, they are seen as a threat and are punished and told to be quiet.

The signs of bad government are starting to show, but we will be in the parliament, in the Territory and on the streets in our communities and homelands holding the government to account. We will do that whether government members like it or not, because they should hang their heads in shame that in less than one year of governing they have already disappointed Territorians and broken promises.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I do not think this is actually a matter of public importance, is it? I thank you for your clarification earlier as to what will be determined as a matter of public importance for this parliament.

What Labor and the opposition might consider a matter of public importance, I do not think the rest of the Territory considers a matter of public importance; there are more important things to Territorians.

The Leader of the Opposition went on at length about domestic violence. That would have been a good MPI to bring to this parliament tonight. The Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence gave a good outline of what we will do. Those opposite could have brought that on as a matter of public importance, but all we heard was a rant and spray from the Leader of the Opposition.

I will touch on a few points the Leader of the Opposition raised. She said that we failed Territorians with multiple broken election commitments. It was never our election commitment to underground power; that was a Labor commitment. I want to clarify the record because the Leader of the Opposition is trying to rewrite history. The previous government put aside $60m for the undergrounding of power in the northern suburbs. I will speak about that a bit later.

Two months after the election, when we had already been sworn in as ministers, the CEO of Power and Water came to me and said, 'We cannot do this because $60m is not enough to underground power; we need more

money. Can you cease this project because we cannot do it for $60m?' For the Leader of the Opposition to say that we were calculated, underhanded and planned to do this before the election is wrong. I want to set the record straight on that matter because Power and Water came to me and asked to stop this because it could not do the project for $60m.

Reneging on renewable targets—they were not our renewable targets; they were Labor's renewable targets. We are still going down the road of renewable energy because it is the right thing to do and will provide cheap power, but we must do it in a manner that will not break the bank, is fiscally responsible and fits in with the rest of the network.

Labor blindly went down the renewable path and contracted people to put in solar farms and do all this other work, but they did not do that all important work in firming up the power grid. Those solar power stations and all the big solar stations outside of Darwin sat idle. They were unable to hook into the grid because those opposite did not have enough forethought to do the work to make sure they would fit into the grid.

I will go back to the rest of the MPI, not that it is an MPI; this should have been a matter for General Business day. They should probably have brought this as a motion, as it is not a matter of public importance.

Labor claims that the CLP has no economic vision; as usual, Labor just does not get it. Those opposite did not know how to put together a budget when they were in government, and now that they are in opposition it still seems they do not know how to read a budget book, because there were claims made by the Leader of the Opposition that are not true.

The previous government does not have a leg to stand on when it comes to critiquing us on economic development initiatives. Labor's idea of an economic vision was to take Territorians on an eight-year ride and let debt balloon by 800%. Its idea of a debt management plan after the Langoulant report in 2019 was to let net debt triple in five years. Its idea of economic growth was an embarrassing low 1% of growth per annum. Its idea of budget was to write a wish list of everything it wanted to fund but could not, and its idea of an infrastructure program was a pile of press releases instead of finding a pile of cash to fund it.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about deep cuts, but you cannot cut what was never funded. This government's overall capital works program has been brought down to reality. The actual cash allocation to the program under the CLP's first budget is higher than what Labor put into its infrastructure program. I will repeat that; our cash component for this year's infrastructure program is higher than what Labor had.

This is important; cash is real, is used to pay contractors and business owners and builds real infrastructure. Labor's infrastructure program offered up a pipedream of infrastructure projects. The CLP's infrastructure program actually offers up a $4.34bn pipeline of projects. This pipeline of projects shows that this government has a clear economic vision. Our government is investing $2bn in transport infrastructure because the CLP knows the backbone of the Territory is not just people who call it home; it is the roads that connect those people. I would love to make every road in the Territory bitumen, but I do not have the money to do that. We have to prioritise. We have only a limited amount of cash, so roads will be done as we can. I will not break the bank and beggar the Northern Territory like Labor would.

These roads on the Tanami Road corridor, the Northern Territory National Network Highway and the Central Arnhem Road upgrades drive our economy and underpin access to health, education and opportunities for people in the bush. They allow communities to weather disasters in our unique and challenging environment. However, we cannot make the Territory the best place to do business and get people to put down roots here if they do not feel safe. That is why the Finocchiaro CLP government's first budget made a record $1.5bn investment in Police, Corrections and justice. That is the largest law and order spend by any government in the Territory's history.

The Leader of the Opposition said that we had not invested in Corrections; again, I do not think she is reading the budget books correctly. I believe my colleague, the Corrections minister, will have a bit of a chat, and he can talk about the significant investment in Corrections to ensure we have the infrastructure, programs, staff and ability to deal with the root cause of crime and actually start to rehabilitate offenders, rather than what Labor did. I was there, and it was a rack-them-and-stack-them model. They cut spending from industries and programs and did not do a damn thing for Corrections.

We are funding early intervention measures; allocating funding to support Territorians who have been victimised by crime; and investing $270m to expand community safety infrastructure, such as emergency services, communications centres and remote policing centres. A safe Territory allows us to build an economically viable Territory to fund essential services and our lifestyle.

The problem is not that this CLP government does not have an economic vision; it is that Labor cannot see it. Labor has never been serious about the Territory's economic future, and it is laughable that it is pretending to fight for it now. Unlike Labor, the CLP is serious about repairing our budget and rebuilding our economy. Our budget repair strategy consists of five points. I have spoken about the strategy many times in this Chamber, but since Labor is so desperate to hear our economic vision for the Territory, I will lay it out in detail again.

Our first strategy is to grow our own-source revenue. This means bulking up our balance sheet through developing key industries and economic reform that cut red, green and all sorts of other tape.

Our second strategy is to focus on sustainable FTE growth in frontline services. Let me be clear that this government is not cutting the public service; instead, we are focused on recruiting in health, education, policing and Corrections where it is needed.

Our third strategy is standing up to Canberra for Territorians. I am in frequent contact with my counterparts in Canberra. Our government consistently advocates on behalf of Territorians so that we can partner with the Commonwealth on projects of mutual benefit and give the Territory the financial support we need to dig ourselves out of Labor's financial meltdown.

Our fourth strategy is doing what government does better. Unlike Labor, the CLP respects Territorians' money. If you want a guarantee they are getting the best bang for buck as we reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our Territory lifestyle, we will. We are doing this to improve program delivery and ensure government funding is going towards what it was intended for.

Our fifth strategy is to manage our debt and implement our fiscal strategy. Most importantly, the CLP's approach is to spend what we have to on what we need, not what we do not need. This is the only way we can stop Labor's debt pile-on so Territorians are not forced to continue shouldering Labor's previous bad decisions.

This strategy is one layer of the CLP's economic vision and our work getting the Territory's economy back on track. We also have an economic strategy that is rebuilding the economy for all Territorians with our regions at the forefront. We have passed amendments such as the Petroleum, Planning and Water Legislation Amendment Bill that makes it possible for economic development to occur in the bush, which the previous government could not do.

We are creating an open economic environment through the Office of the Territory Coordinator so that the Territory is a place where investment is sought out instead of driven away. The CLP's economic vision is already playing out, and Territory businesses are now benefiting from the work we did last year.

Thanks to the CLP our payroll tax regime has the highest threshold in the nation, stimulating job creation and backing small business. We also got rid of payroll tax for not-for-profit entities, giving them the ability to reinvest what they earn into what they do, providing better services to our community.

We introduced the most generous first home owner grant in the country, with over 600 applications and 200 new builds in the pipeline. Our government's $9.62m investment in grants had a direct economic contribution of $86.4m.

We ditched Labor's debt cap. We stopped Labor's debt spiral and gave Territorians funding certainty where Labor could not. There should be no doubt in Territorians' minds that the CLP has a strong economic plan for them. In our year of action we are well and truly living up to this title.

Our economic plan is not just talk. We are walking the walk, and industry knows it. In CommSec's latest State of the States report released yesterday, the Northern Territory ranked first for economic growth, construction work and housing finance. As you may remember correctly, the previous Labor government bagged this report, saying, 'No, the CommSec report has no idea. They are basing it on the previous 10 years.' We know now that CommSec bases it on year-on-year averages. Those opposite canned this report for so many years.

We are leading all other states by almost 700 basis points in economic growth and over 1,000 basis points in housing finance on an annual basis. The Territory is not just ranking above other states and territories; under the CLP the Territory is leaving them dead behind.

Labor had eight years to do this. It had eight long years to implement its economic vision. Instead, Territorians got a mountain of debt and a dying economy. For juxtaposition with an old saying, they came, they spent and

they borrowed. The closest it ever got to an economic strategy was its tag line that it would grow the Territory economy to $40bn by 2030. It may have hit that; it is possible. However, the only way it would get there was not through any of its own work. It probably would have just been because of inflation. Inflation may have trickled it over the line.

On the other hand, the CLP government is accelerating towards that target. In real terms our state final demand grew by 4.6% to $8.4bn over the year to March 2025. If CommSec's State of the States report is anything to go by, this government has set the Territory up well for 2030 and beyond.

If not for decisions Labor made over the past eight years, our economy would be even stronger. This government may not be able to change the past, but the decisions we make now will change the Territory's future. That is why we had the financial sense to walk away from Labor's commitment to underground power in the northern suburbs in what we found out was a terrible deal for Territorians. It is a joke that Labor is claiming we broke an election commitment on this when, under Labor's leadership, it flip-flopped on its commitment to underground power in Darwin for years.

Here is a history lesson. Again, this gives me the opportunity to set the record straight. In 2018 Labor announced it would fully underground 13 suburbs for $290m. In 2022 it revised that to only $60m and would underground only the high-voltage network. Two years later Labor changed its mind again, or more than likely realised it was in deep financial trouble and continued to cost this program at $60m, but now it was for only three suburbs. Suddenly, $60m went from covering 13 suburbs to three. So, we can see why the budget blew out, because its accounting practices were not that great.

Fast-forward to now, Power and Water Corporation is telling our government that the cost of undergrounding the entire 13 suburbs could cost up to $1bn if it went ahead. I got a figure from Power and Water Corporation a number of months ago, because when it first came to me and asked to cease this project I said, 'Go away, do the sums then come back and tell me what it would cost to do this'. It came back with roughly $600m, but it has been doing further work on this and have reevaluated that figure to $1bn.

Imagine if Labor remained in power and went down this path—$60m sounds awful to me. Labor's debt disaster would have spiralled to unimaginable depths, with an addition of $50m per year in interest just to cover that debacle. To cover that cost the government would have likely hit Territorian households with a $1,000 increase to their energy bill.

Can Territorians blame the CLP government for walking away from this? I made a good decision when Power and Water Corporation came to me and said, 'We cannot do this for this much money'. I backed it and said, 'Well, stop it. Let us go away and do the real work to find out what it will cost.'

It was not the CLP that got us into this mess, as the Labor opposition will have you believe. The CLP is getting the Territory out of it, which is why we have reprioritised the funding for underground power in the northern suburbs in that early term. This is not a path we had full view of until we got into government, but once we got there it was a path we knew we could not drag Territorians down.

The Leader of the Opposition is trying to rewrite history, specifically regarding crime statistics. I know that crime statistics have gone up by 10% here or 12% there overall. We have seen robbery, violence and theft across the whole Territory go down by 39%; house break-ins down by 31%; commercial break-ins down by 16%; and other theft down by 15%. Let us put this into context because this is what the Leader of the Opposition chooses not to do.

Let us look at the crime stats year by year from 2016 to 2024: homicide-related offences under Labor were up by 62%; acts intended to cause injury were up by 62%; sexual assault-related offences were up by 15%; dangerous acts endangering persons were up by 38%; robbery extortion-related offences were up by a staggering 316%; total offences against the person were up by 59%; house break-ins were up by 100%; commercial break-ins were up by 13%; and domestic violence assaults were up by a staggering 83%.

The Leader of the Opposition says that statistics have gone up, but when you look at Labor's history on crime Labor members do not have a leg to stand on and should hang their heads in shame.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that it is the opposition's MPI, and no-one seems to want to talk about it. In fact, I felt quite embarrassed listening to the Opposition Leader's rant on her MPI. As we heard before, an MPI is a matter of public importance. As the Member for Namatjira said, it is more a motion if she wants to talk so broadly about things in an MPI.

She also spoke about the land councils, representatives of which were out the front of Parliament House the other day. The land councils have a responsibility to Aboriginal people to support them with economic development and progressing that in their communities and on their land. There is a long way to go for them to do that.

The Opposition Leader spoke about election commitments 101. That was the pot calling the kettle black; seriously, there were eight years of a Labor government that put us in a crime crisis. With crime out of control across the Territory, 11 months into a four-year term of government, we are slowly clawing back points, but we still have a long way to go. It was almost as though she was in an alternative universe or I was watching an episode of *Utopia*; the comments she made were ridiculous.

The Opposition Leader spoke about integrity. We have all seen Restoring Integrity to Government, the paper that was tabled on 30 November 2016. Talk about integrity! If my morals and integrity were ever compromised in this job, I would not be here. That is the kind of person I am. I would never have my morals and integrity compromised; I would be stepping down.

In this document, Michael Gunner, later the Chief Minister, said:

Territorians want and deserve a Government they can trust.

They sure do. It continued:

An open, accountable and transparent Government is essential for this trust to exist.

It is a pity that for eight years we saw that trust eroded by the incompetence of the Labor government. There was the crime crisis. Labor had four Education ministers in that time—the Opposition Leader was one of them—and 58% of all students and 85% of Aboriginal students were failing literacy and numeracy.

There were shocking attendance rates across the Territory, yet the Opposition Leader gave a spray about all the things we should be doing. We reintroduced attendance officers, who are working hard in the community and talking to families to get kids back to school. Labor had a secret list of all the students—off the top of my head there were about 1,600 students on that list—who had not been to school for 20 days or more. Now, 500 or so of those kids are back in school, so more children are going to school. However, because they had not been to school for so long there is a lot of work and catch-up that teachers need to do to support those children.

The Opposition Leader claimed that schools are paying for transport for swimming lessons. This is garbage. This line, which is untrue, is constantly used. I have invited the Opposition Leader to bring forward these claims, if Labor has any. I suspect it does not because I have heard crickets; none of these claims have been substantiated. If any schools are paying for their own travel, I would like to hear from them.

So far, 50 NT Government schools, roughly 5,500 primary school students, have participated in our free swimming lessons. The Territory has the worst drowning rates in Australia. With the lifestyle and the weather we have and the number of people who have a pool or go to a lake, a billabong or whatever, there are many people who spend a lot of time in and around the water, yet for many years it was not a priority for young children to learn how to swim. As an ex-swimming teacher, I know it is important to ensure that children can swim.

We put forward—as it was brought to us by an alliance and was an election commitment—these swimming lessons that will happen for Years 1 to 6 across the Territory. Fifty government schools have already participated, and another 73 NT Government schools are set to participate in Terms 3 and 4. I look forward to that.

Some of those examples of remote schools travelling for swimming—the Opposition Leader is unaware that remote schools can travel for swimming—include Amanbidji, where the closest pool identified is Kununurra in WA. The students and staff travel to Kununurra to do the swimming program. Shepherdson College in Galiwinku is working with its urban satellite school to schedule swimming programs as students attend urban excursions.

The Leader of the Opposition talks a big game regarding crime, but she leads with her chin about issues in Katherine, which I heard earlier this morning. From the Opposition Leader, as a member of the former government and somebody who has lived in Katherine for many years, I heard crickets about Katherine for the last eight years. Now, all of a sudden, Katherine seems to be her centre of the universe as well. It has

been mine for 35 years. All of a sudden, she has realised that Katherine is worth saving. I find the comments she made this morning about how she could not step two doors down to see Nikki at the Coffee Club because it was not her electorate embarrassing. Give me a break.

When we were in opposition and went out to remote areas, as a member, we would call into anywhere, whether it be a school, a business or a station. No matter what it is, you call in and talk to those people. I have spoken to people in Mataranka many times, which is in the Member for Arnhem's electorate, because she does not go and talk to those businesses in the main street of Mataranka. She can comment all she likes, but I know for a fact that she does not talk to those people because they have rung me. As a team, we have been there and spoken to some businesses.

Ms Uibo: Can you tell us which businesses so I can make sure I clear it up?

Mrs HERSEY: There is commentary from the Leader of the Opposition, who is still calling out, interjecting. You have already had your turn. I sat there and listened to you, Opposition Leader.

Ms Uibo: I asked you to name the businesses. That is all. Can you help me do my job?

Mrs HERSEY: You can stop your interjections.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs HERSEY: Madam Speaker, I call you to either send her out or ask her to stop interjecting because I did not interject while she spoke.

Mr Young: You are not the Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: Even though it is late—it is seven o'clock—I will not put up with interjections, and I will not be told how to manage the parliament. Both sides, find some decorum.

Mrs HERSEY: I put up a post on my social media to see what the people of Katherine thought about the Opposition Leader's little rant this morning. Some comments are:

> *It's sad as a community leader she can't even HELP with addressing the antisocial unacceptable issues of her home town …*

And:

> *Sad if as reported she did not check on Coffee Club owner and staff …*

The Opposition Leader is acting as though she speaks for our backbench, but she did not even have a voice at the table in her own party that she is now the leader of.

On this side of the House we have spent $1.9m to expand the number of counsellors, unlike Labor which decided that it wanted to rip counsellors out of the schools and put them in the Mitchell Centre. We expanded that counsellor program across the Territory because when a student needs to talk to someone about a concern, they want to talk to someone behind a door. They do not want to get on an email or have to call someone. They do not want to make an appointment to talk to somebody who might not even be in their community.

We spent $3m to expand the school-based police program. In 2025 a new program will supplement the school-based police as well; that will be with the Aboriginal liaison officers (ALOs). This is a nice fit because the Aboriginal liaison officers generally are people who know a lot of kids in the school; they do in my community. The Aboriginal liaison officers have lived in Katherine for a long time, and they know the students and the concerns going on. It is a nice fit for Katherine High School and our broader community to have those ALOs working with the students.

Amanbidji School, where the closest pool identified is Kununurra, is another example of remote schools travelling for swimming lessons.

I did not think it was right to listen to the waffle and mistruths the Opposition Leader said, rewriting history, because based on her commentary I dare say those opposite have not learnt anything and potentially will be out in the wilderness for a long time.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, the matter of public importance brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition on the Country Liberal Party government's broken promises and cuts is important to talk about because it is clear and has become painfully obvious to Territorians that the CLP government is all talk, no delivery. The CLP was elected on a platform of promises, bold headlines and big commitments. After 11 months, all we have seen is spin, excuses and failures.

The Education minister spoke about what you need to do when you go bush. She might need to talk to her Cabinet colleagues who have failed to go out bush and listen to Territorians. There are a few members opposite who go out bush, including Steve Edgington, the Member for Barkly, and Robyn Cahill, the Member for Port Darwin. I hope one of them is the future Chief Minister for a Country Liberal government because they probably would not do as bad as the government is doing now.

They have been out bush, and I acknowledge that, but the Attorney-General, the Northern Territory's first law officer, said in parliament that she does not need to go because her other colleagues will just tell her. The Attorney-General is the first law officer and has carriage of the implementation, delivery and rollout of law and justice groups in the Northern Territory. She could not bring herself to be honest and tell parliament that she has not met with one law and justice group in 11 months. That is a big fat failure. Remote people deserve access to their members of parliament and to ministers, just as any other person does across the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory is an amazing place. It is rich in culture, heritage and the landscape, but we continue to make national headlines for all the wrong reasons. We have the second-highest incarceration rate in the world, not just in Australia or the Southern Hemisphere. Meanwhile, violent crime is rising, community safety is deteriorating, and the CLP's so-called law and order agenda is in tatters.

Territorians are not demanding apologies; they are demanding answers and results. They are getting deflection, division and disgrace from the Chief Minister. This is a Chief Minister who talks tough on crime but has no plan. She laughs when people raise real concerns, dismisses lived experience, blames everyone else and then has the nerve to call people who speak up apologists. Let me be clear that Territorians are not apologists; they are parents, workers, teachers, business owners and survivors, and they are fed up with being lied to.

The government says one thing and does another. It promised a lobbyist register and delivered a watered-down vision that lacks transparency. It spoke about underground power but did not commit to it in an election; CLP members remained silent and lied to Territorians. They poured $21m into the Territory Coordinator's office. How many fast-tracked projects has the Territory Coordinator delivered at an established cost of $21m? Not one. That role was never about the delivery of or fast-tracking projects; it was about looking after mates. The CLP scrapped its 50% renewables by 2030 target and lied about it. It did not tell people what it would cost. So much for a climate plan. This is a government addicted to short-term thinking and headline chasing.

I am a remote member, and I know the devastation that the ranger cuts have in the bush. In opposition, the CLP committed to continuing and rolling out a renewed Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program. In government, it cut the programs. We have seen cuts and broken promises from this government, with $8.7m cut from Alekarenge School and funding reprioritised for Yuendumu and Yirrkala Schools. That is a fancy word for 'cut'. Homeland centres were reprioritised, which means gone.

This is infrastructure in the bush that keeps kids strong, keeps them in schools, helps to break the cycle of disadvantage and builds strong communities. Instead of investing in solutions, those opposite are wasting $21m on truancy officers for a failed policy that has already been tried and scrapped. Do not get me wrong; those officers are doing their best and a great job, but this government keeps throwing money at the wrong end of the problem. Kids need classrooms, not slogans.

Mrs Hersey: Education is not important?

Mr PAECH: I pick up on the interjection from the Education minister. If she thinks I am lying, I am simply quoting the *NT News* that revealed the $21m expense is a failed policy.

Before the election, the CLP government promised $12m for the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program over four years. That is rangers on country protecting land, culture and community. There is no renewal or $12m, just another broken promise and lie. These are real jobs with outcomes. They are jobs that reduce crime, promote community and country, and jobs the CLP government could have protected.

Perhaps the most appalling cut is to critical upgrades for Dawn House. In the middle of a domestic violence crisis, the government cut the funding. Those opposite will say it was money that was never there, but thankfully people in the public service stay honest. The departments have said, even in infrastructure, we had the money which was being held by us because Dawn House could not do it. Dawn House turned away hundreds of women and children each month because it simply does not have the space. It was promised $8m, and it has now been reprioritised. That is the flash word for cut and betrayal.

This government says it is investing $36m annually in domestic violence services, but where is it? The money is needed on the front line, not sitting in a press release. We need leadership that actually listens to the sector, works with the federal government and walks alongside those doing the work on the ground.

We will never jail our way out of the crisis we are in, yet that is exactly what this government keeps trying to do, rushing through legislation and locking up more people while cutting support to programs which worked. I have spoken about the law and justice groups. If this government was serious, it would invest in diversion, healing, housing, jobs and truth-telling.

The Treasurer said that he cared about the economy and how the economic opportunities for the Territory are ripe and amazing. It is interesting that the Treasurer could not even be bothered to participate and attend the government's own economic positions. The Treasurer was a no-show at the *NT News* economic forum. He was not at the Katherine Show; we did not see the boat trailer.

This government says one thing and does another. This is coming from the Treasurer, who says he cares about it, yet he has had limited involvement. The government has saved the most responsible economic manager—the Member for Port Darwin—to hold those forums, because the Treasurer is the Bill the Territory cannot afford.

Over the last 11 months this government has run on headlines and broken promises at every turn. The result is more women and men experiencing violence, more young people being locked up and more Territorians losing faith in the system that is meant to protect them. This is not a government fixing crime; it is criminalising disadvantage. It is time for the CLP to stop the spin, keep its promises and start delivering, because Territorians deserve better.

The Education minister, who has no idea how the land councils work, said the land councils should be focused on economic opportunities. Land councils are. They work with traditional owners and Aboriginal land trusts to look at how they can leverage economic opportunities and investment. It is incredibly disrespectful of her.

When you ask any service provider in the Northern Territory what they think of this government, their response is interesting, depending on who you talk to. If you talk to someone in the social services sector, in the remote construction space or in the arts space, they will say, 'They refuse to meet with us. They do not respond to our emails. They ignored us at the shows.'

Of course, the Chief Minister talks a big game about community safety. She wanders around with her bodyguards. She had not been to Alice Springs since February, until she went to the Alice Springs Show. That is how much she cares about Alice Springs. The good people of Alice Springs deserve to have the Chief Minister there regularly.

The government talks about Labor being secretive, but this government runs on secrets. It does not tell Territorians when the Chief Minister will be in Alice Springs, as they know she will caca because people will be holding her to account. They will say to her, 'What are you doing? Why are you ignoring our wishes and breaking promises?'

The Environment minister, who calls Alice Springs home, is trying to recreate history with all the funding cuts he has enabled in the environment space. I tell you what; this government has good spin-sters on the fifth floor, because they churn out that machine and try their hardest to recreate the problems the CLP creates for the Northern Territory.

There is a lot to talk about across the Territory, but I urge this government not to close the door on the electorates that are not held by the CLP. Where there are Independent, Greens or Labor members, there are still Territorians who deserve to have the NT Cabinet engaging with them and not ignoring them.

The bush holds answers to many of our complex problems, where there are solutions to respond to crime and antisocial behaviour and for the economic prosperity of the Northern Territory. These things should not

be ignored. It is incredibly important that this government is held to account. That is the job of an effective opposition—to ask the hard questions, talk to people from the community and raise those questions in parliament, on the Written Question Paper and in Estimates.

We have seen the government focus all its energy in one area. The Chief Minister is a one-trick pony. All she knows is to talk one way. If you do not agree with her, she makes it her mission to discredit, attack and demonise you. We see that in the community with organisations and services.

I make it clear that the government has failed Aboriginal Territorians. To insinuate that it is a grandstanding exercise by the land councils—no, it is not. Talk to any Aboriginal person anywhere, and they will tell you they are worried about what this government is doing to Aboriginal people, whether that is in housing, investments or the arts. This government claimed to support the arts. We found out in Estimates that there is not an additional dollar or a new program for the arts. There are no arts trails or music trails—nothing. The arts contribute significantly to the economy, bringing over $730m a year to the Northern Territory, but under this government it is not considered important. That is a shame.

We will have the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair next week, the National Indigenous Fashion Awards and the music awards. They bring thousands of dollars to the NT. I guarantee everyone here will be styling up for a photo. Back it with funding.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I support this matter of public importance.

Territorians have become increasingly concerned over recent months about the direction this CLP government is taking the Territory. They are concerned about the growing pattern of deception and lack of integrity, as well as the promises and election commitments that have been scrapped, shelved or not delivered.

I first turn to community safety, which I know concerns all of us in the Chamber. Well before the last election the CLP was promising Territorians that it would improve community safety, pledging to reduce crime and back our police force. However, month after month since coming to government the evidence that shows its policies are doing exactly the opposite.

The statistics paint a grim outlook for the Territory. This year so far, total assaults in the Territory are up by 1.7%; serious assaults increased by almost 6%; domestic violence assaults have risen by 9.3%, with alcohol-related domestic violence soaring by more than 10%; sexual offences are increasing by over 22%; offences endangering people have increased by over 30%; and alcohol-related violence has increased by more than 8%.

The statistics do not outline an isolated surge; it is Territory-wide. Crime has not gone down; it has gone up and continues to hit local businesses and families time and again. It is unbelievable to hear those opposite say that the increase is not that bad. How on Earth can they justify an increase in crime as ‘not that bad’?

As the CLP failed to reduce crime, the Chief Minister and those opposite continue to try to move the goalposts. First they were all about statistics, but since they are not trending in their favour, now it is when the community feels safe. They have few accolades to back up their views because they do not believe in facts or data, and apparently that is enough proof for them that they are doing a good job.

The community does not feel safe under this CLP government. Residents in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Palmerston and Darwin feel worse off. How do we know? We see and hear it every day. Territorians are frustrated, and rightly so. The CLP promised the world and has delivered a snow globe. The Chief Minister can duck and weave and carefully curate her Facebook posts, but that will not cover the fact that she has left Territorians in the dust and our police force high and dry.

The CLP cut security patrols in Maningrida, scrapped the Peppimenarti Police Station and threw police a pathetic 3% pay offer whilst simultaneously trying to strip 177 police officers of their housing. The police EBA process has become so badly bungled by the Minister for Public Service that the Northern Territory Police Association publicly called in the Chief Minister to take over those negotiations, because the minister was not capable of doing it herself.

When it comes to the CLP’s record on integrity and transparency in this parliament, it has broken its promises to Territorians. It did, however, re-establish the Legislative Scrutiny Committee, but it referred only six of 29 pieces of legislation for consideration. Then, the government stopped the opposition and crossbench from referring legislation to the committee. It removed the ability for non-government members to do so in the

sessional orders, which directly contradicts the Chief Minister's statements in 2020, as the former Leader of the Opposition, when she stated, 'We do not have other review mechanisms for legislation'.

Territorians would not be wrong in thinking that the Chief Minister, along with her colleagues, cannot handle constructive criticism. The issue of parliamentary integrity and transparency already sits with the Member for Katherine's inability to divest her shares after becoming a minister—an action explicitly committed to by the CLP ahead of the 2024 election. Territorians deserve better.

Territorians are still navigating a health system under pressure. The health system was recently plagued by code yellows, which the Health minister tried to avoid calling. Only last month during the Estimates process we heard the minister boast that code yellows were no longer necessary and dismiss concerns from the opposition and health sector organisations such as AMA NT that Territory hospitals and health staff were under immense pressure.

I raise this issue because when we finally saw a code yellow called at Royal Darwin Hospital and Palmerston Regional Hospital on 8 July, and then at Alice Springs Hospital on 22 July, the minister hid away. He threw his CEO under the bus. Not one media release came from the minister's office—not even an acknowledgement. He sent his CEO on radio to do his job. Maybe he went hiding somewhere in the Barkly, but he could not even get on radio or put out a statement to explain to Territorians why there had been a code yellow. Territorians deserve better leadership than that, especially from the Health minister, who we all know likes to be visible.

Ms Uibo: Unlike the Chief Minister.

Mr YOUNG: Yes, unlike the Chief Minister. That is right, Opposition Leader. We know she goes hiding. I think it took her a few months to get to Alice Springs; I think it was February. Then it got to show day and she finally showed up, but she did not tell anyone. It was just a big media stunt for everyone.

Mr Paech: With her bodyguards.

Mr YOUNG: With her bodyguards. That is right, Member for Gwoja.

Turning to infrastructure, the CLP government has traded long-term progress for short-term political headlines. It ripped funding from the underground power program, denying residents of Darwin's northern suburbs—including Wagaman, Alawa, Moil and Coconut Grove—power certainty during future emergency events.

The CLP cut the Gunbalanya health clinic, essential health infrastructure, despite design and tender documents being finalised and ready for construction. Residents of Gunbalanya are left with a deteriorating facility riddled with asbestos and are forced to rely on transporting more patients from remote areas to an already overcrowded Royal Darwin Hospital.

These are just a few examples of the shelved commitments as part of a budget which cut a whopping $1bn from the Territory's infrastructure program. This is a direct cut to the future prosperity of those communities.

We can also point to other commitments that have been broken, scrapped or shelved. The CLP scrapped the 50% by 2030 renewables target and blatantly lied about the cost of achieving the target, relegating Territorians to an unsustainable future. It scrapped an election commitment to target a 43% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, but did not tell anyone about it.

It promised Territorians before the election that the CLP government would double solar feed-in tariffs during peak times but then announced it would apply only between 3 pm and 9 pm rather than the peak hours of 6 am to 6 pm.

The Member for Gwoja spoke about the $12m cut in funding for Aboriginal ranger groups, which I found astounding. I remember standing at the voting booths at that time, and the CLP candidate promised Aboriginal Territorians that there would be $12m in grant funding. This is not just a slap in the face to our rangers; it is also a slap in the face to our police force, which our rangers work closely with. I can talk on that because I was in Wadeye last week when a community member from a homeland went missing for more than two weeks. The Thamarrurr Rangers, the local police and the police search and rescue from Darwin were working in collaboration to find where this missing person went. This type of funding will help to ensure that our frontline services such as rangers and police can work in collaboration when those incidents happen.

Thankfully, the community member was found a few weeks later, just the other day. It would not have happened without the efforts of the police and rangers, yet we see cuts by the CLP government.

A couple of years ago when there was a tragic incident in Palumpa, when a young girl was tragically taken by a crocodile, I went to the site to support the police and rangers. The police relied heavily on the local knowledge of the Thamarrurr Rangers who, again—I shout out to them—did an amazing job. It takes a huge emotional toll on those rangers because it was a family member who was taken by the crocodile in Palumpa. They stayed there day and night and did not leave until they found the young kid who was taken by a crocodile. However, the CLP government is cutting funding to our crucial rangers who work in collaboration with our police force when we have serious issues like this. It is a shame.

All CLP members should hang their heads in shame for promising Aboriginal Territorians that they will fund rangers $12m in grants, yet they have not gone back to tell them that they will not do it. They have not faced up to the ranger groups. Have any of the ministers gone to any of the rangers to tell them that they have cut the $12m?

Mr Kerle: It was a Labor cut.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up on the Member for Blain's interjection; he does not care.

Mr Kerle: No, it was your cut.

Mr YOUNG: They were your cuts. You were the ones who promised them $12m for ranger grants. You cut it from your budget. It is a disgrace, and you should be ashamed of yourselves.

The CLP flip-flopped on its commitment to ban gillnet fishing, with no clear timelines on whether the minister will meet this election pledge. People are watching and waiting.

Territorians deserve leadership that builds up communities, listens and keeps its word. They deserve a thoughtful and comprehensive plan for the Territory that effectively addresses the commitment to enhance community safety, improve infrastructure, expand access to healthcare, ensure secure housing, create employment opportunities and provide environmental sustainability.

I pick up on the Minister for Education and Training's comments, who I think called out to us to identify the schools that have been talking to us about dipping into their budget for free swimming lessons. I can tell you I met with all those schools, and they asked us not to say who they are because they are worried that the minister will step in and take away their jobs.

The minister should do her job and visit the schools in our electorates. She never does that because they are Labor electorates. I have been to every school in my electorate, and they have consistently told me that they are cutting into their budget for the free swimming lessons.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Stop the interjections.

Mr YOUNG: I have never heard them telling me not to come back; I love the schools in my area. Those opposite are always petty.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Both sides stop interjecting!

Mr YOUNG: Member for Fannie Bay, do not worry I have a minute and will continue to speak. I suggest you speak to your Education minister and tell her to get out to all the schools, including remote areas. I do not believe she has been to any remote communities—maybe one or two, but that is it. I remember when Selena Uibo was the Education minister, and she got out to most schools across the Northern Territory. I was with her most of the time. It is a shame that the Member for Katherine, the Education minister, cannot even get to the schools outside Katherine or Darwin and speak to those teachers, who are putting in the hard work, about these free lessons and how it is impacting their school budget.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask myself just how utterly pathetic this opposition is. It is tired and weak, and it is like a wet paper towel.

We have spent the past month travelling across the Territory, from the Centre to the Top End, along the show circuit. I saw the Member for Gwoja, I believe, at every show along the way, as well as the Members for Arnhem, Arafura and Daly. While at the shows we met Territorians and listened to what matters to them. Territorians are talking about jobs, safer communities, the cost of living, the future of their kids and how much it costs to buy a dagwood dog.

Tonight's MPI is what the Labor Party hacks on the fourth floor—the spin doctors—think is the biggest issue of the day. What a joke. This so-called matter of public importance is not even structured like a serious MPI; it is nothing but a laundry list of tired political pointscoring and a desperate attempt to distract Territorians from the fact that Labor is still licking its wounds after being booted out of office and has no ideas of its own.

This morning the Leader of the Opposition admitted that Territorians do not want political pointscoring; they want action. That is what this government is delivering. Those opposite just have more finger-pointing and pointscoring. Frankly, most of the points they try to score end up being own goals. Perhaps they took their political lessons from the former Member for Johnston with his infamous rush behinds. Speaking of that former member, where is he now? Perhaps he scored too many rushed behinds in politics, and that is why we have a new Member for Johnston in this Chamber.

Let me start with this nonsense about the underground power. We need to set the record straight, so a little history lesson is in order about the former Member for Drysdale, Eva Lawler. Does that name ring a bell? Perhaps the Opposition Leader should ask the Member for Gwoja, sitting behind her. He is always behind you, Leader of the Opposition, waiting for his turn in your seat. He was Eva Lawler's Deputy Chief Minister and a good political friend.

When your Chief Minister Eva Lawler made a promise to deliver underground power in the northern suburbs, that was not a CLP promise; that was yours. She may not be in the correct faction for you, the left faction, but she was a member of your party, not ours. The Labor Party owns that promise and did not deliver or fund it. Labor lied to Territorians about what it would achieve.

Now, with a straight face, those opposite are accusing this government of breaking their own undelivered commitment. It is laughable. If the hacks on the fourth floor spend half as much time fact-checking their own party's failures as they do scribbling these dodgy MPIs, the opposition members might avoid embarrassing themselves so publicly.

Reneging on renewables and climate change targets? Here we go again with the climate wedge politics. I apologise in advance to the Member for Nightcliff, but I can say with complete confidence that I did not lose a wink of sleep on this one.

Let us talk facts. Prior to the 2024 NT election, the Environment Centre did a survey of all political parties. In that survey, the CLP committed to a 43% emissions reduction target by 2040, in line with the federal government. NT Labor, on the other hand, committed to emissions reductions targets but would not say what those targets were, merely stating that they would suit the Territory context.

We came to government, opened the books and saw what was left behind. Guess what? There was no pathway to achieve those targets.

Did we take a move out of the Labor Party's books to just lie to Territorians and say that we were getting on with it? Did we keep pretending? No. We were honest with Territorians and told people the truth. Those opposite do not know what the truth is, so it is a bit confusing. It is basically when you say what actually happened instead of saying something that you want to happen but will not.

The reality is if climate was the number one issue for Territorians there would be more than one accidental Greens member in this Chamber. Territorians want a balance, protecting our environment by growing jobs and our economy. That is what the CLP is doing.

This is almost where I choked on my Red Bull this morning, reading the MPI. The big one—failing to deliver on community safety. What a joke. This is coming from the same failed opposition that presided over the highest levels of crime and antisocial behaviour that the Territory has ever seen. This is the same opposition that, when in power, handcuffed police with watered-down bail laws. It is the same opposition that let our streets turn into battlegrounds.

Ms Uibo: Where is their retention bonus?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, stop interjecting.

Mr MACKAY: The gall of these people to accuse the CLP—the party actively working to restore law and order—of failing on community safety is beyond belief. I have even seen former Labor candidates calling for right-wing suggestions of how we are not going far enough on crime.

Mr Paech: Who was that? Tell me.

Mr MACKAY: I will tell you after. I have his name, but I do not want to promote him for free.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Goyder, direct your comments through the Chair.

Mr MACKAY: I would hate to do the Labor Party's job for it.

We have rolled up our sleeves. We are rebuilding the laws that Labor dismantled. We are backing our police and giving them the powers to do their job. We are resourcing the courts and providing ongoing funding so that they can get on with the job of dealing with Labor's mess. We are taking violent offenders off the streets instead of the revolving door justice system that Labor gave us.

Territorians voted for law and order, which is why we are here. That is what we are trying to achieve every day. Unfortunately, there is no magic crystal ball, and we cannot snap our fingers or do a *Bewitched* and play with our noses to make everything happy in a day, but we are actively trying to make the Territory a better and safer place.

Now getting to the second part of this MPI. I do not know how many words it was, but it was like reading a novel. It says, 'cut critical funding to Aboriginal rangers' and 'cuts to key infrastructure, roads, health and education'. I hate to break it to those opposite, but we cannot cut what never existed.

Here is the truth. Your former Chief Ministers, friends and Cabinet colleagues lied to you and to Territorians. They made promise after promise, but when Territorians looked at the budget books the money was not there.

It was always 'next year', 'next budget', 'one more year' and 'I am sure you will get it next year'. Guess what? Next year never came. We opened the books and found a financial mess that Labor created and then tried to hide with glossy brochures and empty slogans.

Do you want to talk about roads, health and education? Where was the investment when Labor had eight years in government? Where were the new schools and the major road upgrades in remote communities?

Ms Uibo: Zuccoli Primary School.

Mr MACKAY: This is on Estimates. You can write to me later.

Where was the investment in critical health infrastructure? Why do the electorates the opposition represent still have poor education and health outcomes? What did Labor do for people in the bush? It failed them and lied to them time and again.

Mr Paech: How is your attendance strategy? How is the $20m for truancy?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, stop interjecting.

Mr MACKAY: We are the ones cleaning up your mess and making sure that projects that do go ahead are funded and actually happen. We are building the road from Wadeye to Palumpa; sealing another 20 kilometres of the Sandover Highway in the Barkly; building a new health centre in Borroloola; investing in roads on the Tiwi Islands; and making the Arnhem Highway safe again. We are fixing your mess.

Territorians know the CLP is getting on with the job. We are delivering real investment in roads that connect communities and support our economy. We are building on the energy and resource industries that create jobs, not strangling them with red tape. We are supporting Aboriginal rangers in Indigenous communities by funding programs that deliver results. We are restoring confidence in law and order because Territorians are tired and were feeling unsafe in their homes under Labor.

This MPI is just another sad, desperate attempt by the opposition to distract from its own failures. Territorians deserve better than this. I think the Member for Daly said in his speech, 'Territorians want leadership'. I would love to see leadership on the other side of the room once in a blue moon.

We deserve a real opposition that holds the government to account on real issues, not a hollow echo chamber of political hacks upstairs trying to relive the glory days of their failed government. While Labor wastes time on political games and holidays overseas, we are meeting Territorians, fixing the budget and the mess we inherited and delivering the things that matter—jobs, safety and opportunity. If the opposition members want to be taken seriously, they might want to start by apologising to Territorians for Labor's broken promises and the financial wreckage and damage they left behind. Until then, I will take no lectures from them on integrity or delivery of priorities.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Mr Deputy Speaker, I address the matter of critical importance regarding broken promises from the CLP government and speak on the real and damaging consequences that these commitments have had on Territorians, especially in my electorate.

Let us start with crime. The Chief Minister and her government came to office claiming that they have a clear pathway to a safer Territory and that they had a fix. That was the commitment. The evidence shows that it is the exact opposite under this government.

I will go through statistics, which will paint a grim picture. Serious assaults have increased by 6%; domestic violence has risen by 9.3%; alcohol-related domestic violence has risen by 10%; sexual offences have spiked by 22%; and offences endangering people are up by 30%. This surge is not isolated; it is Territory-wide. In Katherine violent crime has increased by nearly 30%; Palmerston faces climbing rates of violence and property crime; and Alice Springs continues to experience an escalation of offences against the person. The CLP can hold press conferences and issue as many press releases as it likes, but numbers do not lie. When it comes to crime and safety, the Territory is going backwards under this government.

What did those opposite do in response? They took a chainsaw to programs that are designed to turn the tide and are community based. Did you see the result on Groote Archipelago? The community response and initiative has decreased crime by 80%. We need to use those models.

I turn to my electorate. Before the election the CLP promised investment in community safety to see real tangible actions to address crime. It has cut funding to security patrols in Maningrida, another community initiative proven to reduce crime. This program was not a luxury; it was essential. It was wanted and needed by the community, and members of the community came together to create it. I guess the promise to make the Territory safer does not extend to the largest Aboriginal community in the country.

The CLP government promised to get Territory kids back to school with the truancy program. I have not seen any truancy officers in my West Arnhem region. I would like to give a notice to the Education minister; come out there and talk to the people. We are all anxious to talk to you.

Furthermore, the government slashed more than $4m for the Aboriginal justice initiatives, undermining the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. We have the Nja-marleya law and justice group at Maningrida, which is a part of decision-making in the judiciary system for children and youths. It is more meaningful when countrymen, leaders and elders are involved in the discussion. At the moment, when we lock up kids in Darwin, there is no presence. There is no humiliation for the kids. They just get locked up and seen again in a couple of months' time. Law and justice groups have been proven to keep people out of jail, providing young people with genuine alternatives to detention. It is crazy that the government is choosing to defund these critical programs.

The Member for Daly spoke earlier about the $20m Gunbalanya health clinic funding cut. Gunbalanya is a fascinating place. In the Wet Season it is an island. It is cut off from any roads, so people need to fly in and out for critical care. You cannot even get to Jabiru. The former government had plans for renal infrastructure, emergency bays and essential morgue facilities at Gunbalanya. Now, without consultation or justification, the CLP has quietly scrapped it. It is not only a broken promise but a profound breach of trust for Gunbalanya and the region.

Another betrayal extended to the Aboriginal rangers before the election. The CLP praised rangers' vital role in land management, cultural preservation, biosecurity and community employment. The Member for Daly spoke about this earlier. They also look after the country. When illegal fishing boats were coming to Arnhem Land, they were the first point of contact. Rangers would find them. Community people would see the illegal fishermen and contact the rangers. The rangers would then have contact and sometimes contained them or

helped them by giving them water. One of the accounts was that they had an interpretation app. A Chinese national could not understand the Aboriginal person, and he put that app on his phone and understood what he was saying.

The budget cut deeply into the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program. Rangers in our remote communities are not just guardians and custodians; they are building local economies, providing meaningful employment, restoring pride and teaching valuable skills to future generations. By cutting this, the government cut opportunities, cut jobs and undermined community strength.

I will touch on the money for swimming lessons. Some of us in this room can drive to the nearest pool. For two of the islands in my electorate, Minjilang and Warruwi, the nearest place is Jabiru. It costs about $3,500 for a five-seater. To say that we have access to pools readily is just not true, especially for remote communities. Where is the money going instead?

The CLP pledged not to pursue austerity measures, yet it gutted funding from clinics, security patrols and ranger programs. It committed to supporting remote communities but instead hit them with the hardest cost. Where is this money going instead? It is not going towards the bush, improved services, additional housing, stronger alcohol or drug services, youth diversion or genuine employment opportunities. Instead, we have government without direction when it comes to the bush. It only cuts funding, confuses people and makes excuses.

Territorians deserve better. They deserve more than empty promises; they deserve a government that honours its commitments with real action.

The Labor opposition will always stand up for our communities and hold this government accountable for its broken promises because the Territory truly needs a government with a genuine plan for a safer community, better healthcare, more jobs, secure housing, fair justice and meaningful opportunities for all.

I always bang on about investing in programs to keep people in remote communities. There is always trouble when people come in truckloads to our regional centres. We want to keep them out there, and the way to do that is create jobs and make sure there is healthcare and housing there so we can live in a better and healthier Territory together.

On show weekend there were a lot of Aboriginal people in town. It was good to see them all go back. When they start lingering in bigger towns and filling the parks, that is when trouble lingers. Invest in the communities and try to keep our people in their communities so they are only coming to town for shopping and stuff. They are coming more because there is a lack of services on the ground in our communities.

Mr Edgington: You scrapped local government.

Mr BROWN: We scrapped local government? You promised it and did not say anything after that.

Mr Edgington: It was 1 July 2008.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Enough of the interjections! Come on, let us keep it together; we are on the home run.

Mr BROWN: Pinching a nerve there, Aboriginal Affairs minister.

The AJA and local decision-making created the Groote Archipelago group, which now has an 80% decrease in crime. Just back communities; they know the answers to their own issues for their own people.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I know it is getting late and we all want to get out of here and back to our families, so I will try to keep this brief.

The opposition brought this matter of public importance—so-called, because it does not have any substance to it. If its members want to talk about broken election commitments, I will talk about the broken election commitments in my electorate of Blain.

In 2020 the then Labor candidate for Blain was talking about a $300,000 commitment to the people in Bellamack to beautify their suburb. There is a long story of Bellamack, and I will probably tell it another time. Suffice to say, under the dying days of the Henderson government, it was suffering from mismanagement of

land releases and desperately trying to get developments out the door, so it cooked up a dodgy deal with a developer from Western Australia and handed it all over to them.

That developer disappeared in smoke as soon as all the lots were sold. The promises they made to the people who paid premium rates for houses in Bellamack that they would have green spaces and beautiful lakes to enjoy all disappeared. They were left with Crown land and unkempt bush that was used by motor bikers and four-wheel drives.

The 2020 Labor Blain candidate made a lot of noise about having a $300,000 commitment from the government to beautify these lakes. Fast-forward, he was elected by a narrow number of votes. Unfortunately, he then encountered difficulty and was removed from the Caucus. Whatever happened to that commitment? I have recently been trying to find out what happened to that $300,000, and no-one can tell me. It is almost like as soon as that member was kicked out of Caucus that commitment just disappeared.

The people of Bellamack were left hanging in the breeze. They have been there for three years now with no movement. I do not know whether that committed funding was delivered. I am trying to find out. If it was delivered, hopefully we can see what we get for it. If we are talking about election commitments, that one was ignored by the previous government. As soon as that member was gone, the people of Bellamack were left swinging in the breeze. To the people of Bellamack, I say that my commitment stands, and I will continue to fight to see you have the green spaces promised to you when you bought those lots off the plan all those years ago.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I wish to share with members of the Assembly a draft letter that I intend to present at the next CLP annual conference.

Dear members of the CLP, I know we are now celebrating the first anniversary of our comprehensive election victory. Let me pay tribute to all of you who contributed to this victory. Today, I wish to nominate for a special meritorious award from the CLP a person who I believe made the single biggest contribution to help us win government last August. I acknowledge that there are many other worthy candidates from across our party who could also be nominated, with not the least being our Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro. The person I nominate is an unsung hero who has been fully self-sacrificing and articulate in convincing residents who are traditionally rusted-on Labor supporters or swing voters to vote for the CLP.

Members, it is my privilege to nominate the Member for Gwoja for this prestigious award. I know this may come as a surprise for some of you, but let me explain. The Member for Gwoja worked tirelessly to become the worst Attorney-General ever, facilitating the exponential growth in crime, the destruction of our economy and ruining our Territory lifestyle. In doing so, he allowed unfettered access to alcohol to previously dry communities in Central Australia and brought Alice Springs to its knees. Whilst doing this he still managed to purchase shares in an alcohol company that would benefit from this unfettered access.

Members, how can we forget how often the Member for Gwoja got on the Katie Woolf show, *The Week That Was*, and deliberately used his natural talents to rudely interject and spruik his party's policies of putting victims last and offenders first. These deliberate, well-planned ramblings and occasional crocodile tears just sent voters to us in droves, and we need to thank him for this.

Members, you may recall that every time the Member for Gwoja had been scheduled to speak, we would all jump for joy and freely let him speak for as long as he could knowing he was out to deliberately kick as many own goals against the Labor Party as he could. Members, let us not forget that in the last few months of the election campaign, the penny finally dropped, and then Chief Minister Eva Lawler exiled him back to his electorate, but it was too late. He had already worked his magic for us, the CLP.

But wait, members; I have further great news. Our wonderful Member for Gwoja is not satisfied with just getting us into government. He is now putting in a magnificent effort to ensure we get re-elected with an even larger majority. Rather than just employing the broad Territory-wide strategies he used last year, he has now embarked on an electorate-specific approach to help me and my colleagues retain our seats. Is there no end to his generosity?

For example, following Estimates the Member for Gwoja sneakily issued a press release, which was cited by Katie Woolf, personally criticising me as the humble MLA for Karama for being useless and failing my community in terms of public housing reform. Unlike Labor, I am not offended by this. Like you, I respect free speech. I do not feel defamed. In fact, completely the opposite because I know what the Member for Gwoja's real intention was. He was once again using his natural talents of acrimonious commentary to remind residents of my electorate why they never wanted to vote for Labor again. Once again, I thank him.

Just so you know, Katie Woolf reached out to the residents of Karama and Malak to respond to the Member for Gwoja's comments. Katie then read out what they said. Let me quote some. The first resident said, 'Chansey has more hide than a pack of elephants. Those in glasshouses should not throw rocks. Chansey should not be calling anyone useless. Brian has done more for Karama and Malak than anyone since Delia Lawrie. Brian is a great Member for Karama.'

Another one is, 'Good morning, ladies. As a long-time resident of Malak who lives in an area that has a lot of housing issues, I find it utterly ridiculous for a Labor politician to make the statements Chansey made. Brian is an awesome local member. He is always available to his constituents, and when he sees us out in the community he always makes time to talk to us. His predecessor would not even acknowledge me at election time. Yes, we have a long way to go with issues in our area, but given Labor put us in the too-hard basket, I find these comments unbelievable, given we are in the situation we are in thanks to Labor.'

Another one is, 'Hi Katie. It is a pity Chansey's mob could not collect $80m per year in remote rent. That would have gone a long way towards new housing over the last 15 years.'

Members, you just have to love the residents of Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon for their honesty and judgement.

CLP members, I hope I have demonstrated how the Member for Gwoja is our golden goose that just keeps giving. We should recognise this wonderful contribution. I can only imagine how the next ALP conference will play out. I can see the Leader of the Opposition addressing a small crowd whilst glancing uneasily behind her at the Member for Gwoja saying, 'Comrades, let me remind you that there is no 'I' in 'team', but there are definitely three in 'village idiot'. Factually correct, but a bit harsh, I think.

Members, I know many of my fellow MLAs are queuing up to get the Member for Gwoja to work his magic to criticise them and generate the same defensive response from their constituents, but I am a bit selfish and ask that they wait because this wonderful village idiot is mine at the moment, and I treasure his support. He publicly claims to be a Richmond supporter, yet I know he is working side by side with me in the true Collingwood spirit. As such, I ask that we as a party pay tribute to this true CLP believer.

On another note, I know MLAs may suffer from insomnia. My advice to those members is to avoid drugs and just use natural therapies, including closing your eyes and imagining a happy place. Rather than counting sheep, my happy space is imagining the Teletubbies dancing around the sun, and then Tinky-Winky breaks away and races off to the stock exchange saying, 'I want to buy alcohol shares'. When asked how many he would like to purchase, he mimics his Banana Splits friends and says, 'One share, two shares, three shares, four. Give me these and many more.'

Sweet dreams to all, and God bless the Member for Gwoja.

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister, that is a hard act to follow.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, on 20 July 2025, bright and early that morning, my colleagues and I proudly took part in the 49-kilometre Sunbuild Top End Gran Fondo. This year marked the 14th edition of the Top End Gran Fondo, now the largest competitive cycling event in the region.

The Northern Territory Government proudly supported the event with a $50,000 grant to make sure the traffic management was all up to speed and ready for the 500 cyclists who took part in that fantastic event.

Every politician who participates in the Gran Fondo is proudly sponsored by Julian Barry from Darwin Family Law; he is a legend. As well as organising the event, he is involved with the Darwin Cycling Club. The $500 from each politician goes to a charity of our choice; that makes all the pain and suffering of riding a bike nearly 50 kilometres worth it.

I was proud to ride again this year for my fourth Gran Fondo for Autism NT. Minister Maley rode for Howard Springs Scout Group; Minister Burgoyne for the Breast Cancer Network; Minister Cahill for Total Recreation;

the Member for Blain for the Salvation Army; and the Member for Casuarina for Amber NT. He had the most challenging ride of all of us and will be investing in a new bike next year. Minister Charls was a marshal and supported the Down Syndrome Association of the NT.

It brought riders together from around the nation and Territory; it is always an excellent event. The ride is anything from five kilometres to a 135-kilometre challenge, and there was a 25% increase this year in novice and family riders, demonstrating that this event is an inclusive one for all Territorians. It exceeded expectations, attracting 500 cyclists, which was huge.

I thank the Deputy Chief Minister, as he is my riding buddy every year. We tag along together, and at most points he is dragging me along—what do they call it?

Mr MALEY: The draft.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The draft. I like to get there in the draft, and he drags me up the hills. This year was the first time it involved the Hidden Valley Raceway. The Deputy Chief Minister and I were lucky because the man put the witches hats out to go up there just as they cut off the limit of people who had to ride the extra loop at Hidden Valley, and we missed out which we were thrilled about because were pretty exhausted at that point.

Cycling is a great sport; it promotes fitness, health and wellbeing, and it is a great thing to be involved in.

Congratulations for first place on the 135-kilometre race to Jordan Mifsud, with a time of 3 hours, 30 minutes and 37 seconds; that is unbelievably fast.

The 92-kilometre race was won by Matthew Jones, with a time of 2 hours 36 minutes and 32 seconds. To give you an idea, the Deputy Chief Minister and I did 43 kilometres in about two hours.

First place for the 49-kilometre race went to Michael Menadue, with 1 hour 26 minutes and 28 seconds.

The 15-kilometre race went to Murray Darker, with 35 minutes and 41 seconds.

The five-kilometre race went to Jasmine King, with a time of 15 minutes and 34 seconds.

Well done to everyone, and thank you to all the sponsors: Northern Territory Major Events; Darwin Family Law; Sunbuild, the naming sponsor; AANT Salary Packaging; EcOz Environmental Consultants; and INPEX.

Congratulations to everyone who participated. It truly is a wonderful event, and we look forward to seeing you next year. The Member for Casuarina will have a new shiny bike by that time.

I had the pleasure of attending the GTNT Group Awards hosted by Mindil Beach Casino Resort. It was a beautiful Dry Season night. I joined 450 fellow Territorians from the education and training sector; small and large businesses; my parliamentary colleagues; and the trainees, apprentices and supervisors this event is celebrating and all about.

There was representation from around the Territory, from 17-year-old apprentices and trainees to mature-age apprentices. There were people from Groote Eylandt, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs, Yulara and Darwin—people from around the Territory to celebrate excellence.

These awards recognise the achievements of GTNT Group apprentices, trainees, students, supervisors and host businesses as well as 36 years of employing and supporting thousands of apprentices and trainees around the Territory.

Congratulations to Apprentice of the Year, Abbe Ayers, who is hosted by South32 GEMCO; Trainee of the Year, Tahnee Henderson, hosted by Charles Darwin University; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander of the Year, Kit Hawes, hosted by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia; School-based Trainee of the Year, Aaron Cochrane, hosted by CSA Contracting NT Auto Electrics & Air-conditioning; Host Business of the Year for Small Employer, Asbuild NT; and Host Business of the Year for Large Employer, Territory Generation.

Plenty of sponsors helped make it all happen, so I extend a huge thank you to: Calvert; Hot100; NT News; Mindil Beach Casino Resort; Master Builders NT; Charles Darwin University TAFE; MATES in Construction; NEC; Nyirrunggulung-RISE Employment & Training; Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce; Bridge Toyota; Rotary District 9560; ISACNT; Northern Territory Government; Cultural Journeys; NT Powerlines &

Electrical; Kinetic IT; YouthWorX NT; Territory Generation; National Association of Women in Construction; WANT Training Services; Prelude FLNG joint venture partners; GTNT Foundation; Max Fredericks; Amiable Communications; North Australia Media; Biznorth; S.L.M; Social Playground Darwin; Colemans Printing Darwin; Darwin City Hotel; All About Party Hire & Events; The Light-Up Letter Co. NT; and Ed's Engravings.

Many people make an awards night like this possible. A big thank you goes to GTNT Group CEO, Kathryn Stenson; Chairman of the Board, Chris Lay; and all the staff and volunteers who do a wonderful job promoting the excellence and talent we have across the Northern Territory. I thank my colleagues for attending; it was a truly memorable and wonderful event. We look forward to next year.

Tomorrow, young Olivia Mullen will be competing in the prestigious Champion of Champions Junior Golf Tournament in Lough Erne, Northern Ireland, which is amazing. Her mum and dad, Rachael and Jamie, are incredibly proud, as is the entire family at the Palmerston Golf & Country Club. Everyone is behind her for tomorrow. She is at that massive tournament, and her family have put the thanks out to Fiona from Ray White; Holly Trembath; Jacob Rawlings; the Palmerston Golf & Country Club, particularly Barney Ray; Helloworld Travel Darwin for assisting with flights; and Johnny, Sumi and the Lay family for supporting her to achieve her dreams.

Olivia, the whole Territory is behind you tomorrow. We hope it is a memorable and exciting event and that you do well, but if you do not, you are a champion in all of our eyes.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I put on the record a great event that happened recently in Katherine. It seems like it was a while ago, but it was just over a week ago when we celebrated 60 years of our Katherine Show.

For my family the show is a must-attend event that started 35 years ago when I first came to Katherine, and the family farm featured heavily in the horticultural exhibits. My husband and his family have been attending and exhibiting fresh produce from their family farm—Hersey farm—each year, starting in the 1960s. It was great to walk around the show and take in the photos of yesteryear.

Fast-forward to now, as a local member and a minister in the CLP government, and the show is still a must-attend event, but a little busier. Our office, along with our branch, runs a busy stall selling homemade cakes and biscuits; cooked steak; sausage and egg and bacon sandwiches; soft drinks; homemade egg and lettuce, corned beef and pickle sandwiches; along with our much-loved Devonshire teas. It was great to have the support of the Chief Minister and colleagues who came and supported our stall along with party members.

The stall would not operate without the generosity of many people, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. To those who baked, cooked and supported in kind, thank you. Our support comes from across the Territory, and it does not go unnoticed. It is appreciated.

I thank Elliot Wilson and the Humpty Doo Bakery team who bake the bread and scones for us and have done for the last few years—the scones are amazing; Andrew and Lyn Woods from TLC freight who bring them down each year; Chris and the Car Parts team for donating the cool room; Patty Buntine who donates the benches and cows—we have cow cutouts that we place around the garden area—who at the ripe, old age of 80 helps out in our stall; Dave Scorgie for donating the drinks; Jason and the team at Town & Country Butchers always provide the good-quality steaks, snags and bacon; Asian-United Food Service, where you can buy a lot of eggs when facing an egg shortage; Pedro from Duncan Electrical, who does all of our testing and tagging; Jessica Groves, who gets the steak sangas going each morning on the barbecue; my sister, Sam, who flies up each year—we could not do it without your huge effort on the till, setup and sandwich-making; KVEC (Katherine Vehicle Enthusiasts Club) for providing the chairs; and Gino Antonucci from Gino's Pasta To Go for allowing my husband to use his slicing machine to slice up all of the onions.

Thank you to the show management for sourcing the hay for me, as my normal supplier did not have any this year; Nhi and her staff from Brumby's for supporting our senior's lunch with Brumby's bread; Poppy Skudder from the Shed Gym for the use of their fridge; Ron Hersey, my father-in-law, who at the drop of a hat makes pickles for the corned beef sandwiches and always supports me at the ripe old age of 90-plus; Jenni Groves, Chrissy and Georgia for their baking efforts and serving on the stall; Brian and Stephanie Hill for donating the bacon for the barbecue; my parliamentary colleagues, including the Chief Minister and her daughter Isla and the Members for Braitling, Barkly, Casuarina, Wanguri, Brennan, Goyder, Fannie Bay, Nelson and Blain; and other people who supported our stall, including Carmel Whalley, Patty Buntine, Tim Cross, Shane Hockings, Chrissy and her daughter, Georgie.

I acknowledge the Chief Minister's daughter Isla, Chrissy's daughter Georgia and the Member for Casuarina's daughter Anika—all young girls who are extremely capable and helped out on our stall. Anika was amazing with her help on the stall. For young girls, Isla and Georgia were extremely competent on the till and let people know that they knew what they were doing and were no fools. That was good to see.

In conjunction with our stall, a huge thank you goes to my staff who run around and organise the seniors' lunches we put on. Thank you to Jen, Hannah and my daughter, Hannah, who is always ready to support the stall and her mother. Thank you to my husband, Dean, who does a lot of the heavy lifting with the setup and running around.

I thank Christine and Hannah who keep my flowers going when I am not at home so they look amazing on our stall and, equally, adorn the front of their salons and are admired by their clients.

This year the show was opened by Patty Buntine and her sister, Robyn Morris. Both of these ladies are long-term residents and show-goers, with their families entering many items in the show. Betty Martin, who is approaching 102, attended; she was at the first show in 1965. It was a pleasure to chat with her.

To the show president, Joanna Holden; junior vice president, Duana Job; treasurer, Bonnie Niceforo; the committee members, Cameron Allen, Kimberly Warrigal, Heather Dingle, Jen Baur, Tyson Brook and Katie del Santo; along with Joel Ulbricht, the Katherine Show manager, thank you for your tireless effort in bringing our show together.

Congratulations to all of the winners who entered events, and a special congratulations and thanks goes to Anna Kerwan for her countless volunteer hours over many years as the show treasurer. In honour of Anna's hard work and dedication, a scholarship has been created in her name for the next generation of show enthusiasts. Thank you, Anna, for all your dedication and hard work over many years. It is because of hardworking and dedicated people like you that our show keeps going. It is 60 years of celebrating the Katherine Show. Well done, everyone. Until next year when we do it all again.

Congratulations also to Tait Green for winning one of the highest accolades a St John Ambulance cadet can achieve in the international organisation's youth program. This honour recognises dedicated service, skills training and community involvement and is rarely awarded to cadets in the Northern Territory. Tait was required to complete at least 12 proficiency badges, demonstrate first aid competency and leadership across a minimum of three years and complete 100 hours of event duties. What a mammoth effort! Well done to Tait. He won the St John Ambulance grand prize award.

Tait's father, Ron, who is a teacher at St Joseph's, also received an award this year, the volunteer service medal for 10 years of service with St John. He received his warrant of appointment as superintendent of the Katherine youth division.

I also thank Ron, Tait and their whole family because they are great community people. They are always at events, supporting our community. It is families like that which make our community great.

I acknowledge the extraordinary dedication of Bess Hart on her Biggest Morning Teas. Bess has been a tireless supporter and volunteer for the Cancer Council, dedicating her time, energy and heart to a cause that touches so many lives. This year she raised $8,568.20. In the 15 years of the Newhaven Biggest Morning Tea the total raised in that time is $109,552.88.

Recently, Bess poured the last of her famous billy tea at Gorge Road. It was a bittersweet moment, but thanks to the kindness and generosity of Cancer Council NT, they have committed to supporting her efforts moving forward. This wonderful gesture ensures that Bess' Biggest Morning Tea will continue to thrive and make a difference in our community.

We also extend a huge thank you to all the volunteers and businesses that generously donated and supported Bess and the Cancer Council over the last 15 years, especially this year. Your contributions are invaluable. A special thanks goes to Bess. Her commitment, compassion and hard work inspires us all. Bess was hanging up her billy this year. She is well into her eighties and labours over that hot fire all morning, boiling the billy and serving tea. She was to pull up stumps this year, but the Cancer Council rallied around and decided to support her, which is fantastic.

A while back was the Mother's Day Run Festival with the Katherine Multisport Club. It is a great run along the riverbank of Katherine.

I might leave this one for another day, as I only have 53 seconds, so I will not get through it all. I will do it another night.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, the Member for Nightcliff and I were also at the Gran Fondo. Thank you to the Chief Minister for the shout-out for us riding as well. We rode to raise money for Dawn House. As we know, Dawn House and the Katherine Women's Crisis Centre lost a lot of money they were expecting for infrastructure funding in this budget. They have to turn away up to 200 women a month. We thought if the government would not do it, we would pedal for it.

It was a hard slog—maybe not as hard as Khoda's, but I still found it hard work. It was a great thing to do, and I am proud to say that we called out to the community to support that and have now raised nearly $5,000 for Dawn House. It is not much towards the more than $6m that they need, but it is something. It should not be the community's responsibility, but the community knows how important it is.

I am grateful for the chat with the Member for Katherine about what is happening at Katherine Women's Crisis Centre. I know that is on her radar as well, so thank you, Member for Katherine.

I will give a speech that I wanted to give earlier today but was not able to. Today, the Member for Mulka brought a censure motion against the NT CLP government. I thank the member for bringing this motion and am sorry that the CLP government refused to hear it. If it had been heard, this is what I would have said.

I stand with the Member for Mulka in his call for justice. This is not just a motion of disapproval; it is a declaration of broken trust, a demand for accountability and a message that if this government continues down its current path, it is not only morally bankrupt but also politically doomed.

This is a government that is failing to govern for all Territorians and has actively sidelined, ignored and harmed the people whose connection to this land runs deeper than any other institution, Aboriginal Territorians. Last week, the four NT land councils—Northern, Central, Tiwi and Anindilyakwa—came together for the first time in five years. Their message could not have been clearer. They said, 'We are strong together. We are not going anywhere.' But this CLP government acts like they do not exist.

More than one-third of the Territory's population is Aboriginal. Over 50% of the land and 85% of the coastline is owned by Aboriginal people through these land councils. These councils are not fringe bodies; they are statutory authorities established by the Commonwealth in 1976 with a legal mandate to represent Aboriginal interests on land and water. Instead of this government treating them as partners in progress, the CLP treats them as obstacles to be sidelined.

The Chief Minister has said publicly that she does not need to listen to the land councils, as though they are not part of the community she represents. Chief Minister and everyone in this Chamber, if you missed it this is what the land council leaders said last week. Matthew Ryan, NLC Chair, said:

> *Many people come and go. Our people are not going anywhere …*
>
> *Economic growth for all Territorians can only happen in genuine partnership with our people.*
>
> *Federal funding for our people props up the NT's budget. The Australian government needs to hold the NT government accountable and make sure its laws and policies match the intent of that funding—to help our communities.*

Anindilyakwa Land Council Chair, Cherelle Wurrawilya, said:

> *… the land council will not be sidelined.*
>
> *Everyone will suffer if governments keep punishing and neglecting our people, but we will all gain when governments work with us. Just look at the big drop in crime we achieved on Groote Eylandt since we took control of delivering justice.*

Central Land Council Chair, Warren Williams, said:

> *The findings and recommendations of the inquest must inform the NT Police anti-racism strategy, even if this delays the release of the strategy …*
>
> *There must be full public consultation of the review of the Youth Justice Act.*

Yet time and again, this government has pursued decisions without consultation, transparency and any respect for Aboriginal self-determination.

The funding that props up the Northern Territory budget, Commonwealth funding intended to support Aboriginal communities, is being undermined by Northern Territory laws and policies that work against the interest of those communities. When this government was asked in Estimates to account for how that money was being spent, it could not answer. This is not just a betrayal; it is a mismanagement of public money.

This issue runs even deeper. Racism in the Northern Territory justice and policing systems has become a crisis. The recent joint land council meeting called for an independent police misconduct body, for the full implementation of the Kumanjayi Walker coronial inquest recommendations and public consultations into the youth justice reforms; these are not unreasonable demands.

Let me say this plainly: a government that punishes Aboriginal people for existing, speaking up and seeking justice is not fit to say that it is here for the whole community. This government insists it is not racist, but any government that refuses to address structural inequality and systemic racism cannot claim to govern for everyone.

I want to be clear, because there has been a lot of misinformation about systemic racism. It does not mean that individuals are racist; it means the systems and policies in place produce unequal outcomes for people of different races, whether or not that is the intention. That is exactly what we are seeing across policing, youth justice, health, housing and land management. Aboriginal people are bearing the brunt of decisions made without them and too often against them. When the land councils call for something like a co-designed inquiry into structural racism in the Northern Territory Police Force, this government must not walk away.

I say to the Chief Minister and every member of the CLP: you may think you can win another election by dividing people, but there is no future for a government that denies more than one-third of its population a seat at the table. As the Tiwi Land Council Chair, Leslie Tungatalum, said:

> *Between us we own more than half of the Territory's land and 85 per cent of the coastline. Any government that ignores and harms our fast-growing population may win an election or two, but it has no future …*

The Member for Mulka's censure motion is not symbolic. Everyone in this House knows and has heard him, now in his third term, speak over and again in a generous way about how he wants to work with people in government to bring justice to address the issues we all know are of great concern. Over and again, his offer is not met. He did not bring this motion lightly. It is a signal from him, the land councils and Territorians that we all deserve better. We deserve a government that listens, includes and governs for every person in the Northern Territory—not a government of division or a government that says, 'I am governing for the community, and if you do not like it you can just go away'.

I am disappointed that we did not have the opportunity to discuss this motion today. I would have appreciated hearing what the government would say about it.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be part of a government that is reconnecting strategically to Asia, specifically in relation to trade and investment. Sadly, the minister in that realm can only be in one place at a time, so I was delighted to deputise for the minister this past weekend to support our Global Worker Attraction Campaign in New Zealand.

I was the small part of a larger team—Team NT. We had from people from across the Northern Territory Government in the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations; the Department of Children and Families; the Department of Corrections; and the NT Police Force. More importantly, in some ways, we had lots of representatives of industry, all of whom felt it important enough to be there. We had industry representatives from Hospitality NT, NTCOSS, WoSSCA, NT Shelter, NT Mental Health Coalition, Primary Health Network, the ICT Industry Association, the Motor Trade Association, the Civil Contractors Federation and the Chamber of Commerce.

In my past professional life when I advised on how to grow workforce and population, I have been extremely critical of these kinds of ventures. A lot of the time they do not represent good return on investment and, quite frankly, they are just junkets to a foreign land. I am pleased to say that on this occasion that is not how I felt at all. This was a well-executed, well-targeted engagement that will deliver a real return on investment for the north of Australia. That is why it is important to speak about it for the benefit of everyone in the House.

There were high levels of stakeholder engagement, with promising candidates in the sessions that we conducted in New Zealand. The presenters were extremely busy throughout the two days I was in Auckland; but, by all accounts, they were even busier in Christchurch when they had a small window and were basically run off their feet the whole time with people from New Zealand who are genuinely interested in coming to work in the Northern Territory in a range of sectors.

What is the purpose of these engagements? It is to connect overseas jobseekers with local opportunities and raise awareness about the NT as a place to work and live. We could all do well to look at these glossy brochures, because a lot of work goes into them and we should all been singing off the same song sheet when we are trying to fly the flag for the Northern Territory. This is excellent collateral that has been created.

The key reason I say this was a well-targeted engagement is that New Zealand has been a key labour source country for Australia and the Northern Territory for a decade-plus. In 2024 alone, 30,000 New Zealanders moved to Australia—the highest figure in decades—and 35% of those people were foreign born, which also has something to say for how we treat multicultural and diversity policy in this country.

It is not just relevant to Darwin. Madam Speaker, you may be pleased to know that the suburb with the highest percentage of people born in New Zealand in the NT is in fact Araluen. Araluen has 5.1% New Zealand-born representation.

These New Zealanders are not just concentrated in a little backpacker corner of Darwin; they are spread across the Territory, and they engage in and work in sectors that are important to all of us. It is in no small part because New Zealand citizens have automatic work rights when they enter Australia under what is called an SCV (Special Category visa), which since 1 July 2023 allows New Zealanders to be considered for PR and qualify for citizenship after they have been in the country for four years. Between July 2023 and July 2025, 92,000 New Zealand citizens applied for Australian citizenship. Think about it; that is a significant number of people who are interested in coming here. Of these, 48% were born outside of New Zealand. Again, this says something to us about diversity.

I had the opportunity while I was in New Zealand to fly the flag not just in person but also briefly on Radio New Zealand. That led me to look into Radio New Zealand and the stories it is prosecuting at the moment. The reason Radio New Zealand was interested in our story was it wanted to know: 'Why are you nicking all our New Zealanders, and why are New Zealanders seeking to leave?' It is an age-old conversation about brain drain and brain circulation.

I turn you to a recent media piece by Radio New Zealand called, 'Revealed: Number of migrants using NZ as a stepping stone to Australia'. We have to be wise to these kinds of things if we are trying to grow our population in a sustainable way. In that article a scion of population geography, Emeritus Professor Richard Bedford, whom I had the pleasure to meet many years ago in my academic life—he has been working on immigration in New Zealand since the 1960s—had interesting things to say that are worth reflecting on for everyone in the House. I will quote from it briefly. He said:

> *We need to take very seriously the factors that attract skilled migrants. It's not always about money, but money is a big one.*
>
> *We must ensure that highly skilled migrants we bring in get good jobs and are well paid. But we're a small country with a smaller economy, and we can't compete on everything.*
>
> *What we can offer is a good lifestyle, a welcoming environment, and a strong sense of community, things that also matter to many migrants.*

Richard Bedford also said:

> *… the real challenge was making New Zealand a place people want to stay.*
>
> *Not just with good pay, but with access to housing, a welcoming culture, and opportunities. If we want migrants to commit to staying, we have to make it worth their while beyond just the job offer.*

Does that sound familiar to anyone in the House? Is anyone cottoning on to the parallel here? New Zealand is to Australia as the Northern Territory is to the rest of the states and territories of this country. If you want to attract people to a place that is one thing, but if you want to retain them you have to focus on a whole different set of metrics. Therefore, it is a smart option to go to a place like New Zealand, fly the flag and try to encourage people to live and work here.

You will find in that Radio New Zealand piece that I had a brief engagement with our police industry representatives who were there, talking about the fact that they have lots of experienced and up-and-coming police who are keen to work here. It was the same with correctional services officers.

I think we will all appreciate that we could use labour force support across a range of sectors. What are those sectors? We were flying the flag for ICT and digital, automotive, civil construction and infrastructure, correctional services, law and order, hospitality and tourism, primary healthcare, social services and child protection and community and mental health services.

Everybody there was doing real work that mattered and will make a quantifiable difference to the Northern Territory. Chief amongst them, I thank Geoff Totham and Scott Healey from the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations who coordinated the whole event and did a stand-up job of keeping the whole thing humming smoothly.

I worked with Geoff on a number of the sessions where he would give a presentation talking about location, population, climate, the outdoors, lifestyle, education, health, cost of living, rental costs, property prices and wages. He gave detailed information to give the people coming in to have a listen a real apples-with-apples comparison in data. What does it cost you to buy a meat pie in this place versus that place? What does it cost you to rent in this place versus that place? That is the kind of targeted engagement you need to do if you want to attract people and have a fighting chance of retaining them in the future.

Another person I think deserves a shout-out is Kelly Abrahams from Migration NT. Migration NT has been undervalued, in my opinion, over a long period by successive governments. It does a lot of heavy lifting in trying to channel workforce into the Northern Territory. Migration NT has an abundance of work to do, and probably nobody was more run off their feet at that engagement than Kelly, who spent her whole time essentially answering visa questions in relation to skilled migration pathways for non-New Zealand residents as well. That includes things like the employer-sponsored NT DAMA, the subclass 482 and 494 visas and the subclass 491 Territory-sponsored, Territory-nominated general skilled migration places.

I will say until I am blue in the face and until you all wake up to the reality of it that we are not solving any problems without more people here. It is as simple as that. That means we need to get law and order under control. It also means that we will need to think about demographic growth to support sustainable economic growth. Otherwise, we will just be shuffling deckchairs on the *Titanic*. Therefore, it is important that we are connecting to Asia, building strategic linkages in relation to trade and investment and using our precious dollars to target sensibly to try to promote sustainable demographic growth to support sustainable economic growth.

I am grateful that the minister was way too busy on this occasion to go. I enjoyed attending this event to see firsthand the hard work that our public servants are doing in the face of trying circumstances a lot of the time. I commend Team NT on their work. I thank the minister for the opportunity to attend.

I encourage you all to take a look into the Global Worker Attraction Campaign and platforms like WorkerConnect, which we use to try to bolster our local workforce.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, tonight I acknowledge the amazing contributions and the award winners of the Northern Territory Music Awards. On 27 June in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) Music NT hosted the Northern Territory Music Awards. It was a time to celebrate the incredible talent and achievement that makes up the Northern Territory's rich and diverse music scene.

Music in the Territory is not just about sound; it is about stories, the beat of culture, the voice of community and the spirit of country. Whether it is sung in Yolngu Matha, shouted at the stage from a Darwin venue or shared around a campfire under the stars of the Territory's skies, NT music is bold, beautiful and utterly unique.

We honoured the artists, songwriters, producers, sound techs and festival teams who bring magic to life in the music space. I begin by congratulating the winners of the NT song of the year, Rrawun Maymuru and Nick Wales, for their powerful and moving work, *Yolngu*. This song is not just a standout piece of music; it is a spiritual journey, deeply grounded in language and culture. It is a reminder of the strength and pride that runs through the deepest First Nations hearts and voices.

Congratulations to the Blues and Roots winners, the Andrew Gurruwiwi Band which had an amazing song, *Yaa Djamarrkuli,* a groove that carries the unmistakeable pulse of community and connection. For Country we heard the heartfelt storytelling of Tom Curtain and his collaborators through *Good Life*, a song that

captures the simple beauty of the Territory. In the Electronic/Dance field, once again Rrawun Maymuru and Nick Wales delivered with *Yolngu*, showcasing the versality of pushing boundaries across genres.

Folk winners The Wanted Gems—Madison and Micaela Hull—outstanding Territorians from Central Australia, touched us all with *Lovely Distraction*. They were not done yet, as they also took out the Youth and Pop categories with *Detaching*. What an achievement from such young Territorians from Central Australia.

Hip Hop/Rap was led by Yung Milla whose track, *Bossin'*, proved just how sharp and authentic Territory hip hop can be. In the world of Metal/Hardcore, KOH7 brought with fire *Follow Your Ghost*—heavy, unforgettable music getting the right nights rocking.

In the Rock category, TANG's *Darwin Time* hit all the right chords, taking out not just the genre award but also the People's Choice Song of the Year. Well done to Liz, Roxanne and Alanah. This anthem is pure Territory power.

We pause to honour those who make this possible behind the scenes. To the outstanding Dirk Kelly from the Barkly, our Tech of the Year, thank you for your craftsmanship and care in bringing performances to life night after night. I congratulate the Metro Festival of the Year winner, TerrorLoud, and the Regional Festival of the Year, the always iconic Desert Harmony Festival, which continues to create platforms to celebrate culture, creativity and community.

Let us also celebrate this year's Hot Shots with the best photographs: for the portrait, Jack McDonald and his image of Ripple Effect Band on its tour; for the live-captured image, Juran Timu for his shot of the Borroloola man singing *Black Boy* watching Coloured Stone live, which is simply iconic; and a big applause to Zac Henderson, who took out both awards in the People's Choice category with *Rhythmlord* and *Groove State*—a testament to his growing place in the hearts of Territorians.

Finally, it is my honour to acknowledge our Hall of Fame inductees—none other than proud Centralians Ted Egan and Nerys Evans. Their lifelong contributions to Territory music and culture are immeasurable. Thank you for paving the way for generations of artists to come.

To everyone involved in the night—every nominee, performer and audience member—thank you. The Territory's music scene is alive because of you. May the songs keep coming, the stages keep growing and the spirit of the Territory always ring loud and proud. Congratulations to all the winners. Let us keep making music that matters.

It is important to remind Territorians that there are many wonderful festivals across the Northern Territory. If you cannot get to those festivals do not be shame and do not be stingy; buy a ticket and give it to a friend, a loved one or a constituent. If we are not buying the tickets, we are not supporting the industry, and we will not keep seeing these amazing festivals and emerging Territory artists take to the stage and share their music and talents.

I give a huge shout-out to MusicNT. Mark Smith and the team there are brilliant, continually supporting not only the NT Music Awards but also getting behind the Bush Bands Bash in Central Australia and a bunch of feel-good projects across the Northern Territory. Their work is amazing.

I attended the Music Awards, which was brilliant. I have always said that the Territory may be small in population, but we are big in creativity. The NT Music Awards was a clear sign of the Territory's talent.

To all members and anyone who is watching, get behind and support Territory musicians and artists. We need to continue to showcase them to the world. We saw at the NT Music Awards that Territory musicians do not just perform in the Territory; they are recognised on the international stage. That is something we should all be proud of; that is Territory pride right there.

Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling): Madam Speaker, this evening I will speak about a wonderful event I had the pleasure of taking part in recently, the Top End Gran Fondo.

For the last five years I had the pleasure of taking part in the Gran Fondo and, thanks to the generosity of Julian Barry from Darwin Family Law, raising much-needed funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Over the last five years more than $2,500 has been raised and donated thanks to Julian's generosity and support of what is known as the Pollie Pedal, where members of parliament are encouraged to take part in

the event by Julian and raise funds for their charity of choice. I sincerely thank Julian. What some may see as a simple gesture has meant more than words can describe to my family and me.

My mother suffered from breast cancer not once, but twice. My mum and I always reflect on how lucky we are to have her still with us. After all these years, this small gesture by Julian is much appreciated.

I thank the event organisers. Every year the event is well planned, and I cannot fault the organisers. I also thank the sponsors of the event, notably the naming rights sponsor Sunbuild and Neil Sunners who, after having a big birthday celebration the night before, got to the start line and completed the course in good time.

I will also speak about an incredible woman who passed away recently, a person I was so lucky to know and whom I grew up with at Braitling Primary School and St Philip's College. Amanda Connor was an exceptional athlete, a friend and mother of three beautiful boys.

It was only seven weeks ago I went out to dinner with my family and spoke with Amanda and Adam, her husband, and asked whether everything was all right. Amanda was not her bubbly self and had just found out the terrible diagnosis that meant she would have to undergo treatment for an aggressive cancer. Only weeks later, after trips from Alice Springs to Darwin and then Melbourne, Mandy lost her fight and passed away.

I fondly remember trips to Darwin for athletics, competing and representing Alice Springs alongside Amanda.

Head Street oval, where we used to train, saw many evenings where Mandy would be running up and down the 100-metre straight. During high school I fondly remember catching up with Amadna during tutor group in the morning and discussing many different topics. Amanda was the sort of person who lit up the room and was always positive in life.

Today was her funeral in Alice Springs and, although I could not be there, I thank Lisa-Marie for attending on behalf of our family. To Adam and Amanda's boys, Ethan, Jaxon and Axel, her mum, Carmy, her dad and her entire family I pay my most sincere condolences. Amanda's loss will be felt by the entire community of Alice Springs, and I feel fortunate to place on the *Parliamentary Record* this short adjournment acknowledging her passing. I will seek to read her eulogy in the future should her family allow it.

Amanda Connor—gone but never forgotten.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I rise to share achievements of a couple of young people from Sanderson and to inform members about Sanderson Day.

I congratulate Ethan Krelle, who has achieved the incredible milestone of being selected for the under-17s Australian men's netball team. Ethan's netball journey began seven years ago with the Northern District Eagles Netball Club. While he was under 13 years of age, he played as a junior. Ethan trialled for the Queensland Suns and successfully made it through the selection process, joining their under-17s team. As part of the Queensland Suns, Ethan competed in the Australian Men's & Mixed Netball Association competition in April this year. Thanks to his outstanding performance he was chosen to attend the under-17s Australian squad camp in Sydney in mid-May where he received the exciting news of his selection for the under-17s Australian team. Congratulations, Ethan, a true NT trailblazer for men's netball.

I congratulate Ocean Bonson, who has been selected to represent the Northern Territory in two sports this year, including under-12s AFL to compete in the Sunshine Coast in August and under-12s netball, heading to Ballarat in October. I wish her all the best for both competitions.

Sanderson Day celebrations were held on Sunday 29 June from 3 pm to 6 pm. Sanderson Day brought together an all-ages community event that truly celebrated the spirit of Sanderson. This special occasion successfully united hundreds of families, seniors and young people at the beautiful Yanyula Park in Anula where attendees enjoyed a wide array of activities and entertainment on a glorious Dry Season afternoon.

Almost 700 sausages were cooked and consumed alongside 400 Zooper Doopers and 150 coffees prepared by the wonderful Ahmin from Xpresso Mobile Cafe. Many thanks to the dedicated volunteers: Preneesh; Peter Bailey; and Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri, who helped ensure everyone was well fed. CGee's face painting showcased amazing artistic talents, turning children's faces into works of art. The Millington family brought their unique SpeedDart game for all ages to enjoy. Corrugated Iron entertained with their circus performances and training equipment, which proved to be a huge hit.

Throughout the afternoon, Peter, Paul and Jacko provided a vibrant musical backdrop in encouraging dancers and singers, including our own Member for Port Darwin, Robyn Cahill MLA, whose rendition of *Dream a Little Dream of Me* was a standout moment. Bernard Davey made sure the Darwin Multicultural Choir was part of the program, delivering two beautiful performances. The energetic Keltikka Performance Dance Company brought vibrant Irish and Scottish dancing, whilst Top End Mustangs delighted the crowd with their audience participation segment. Hector the Cat was ably assisted by our youngest volunteer, Nate, alongside Paddy Platypus, Kym and Rhys. There were plenty of hugs and photo opportunities to go around.

It was wonderful to have Waters Ward councillors Sylvia Klonaris, Kim Farrar and Mirella Fejo join the festivities. Neighbourhood Watch provided valuable information to constituents, and Cancer Council NT ensured everyone stayed sun safe. When organising this event we were truly overwhelmed by the number of people eager to be involved and offer their support.

I sincerely thank my parliamentary colleagues, the Member for Wanguri, Oly Carlson MLA; the Member for Drysdale, Clinton Howe MLA; and the Member for Port Darwin, Robyn Cahill MLA for their support. A special mention goes to Oly Carlson, who was one of the last to leave, still helping to pick up rubbish at 6 pm. Thanks also to Sanderson constituents and to regular office visitor, Butch, for his quiet assistance during setup and packing up. He is a humble man who never seeks recognition but contributes greatly to his community, once again demonstrating his dedication to Sanderson Day.

Thank you to all the volunteers and participants who made this event a memorable and wonderful day.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I was not planning to do an adjournment, but I became inspired by the Member for Karama. I thank the Chief Minister, Aboriginal Affairs minister and Minister for Multicultural Affairs who came to the Tiwi Island grand final. The Member for Barkly came two days in a row. Thank you for coming out; the people appreciate it.

I am also working on a fictional character team, and I am looking across at the Member for Karama. He was going for progressive; I am going for sheer size, multiculturalism, colours and different heights. Can you guess who they are? *Sesame Street*. I have a couple of mates on the other side, so I am not too harsh on them. I have the Member for Drysdale as Ernie, and his teammate from Blain is Bert—obviously; we cannot go past that, right?

I am struggling between Grover or Elmo for either the Member for Karama or Barkly. I will reach out to get input. The Cookie Monster is the Member for Namatjira, and the Member for Port Darwin is Abby Cadabby—good character there.

I am still working on that list, and I like the inspiration; I like the banter. If we could just go back to respecting each other for the positions we are in—there are seven members on the other side who were in opposition and are ministers now. I do not want to be calling the Member for Barkly Grover or Elmo. I am more than happy to put this on the floor and debate it or send it around. I think we should focus on limiting the name-calling and going along with the banter we have in our normal time. We worked so hard for our positions, but I am more than happy to debate it and add to it. I will reach out. Let me know how you want to go about it.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I will finish off the speech I started earlier today on the ministerial report on law and order. Just to recap everybody's memory, I spoke about the opposition and the comments about us leading by example and listening to Territorians, which is what we are doing. We are listening to Territorians and proving that Labor did not listen over 19 of the last 23 years, which is why Labor is sitting over there.

I spoke about how the Leader of the Opposition went on radio this morning and told Katie Woolf that people were shocked and gobsmacked about the events that happened at the Royal Darwin Show over the weekend. I thought I made it clear that Territorians are not shocked and gobsmacked by that sort of behaviour anymore. They are not surprised by that behaviour, but that should not be the way it is.

I also spoke about how the Leader of the Opposition went on ABC *News Breakfast* and talked about how Territorians felt that the former government did not listen to them. I made the comment that we were not sugarcoating that they did not feel as though the previous government did not listen to them; the previous government did not listen to them. It was not a feeling; it was an action.

In recent years many tragic incidents that have galvanised community demand for action. I spoke about this earlier. We are responding to that by introducing some of the strongest bail laws in Australia, along with many

other legislative changes. We do not make these changes lightly; they are direct answers to urgent calls for accountability and public protection after failures in the system pitched innocent lives into danger.

This is not merely about funding or law changes. The reality is stark: crime rates surged severely under the former Labor government over the last few years. Drug and alcohol abuse, repeat offenders released on insufficient bail conditions and social breakdown have all contributed to unacceptable outcomes in our towns. Our government does not accept that this is business as usual. We have boosted police numbers, improved remote police infrastructure and are rolling out major upgrades to the youth justice system. This government is on the side of victims and law-abiding Territorians.

Our communities have endured years of upheaval and uncertainty, but today, thanks to the decisive action of the Finocchiaro CLP government, we are finally seeing signs of progress. Offenders are being held to account and, crucially, victims are being put first.

To us on this side of the Chamber, public safety is not negotiable. We can and will deliver careful measured legislation, ensuring that the safety of Territorians always comes first.

There is evidence of a system that is finally, after nearly a decade of Labor failure, turning around. We know that success is more than just statistics. Real progress is when people feel safe again in their homes, on their streets and in their towns. We understand that law and order cannot be measured on paper alone; public confidence is what truly matters. Territorians will know we have succeeded not because politicians say so but because they feel safe to live their daily lives.

Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition would like you to believe, now more than at any other time over the last nine years Territorians are telling us and the media—saying it out loud in public forums—that we are most definitely not at the finish line yet, but they are starting to feel safe again.

The Member for Johnston this morning stated, ‘None of us feel safer’. I want to know who she is speaking to in order to confidently say that none of us feel safer, because that is not what I am being told. Police assaults have gone down from this time last year to the same time this year.

However, those opposite are not listening to this because the evidence shows us that they would not do it, could not do it and did not do it. They are embarrassed that we are now doing what they would not, could not and did not do. Instead, they throw stones.

These improvements do not happen by accident; they are a direct result of our government’s commitment to stronger laws, stronger police powers and unambiguous support for victims, not offenders.

The Chief Minister and all government members have said time and again that our job is not done. This is only the start; we have much more to come. The positives are that offenders are finally being held to account and victims are at the heart of our justice reforms.

For nearly a decade Labor’s failures let crime spiral out of control. We will not stop delivering the toughest bail laws, enhancing police powers, expanding support services and showing every day that this government stands with law-abiding citizens. We will not rest until every Territorian, urban or remote, can say that they are safe and know that their government stands with them.

As I stated in a recent Facebook post following the stabbing at the Royal Darwin Show over the weekend, it would be impossible for us to bring every person in the NT into a classroom and teach them right from wrong, but we can hold them accountable for their actions until such a time that personal responsibility is learned. Accountability is how we start to shift behaviour and hopefully lead to better choices in the future. This is exactly why we are coming down hard on criminals. We are sending a clear message that violent behaviour will not be tolerated.

Our community deserves to feel safe. That is why I put up my hand last year. This is what we are working towards every day.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I will touch on the Member for Fannie Bay’s contribution. I found it an uneducated and a punitive response. She is attacking our Leader of the Opposition, who works constantly with integrity. She works for the people of Arnhem and knows that the issues in the Northern Territory have been here for decades. There are systemic issues in the Northern Territory and Australia when it comes to crime.

The Member for Fannie Bay said that Territorians are not shocked about what happened at the Royal Darwin Show. I do not know who you are talking to, Member for Fannie Bay, but I have spoken to many Territorians about that incident, and they are all shocked and concerned about it.

All of us have been trying to work together to get better outcomes for all Territorians. The Member for Mulka has spoken about the impacts of the Northern Territory intervention when the federal government overreached its powers into Aboriginal communities and took away decision-making from Aboriginal Territorians. The government changed the *Anti-Discrimination Act* so that it could discriminate against Aboriginal people, yet the member wants to politicise this issue and attack our leader. That is what she does, she said; she comes in here and attacks. She does not understand the systemic issues in the Northern Territory.

I suggest that the Member for Fannie Bay understands the deep-rooted issues in the Northern Territory and stops blaming everybody else because she is in government now and has access to her ministers. They are clearly not listening to her. I suggest that she learns the history of the Northern Territory and the implications of those policies, which is why we are where we are at today, and have a more robust debate about the situation.

To pick up on the comments about ABC *News Breakfast*, we take responsibility; we always have. That is what leaders do. The Leader of the Opposition acknowledged that because she is taking responsibility, unlike the Chief Minister who does not take responsibility. The Chief Minister deflects and blames Territorians rather than putting forward something productive for us so that we can all feel safe in the Northern Territory.

I find it highly offensive that she attacks our leader because she has worked with integrity throughout her career in parliament. I have seen that firsthand.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I promise to be quick.

We just heard from the Deputy Opposition Leader about not attacking the character and integrity of a proud Territorian, the Leader of the Opposition. I remind him that he spent most of today attacking a proud Territorian, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. He should check himself in the mirror before throwing around accusations.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I will keep this quick. I was not planning to speak tonight …

Mr Young: That was shameful, Member for Goyder.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mrs CARLSON: I have something nice to say if you would like to listen.

I was fortunate to attend the Darwin NAIDOC Gala Ball with the Chief Minister and the Member for Drysdale. At that award ceremony our colleague Yingiya Guyula won the Lifetime Achievement Award. He was super proud of himself when he got up and was announced.

What was special about that was his story about how he got to that achievement. He shared lifelong lessons of how hard he has worked to get to where he is. He told the story of being one of the first pilots in his area and how he used to go to school and got to where he is.

I congratulate Yingiya, because it is a lifetime achievement. He has done a lot of work, and he continues to advocate for his people and represents the Mulka area proudly.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I will speak about my electorate, particularly the good people of Bellamack who, unfortunately, have been dealing with the short end of the stick that was dealt to them by the poor planning of the previous Henderson government, but I will speak more on that another time. Tonight I will talk about the issues with Opticomm and the raw deal that this provider has given the good people of Bellamack.

I will give a bit of history. Bellamack was built as a planned community from 2009 to 2011, with construction starting around 2012. Most of the houses were built by 2014. This was in the era of the NBN rollout. As a new suburb, Bellamack did not have access to the full NBN; it got Telstra Velocity. Telstra Velocity had a lot of issues for a long time. It was high cost and low speed. There was a pronounced lack of competition, which many of my constituents in Bellamack raised with me. Recently, it was transferred to another company called

Opticomm. Telstra Velocity has been moving out of this business, so it sold its assets to Opticomm. We hoped for more competition, more choice, lower prices and better service all around. Unfortunately, it has not fully delivered.

I will now speak about something that happened recently. I would love to table these documents, but unfortunately the quality is not good. I am looking for a higher-quality version that I can table at a later date. The people of Bellamack were recently unpleasantly surprised to receive this letter in their mailbox informing them that their devices were being upgraded.

Last year we had transitional issues. I will back up a bit. For context, as a planned suburb, all the digital and free-to-air services for Bellamack are provided by the NBN or fibre network. The idea originally was that there would be no antennas on top of roofs because someone decided they did not like that. If you are in Bellamack and want free-to-air TV, you need to plug into the box from Opticomm. If that box does not have a TV out connection, you are out of luck. We had issues last year, but I was fortunate to find an Opticomm technician to resolve them.

I turn back to the letter that the people of Bellamack received. It says, 'Your device is being upgraded. A technician will attend your property and upgrade your device.'

They do not get a choice; it is just happening. Most people in Bellamack, because of the covenant, are not allowed to have an external fence, so that box is exposed to the world and they are unable to opt out. It says, 'Your free-to-air TV service will be impacted. If you currently watch free-to-air TV delivered by the Opticomm fibre network, note that this service will cease to work once your ONT is replaced.'

ONT is the optical network device. It continues, 'This is due to the legacy fibre TV technology being decommissioned across the network. To continue watching free-to-air TV, you will need to make alternative arrangements before we upgrade equipment at your residence.'

Thank you, Opticomm. They basically said that if you want to watch free-to-air TV, good luck; you need to either pay, at your own cost, to get an antenna installed on your roof and cable run through and terminate at a patch panel, or you can buy a little dodgy one that plugs into the back of your TV that has subpar reception.

On behalf of the residents of Bellamack, I complain about the treatment of residents by Opticomm. I will be writing to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman on their behalf. I will also be writing to the federal Minister for Communications to raise this issue and request that they direct Opticomm to provide better alternatives to the residents of Bellamack.

I will talk about a fantastic charity event I recently participated in—the Sunbuild Gran Fondo. I participated in the Pollie Pedal along with the Member for Braitling who set a cracking pace, getting back before the rest of us; the Chief Minister; the Members for Nelson and Casuarina; and—yes, I am working my way around the Chamber—the Members for Johnston and Nightcliff. We were all pedalling for a good cause.

My cause was the Salvation Army because they have a domestic violence shelter for women in Palmerston. I will not say any more specifically than that. We all agree in this House that it is a vital service, which I am happy to support. I look forward to presenting them with a cheque from Darwin Family Law, who I thank for sponsoring the Pollie Pedal.

I will briefly report to the Assembly that the show circuit for the Northern Territory has recently wrapped up with the Royal Darwin Show. In my first year, I am proud that I could attend every show as they moved their way up the Stuart Highway, starting with Madam Speaker's lovely town of Alice Springs, then Tennant Creek, Katherine and finally the Royal Darwin Show.

The Members for Goyder and Casuarina and I took the opportunity to explore part of Central Australia's lovely country, the West MacDonnell Ranges. It is a stunning part of the Territory. I am itching for the opportunity to go back there with my family and walk some of the trails. I would love to do the Larapinta Trail one day, although I am not sure how. I will have to carry a lot of water and food with me, but I look forward to it.

We also had a tour around Tennant Creek from the Member for Barkly and saw the amazing opportunities that are opening up there. It is a land of opportunity. We saw the Juno Centre, which is a fantastic education facility which I will talk about another time; the youth justice facility, which was mentioned today and is doing great work; and the Barkly Work Camp. We also saw the Nobles Nob mine and heard about the large reserves of gold under the ground outside Tennant Creek that are just waiting to be tapped.

All the best to the Member for Barkly. I look forward to going back another time and seeing industry leaping into life under this CLP Finocchiaro government.

Briefly before I finish, to correct the record for today, the Member for Johnston mentioned EPA readings for Palmerston that were not working. I looked at the site today, and the readings for Palmerston seem to be working fine. They are reporting readings. Maybe there is another time when you checked that they were not working, but when I checked today they seemed to be working fine.

Given that prevailing winds throughout most of the year come from the south-east, and Palmerston is not downwind of the Middle Arm facility, it tends to blow over the port, Winnellie and the airport rather than Palmerston. We have a lot of air pollution, but unfortunately it is from the annual burn-offs. They impact our air quality quite a lot.

Lastly, it is good to see the Member for Daly defending his leader. Before he was elected, as her staffer he spent a lot of time travelling around and supporting her.

For the people who live in Darwin, the suburb is Wagaman. Maybe in Sydney it is pronounced, ‘Wag-ay-man’; I do not know, but people who grew up in the Territory pronounce that suburb as Wagaman.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.