Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

15th Assembly



Parliamentary Record
Debates and Questions



Tuesday 15 October 2024

CONTENTS

ASSEMBLY CONVENED 1
NOTICE CALLING TOGETHER THE 15TH ASSEMBLY 1
ATTENDANCE OF HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR 1
TO DECLARE OPEN THE 15TH ASSEMBLY 1
RETURN OF WRIT 1
ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS 1
ELECTION OF SPEAKER 2
PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO ADMINISTRATOR 3
ATTENDANCE OF HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ADDRESS THE ASSEMBLY 3
ADMINISTRATOR'S ADDRESS 3
ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS ORDER 7
OPPOSITION PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES 7
MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR 8
Message No 38 – Assent to Bills Passed in June 2024 8
ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER 8
MOTION 8
Routine of Business – Adopt Sessional Orders 8
NOTICES 9
ADDRESS IN REPLY 10
PAPER TABLED 90
Correspondence from the Auditor-General 90
ADJOURNMENT 90

ASSEMBLY CONVENED

The 15th Assembly convened on 15 October 2024, pursuant to notice by His Honour the Administrator.

NOTICE CALLING TOGETHER THE 15TH ASSEMBLY

The CLERK: Honourable members and guests, the instrument appointing this meeting day states:

Northern Territory of Australia

Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 *(Cth)*

1st Session of 15th Legislative Assembly

I, Hugh Crosbie Heggie, Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, under section 22(1) of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 *(Cth), appoint 10 am on Tuesday, 15 October 2024 as the time for holding the 1st session of the 15th Legislative Assembly.*

Hugh Heggie
Administrator

Dated 19 September 2024

The Serjeant at Arms conducted His Honour Professor the Honourable Hugh Crosbie Heggie AO, PSM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, and Ms Ruth Jones into the Chamber.

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair.

ATTENDANCE OF HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO DECLARE OPEN THE 15th ASSEMBLY

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Members of the Legislative Assembly and guests, I begin by acknowledging the Larrakia people, the tradition custodians upon whose land we gather today, and pay my respects to the elders and extend that respect to their descendants past, present and emerging.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 22 of the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* of the Commonwealth, I appointed 10 am on Tuesday 15 October 2024 as the day for the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia to assemble for the dispatch of business and required all Members of the Legislative Assembly to give their attendance in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

I declare open the first session of the 15th Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 13 of the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* of the Commonwealth it is, amongst other things, enacted that every Member of the Legislative Assembly shall, before taking their seat, make and subscribe before the Administrator, or a person authorised by the Administrator, an oath or affirmation of allegiance in the form in Schedule 2 of the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* and an oath or affirmation of office in the form in Schedule 3 of the Act.

I now ask the Clerk to lay on the table the return of the writ.

RETURN OF WRIT

The Clerk laid on the table the writ for the election of Members of the Legislative Assembly held on 24 August 2024.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS

The following members named in the returns made and subscribed the oaths or affirmations required by law:

Electorate	Member
Arafura	Manuel Brown
Araluen	Robyn Jane Lambley

Arnhem	Selena Jane Malijarri Uibo
Barkly	Steven Mark Edgington
Blain	Matthew Allan Kerle
Braitling	Joshua Roland Burgoyne
Brennan	Marie-Clare Joy Boothby
Casuarina	Khoda Patel
Daly	Dheran Justin Young
Drysdale	Clinton Paul Howe
Fannie Bay	Laurie Anne Zio
Fong Lim	Tanzil Rahman
Goyder	Andrew Reay Mackay
Gwoja	Chanston James Paech
Johnston	Justine Ruth Davis
Karama	Brian Christopher O'Gallagher
Katherine	Jo-Anne Hersey
Mulka	Yingiya Mark Guyula
Namatjira	William Carl Yan
Nelson	Gerard Phillip Maley
Nightcliff	Kat Danger McNamara
Port Darwin	Robyn Patricia Cahill OAM
Sanderson	Jinson Anto Charls
Spillett	Lia Emele Finocchiaro
Wanguri	Oly Marharita Carlson

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is now necessary that a Speaker be chosen. You, the Members of the Legislative Assembly, will now proceed to choose some proper person to be your Speaker. Following the presentation of your Speaker to me, I will address the Assembly, declaring the causes for calling the Assembly together.

His Honour the Administrator and Ms Ruth Jones, escorted by the Serjeant at Arms, withdrew from the Chamber.

The CLERK: Pursuant to Standing Order 214, I call the Chief Minister to nominate a member to be the Speaker.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Mr Clerk, I nominate the Member for Araluen, Mrs Robyn Lambley, to be the Speaker of the 15th Assembly, and I move that the Member for Araluen take the Chair as Speaker.

The Member for Araluen has been a member of this House since 2010 and is warmly regarded in Westminster tradition as the Mother of the House, being the most senior member of this parliament. It gives me great honour to nominate the Member for Araluen, who has served her community with distinction and pride over many years. In the spirit of making sure that parliamentary practice is held in incredibly high esteem and the traditions of our system are upheld, I know that having the Member for Araluen as an Independent Speaker will bring important reform to the parliament and a spirit of cooperation, which this Assembly needs.

Members: Hear, hear!

The CLERK: Does a member second the nomination?

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Mr Clerk, on behalf of the Labor opposition, we second the nomination of the Member for Araluen, a trusted and respected member of her community representing not only the Central Australian part of the Northern Territory but the whole of the Northern Territory. Should she accept the nomination, the Member for Araluen will serve with integrity, independence and impartiality, which is the true reflection of the Speaker role. We respect and support the Chief Minister's nomination of the Member for Araluen.

The CLERK: Does the Member for Araluen accept the nomination?

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Yes, I accept.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal? There being no further proposal, the time for proposals has expired.

Does any member wish to speak to the nomination? I declare the Member for Araluen elected as the Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: Traditionally, the Speaker-elect is dragged unwillingly and reluctantly to the seat, but I have no reluctance or hesitation. I am extremely honoured to take on this amazing role, which came unexpectedly. Thank you; I appreciate the high honour you have bestowed upon me.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO ADMINISTRATOR

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am informed that it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend the Office of the Speaker. It is my intention to present myself to him as the choice of the Assembly for its Speaker. I invite honourable members to accompany me.

The Assembly suspended.

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I report that I presented myself to His Honour Professor the Honourable Hugh Heggie AO, PSM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, as the choice of the Assembly for its Speaker. His Honour was pleased to congratulate me.

ATTENDANCE OF HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ADDRESS THE ASSEMBLY

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Administrator will attend the Assembly immediately to declare the causes of his calling the Assembly together.

Serjeant at Arms, please inform His Honour that the Assembly is waiting to receive him.

The Serjeant at Arms conducted His Honour the Administrator and Ms Ruth Jones into the Chamber.

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair.

ADMINISTRATOR'S ADDRESS

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Madam Speaker and honourable members, those newly elected and those returning, *Darran'darra Men-egg-gwa Batji-wa*. Good morning.

Thank you to Jeanneen McLennan for welcoming us to country. I pay my respect to the Larrakia people and their elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all First Nations people present. I also acknowledge all traditional custodians across the Northern Territory.

The people of the Northern Territory have voted decisively for change, electing the Country Liberal Party to office. On this opening day of the 15th Legislative Assembly I congratulate you on your election to office. I am confident that you will serve the people of the Northern Territory diligently.

The new government was elected with a clear goal to create a stronger and safer Territory for all Territorians. Having listened to Territorians' concerns, my government will restore hope and optimism by reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our enviable lifestyle.

My government has not underestimated the challenges it faces to achieve its goal. It is ready to overcome them and deliver on the change that it has promised Territorians, by getting on with the job.

Breaking the cycle of crime and reducing antisocial behaviour is the first challenge my government will tackle. It will deliver this through early intervention, addressing the root causes and providing real consequences for offenders.

My government has an ambitious agenda to reduce youth crime. Breaking the cycle of youth crime is critical to ensuring that all Territory children have a bright future and access to the opportunities they deserve.

All Territory children should be safe, loved and cared for. To this end, my government will address the root causes of criminal behaviour in young people. This will include improving school attendance and strengthening the focus on literacy and numeracy. It also means making parents responsible for ensuring their children are safe and their needs are met. Parents who do not do this will face consequences.

Parents will be connected to services to help them deal with their own problems so that they can focus on supporting their kids. My government will use all the levers at its disposal to achieve this. For example, my government will work to make sure parents have access to the mental health, alcohol and other drug

rehabilitation services they need. Parents will be referred to income management so that their children have greater access to necessities.

To break the cycle of youth crime and restore community safety, my government will also introduce appropriate consequences for young offenders. There will be mandatory diversion programs for young people who offend, aimed at changing their life pathway away from committing further crime, and breaking the cycle. Two youth boot camps will be built to deliver programs to give young people the skills and training to get ahead.

My government will deliver reforms to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in the broader population, as keeping Territorians safe extends beyond just tackling youth crime.

To reduce reoffending and prevent further harm to the community, my government will introduce Declan's law. This will expand the police powers to search people for edged weapons. It will also introduce a presumption against bail for serious violent offenders.

My government will establish a mandatory community service program for those offenders on bail. This means that people who commit property crime, such as vandalism, will need to fix the damage they have caused and be accountable for their choices.

Reducing overcrowding in prisons and rehabilitating offenders is a priority for my government. This will be addressed through the establishment of two new women's prisons, as well as two new adult prisoner work camps.

A new 'work in the community home detention' program and a reinvigorated Sentenced to a Job program will provide practical, skills-based training support to prisoners to navigate job pathways. This will help offenders to get a job in their community when they are released, equipped with the skills they need.

My government will ensure problem drinkers get the help they need to overcome their addiction by developing new mandatory alcohol rehabilitation programs, which we know can reduce the harm caused by this terrible disease.

My government will also do more to protect our vital frontline workers—our police and other frontline workers. In relation to police, this includes targeted strategies which emphasise the value my government and the community places on our frontline police. We want to keep our experienced police on the beat and on the job.

Northern Territory Police will also be empowered to more effectively protect the community and themselves in the important work they do every day to keep Territorians safe. My government will equip the Northern Territory's hardworking and dedicated police force with more powers to tackle youth crime, public drinking and knife crime.

My government will also introduce minimum mandatory sentencing for assaulting frontline workers, including police.

My government is committed to combatting the unacceptable and tragic levels of domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory. It will invest $180m over a five-year period to stop the cycle of violence and will amend the law to protect survivors.

The Northern Territory faces challenging economic conditions that are affecting our cost of living and the cost of doing business, but these challenges bring opportunities, and we know how resilient Territorians can be in the face of adversity.

My government will rebuild the economy by playing to the Northern Territory's natural strengths across the tourism, Defence, agriculture, gas and mining industries. My government will support industry to expand and deliver well-paid, secure jobs for Territorians, including jobs on country for Aboriginal people.

My government will speed up project approvals and reduce unnecessary red tape. An approvals fast-track taskforce made up of a wide range of people from the private sector will provide real-world advice to my government on what can be done to reduce red tape, using a commonsense and practical lens to drive the Territory forward.

It will establish the Office of the Territory Coordinator to facilitate the delivery of projects of significance and Territory development areas, such as Middle Arm, to rebuild our economy through a can-do investment relationship with the private sector.

Working together with the Commonwealth and others, my government will work to establish a pipeline of Defence projects. More Defence projects will provide more opportunities for our local Defence industry and construction workers, as well as the broader Defence supply and logistics chain. Maximising the Northern Territory's industry capability to support a greater Defence and national security presence in the region is a key focus of my government.

My government will also continue to build on our strong links with our allies, the United States of America.

My government values the deep legacy of the Territory's Defence history and the continuing role the Territory has in maintaining Australia's national security.

My government will ensure the gas industry is safe and well regulated as its presence grows in the Northern Territory. This important industry will bring energy and economic security for Territorians and support the national transition to renewables.

Transparency and integrity in expending taxpayer funds is a clear community expectation. My government will introduce measures to ensure all organisations receiving public funding are accountable for spending and delivering outcomes.

Our expansive landscape means our road and freight networks are critical for communities and businesses across the Northern Territory. My government will work with the Commonwealth to invest in upgrades to the Stuart, Victoria and Barkly Highways to improve access and support growth in the regions.

The rising cost of doing business is affecting Territory enterprises and their ability to grow and support employment for Territorians.

My government will offer the most generous payroll tax-free threshold in Australia to support small businesses in the Northern Territory. Apprentice and trainee wages will also be exempt as part of the new payroll tax exemption threshold. This will allow small businesses to support apprenticeships and traineeships, create new jobs and invest in growing their businesses.

My government recognises the value that international students bring to the Northern Territory. We will attract more international students to study with one of the Northern Territory's outstanding education institutions and ensure that there is accommodation ready for them.

A sustained period of global inflation has made everyday necessities more expensive for Northern Territory households. My government has set out a suite of measures to ease this cost-of-living pressure.

My government will introduce a freeze on vehicle registration costs and introduce three-year trailer registration.

My government will take action to reduce household electricity bills. The doubling of the solar feed-in tariff and the battery bonus will increase the benefits and savings offered by solar panels.

My government has delivered the most generous first home builder grant in Australia. This includes home builder grants for those who currently or have previously owned property. These will support people to come to the Territory for a fresh start and boost the construction industry.

The Northern Territory is proud of its strong partnerships with our neighbours. Our position within Australia as the gateway to Asia comes with unique opportunities to boost our economy. Through the establishment of the Asian Relations and Trade ministerial portfolio, my government will harness these opportunities to connect with our regional neighbours and advocate for the Northern Territory.

My government understands the importance of self-determination and people being involved in decisions that affect their local communities. My government will engage, consult and work with Aboriginal people and remote communities at the local level to empower bush communities to play an active role in community development and decision-making. This underpins my government's commitment to reform local government in the bush.

The Northern Territory is an exceptional place to live, work, invest and play, with a diversity of people, landscapes and experiences. My government has made a clear commitment to restore the Northern Territory's incomparable lifestyle.

My government will implement measures to strengthen the health system. It will work to end constant code yellows in Territory hospitals by tackling violence, alcohol abuse, chronic disease and insufficient aged-care places.

My government will work with the Australian Government to increase access to aged-care facilities for our cherished elderly Territorians. It will also work to ensure families have access to cheaper medicines with the broadening of the pharmacy scope of practice and free life-saving meningococcal B vaccine, and that Territorians living with disability receive the support they need.

My government will increase job security for key workers, such as teachers, moving them off short-term contracts to enable them to put down roots in the Northern Territory. My government will also advocate for federal tax incentives and skilled migration programs to support people who want to call the Northern Territory home.

Sport and recreation offer all Territorians a sense of connection and community. My government's commitment to improving community sporting grounds will contribute to these connections and provide healthy lifestyle options which improve the wellbeing of Territorians of all ages.

We will also improve the Northern Territory's outdoor lifestyle by expanding existing campgrounds in Litchfield National Park and expanding the Harrison Dam hunting reserve.

There is no better way for locals and visitors to see our incredible waterways than with a fishing rod in hand. By upgrading boat ramps, my government will make it safer and easier to launch a boat and get out on the water.

My government will focus on water security in remote and regional communities, providing critical access to water supplies which bush Territorians need to live, work and run their properties. My government will prioritise water infrastructure, invest in water recycling and grey water systems, to provide reliable, safe and affordable water.

The Northern Territory's spectacular natural environment is central to our way of life. No matter where Territorians call home, our landscapes, waterways, fauna and flora are vital for recreation, lifestyle, culture, food and identity.

My government has set out its plan to protect the Northern Territory environment. We will fund Aboriginal rangers, community groups and local councils to tackle gamba and buffel grass to reduce its impacts on native habitats and the risk it poses to properties.

Sustainable park management practices will deliver memorable experiences for locals and tourists at our iconic destinations.

My government has a plan for sustainable crocodile management and will work with Aboriginal rangers to ensure our parks and waterways can be enjoyed safely, as they should be.

The Northern Territory is fortunate to have such unmatched natural beauty and cultural heritage. By tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, my government will restore the Northern Territory's reputation as a safe destination for travel.

My government has outlined its plan for a stronger and safer Northern Territory. We know it will be challenging to achieve this, but my government will work diligently to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle.

My government is very proud of the change it has achieved already. The measures outlined today are only part of what my government aims to achieve over this term.

I charge you to work toward this vision and discharge your duties honestly, transparently and with integrity.

Madam Speaker and honourable members, I wish you well over the next four years.

His Honour the Administrator and Ms Ruth Jones, escorted by the Serjeant at Arms, withdrew from the Chamber.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS ORDER

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I table a copy of the Administrative Arrangements Order published in the *Northern Territory Gazette No S84*, dated 10 September 2024.

Following the Northern Territory general election on 24 August this year, an interim ministry for the new government was appointed on 28 August 2024. The Administrator appointed the full ministry on 10 September 2024 as follows:

- Lia Emele Finocchiaro: Chief Minister; Minister for Police; Minister for Fire and Emergency Services; Minister for Defence NT; Minister for Territory Coordinator.

- Gerard Phillip Maley: Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries; Minister for Mining and Energy; Minister for Corrections; Minister for Renewables; Minister for Recreational Fishing.

- William Carl Yan: Treasurer; Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure; Minister for Housing Construction.

- Marie-Clare Joy Boothby: Attorney-General; Minister for Tourism and Hospitality; Minister for Major Events; Minister for Parks and Wildlife; Minister for Racing

- Steven Mark Edgington: Minister for Health; Minister for Mental Health; Minister for Alcohol Policy; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Minister for Essential Services.

- Joshua Roland Burgoyne: Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment; Minister for Corporate and Digital Development; Minister for Water Resources.

- Jo-Anne Hersey: Minister for Education and Training; Minister for Early Education; Minister for Public Service.

- Robyn Patricia Cahill: Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations; Minister for International Education, Migration and Population; Minister for Workforce Development; Minister for Advanced Manufacturing; Minister for Children and Families; Minister for Child Protection; Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence.

- Jinson Anto Charls: Minister for People, Sport and Culture; Minister for Disability; Minister for Arts; Minister for Youth, Seniors and Equality; Minister for Multicultural Affairs; Minister for Veterans.

I am proud of my Cabinet colleagues who together have the real-world and government experience we need to deliver on all our promises to Territorians. These ministries reflect a new and reformed public service, going from 12 government agencies to 18.

We are proud of the opportunity to serve the people of the Northern Territory, and we will do so with distinction. We are proud to represent all corners of the Northern Territory as a broader team.

In tabling the Administrative Arrangements Order, I table the new formation of the CLP government.

OPPOSITION PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader)(by leave): Madam Speaker, we congratulate the CLP government on its win of the Northern Territory general election. I table and announce our shadow ministry portfolios as follows:

As the Opposition Leader and Member for Arnhem, I will hold the shadow portfolios of Police; Defence NT; Territory Coordinator; Mining and Energy; Renewables; Treasurer; Alcohol Policy; Essential Services; Trade, Business and Asian Relations; International Education, Migration and Population; Advanced Manufacturing.

The Member for Daly, the Deputy Opposition Leader, will hold the shadow ministry portfolios of Fire and Emergency Services; Recreational Fishing; Logistics and Infrastructure; Tourism and Hospitality; Parks and Wildlife; Health; Mental Health; Disability; Arts; Multicultural Affairs; Veterans.

The Member for Gwoja will hold the shadow portfolios of Corrections; Attorney-General; Racing; Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Lands, Planning and Environment; Education and Training; Early Education; Public Service; Children and Families; Child Protection; Prevention of Domestic Violence.

The Member for Arafura will hold the shadow portfolios of Agriculture and Fisheries; Housing Construction; Major Events; Aboriginal Affairs; Corporate and Digital Development; Water Resources; Workforce Development; People, Sport and Culture; Youth, Seniors and Equality.

The Assembly suspended.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 38 – Assent to Bills Passed in June 2024

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received Message Number 38 from His Honour the Administrator notifying assent to the Bills passed in the June meetings of the Assembly. The message is dated 21 June 2024.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to Standing Order 215, a member is required to be elected to the position of Deputy Speaker of this Assembly.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I nominate the Member for Karama to be the Deputy Speaker of this Assembly.

The Member for Karama is a long-term Territorian. He and his wife, Marylou, have been here for more than 30 years. He has held senior roles, particularly in trade and economic and industrial development. Most recently he served on the City of Darwin council. That gives him an insight into the formal processes in the quasi-parliamentary role of an alderman on council. Brian is an exceptional member of our team. He has the full support of my government to perform the important role of Deputy Speaker under your leadership, Madam Speaker.

I commend him for the role.

Madam SPEAKER: Does another member second the nomination?

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I second the nomination.

Madam SPEAKER: Does the Member for Karama accept the nomination?

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I accept the nomination.

Madam SPEAKER: Are there any further nominations?

The time for proposals has expired. I declare the Member for Karama to be elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Legislation Assembly. Congratulations.

Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION
Routine of Business – Adopt Sessional Orders

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly adopts the following sessional orders, the terms of which have been circulated to all members, without reading the text of the motion.

In presenting these sessional orders to the Assembly, the government makes it clear that we are committed to making the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly more reflective of the Westminster traditions and restoring elements of parliamentary process that have been missing from more recent sessional orders. As the Chief Minister said during the election of the Independent Member for Araluen as the Speaker, some practices had also diverted from more conventional procedures that might be considered as the manner in which parliamentary affairs should be conducted.

I highlight to members a number of practices that have been upgraded through these sessional orders. This shows that the government has allowed for more opportunity for opposition and crossbench members to speak, representing their communities and bringing the voices of their electorates to the parliament.

The sessional orders establish a Legislative Scrutiny Committee, similar to the practice in the 13th Assembly, which will contain government, opposition and crossbench members. It provides opportunity for the scrutiny of legislation and reporting to the Assembly in advance of second reading debates, with some consequential amendment to the process of passage of a Bill to allow for this additional scrutiny when conducted.

The government has also expanded the opportunity for additional discussion of petitions by doubling the length of time in which a petition can be debated. Under Labor in the 14th Assembly a petition provided for only 16 minutes of discussion. In this parliament a petition can be discussed for up to 32 minutes, and more members will have an opportunity to contribute. The mover will have more opportunity to speak to the issues contained in the petition. In this way the community has additional opportunity to bring its views to the parliament through its members. We all have that responsibility through government or general business, debate on matters of public importance, petitions, in adjournment or any other formal debate that allows for all members to contribute.

Other important elements for members to note include the return of the adjournment debate in its more correct format so that the debate takes place in advance of the adjournment, as is the practice in each of the state and territory parliaments. In the 14th Assembly a practice crept in of the government adjourning the House so that it could knock off early. Our measures remove that.

The use of remote participation for sittings has been removed. The government believes it is important that members of all parties and electorates are present to conduct their business when the Assembly is scheduled to sit. It is what we are paid for by the Northern Territory taxpayers. If some future extreme circumstance or external act requires remote participation, the government will develop and implement an appropriate practice, but only when needed.

I understand that the proposed sessional orders have been circulated to all members, and I commend the orders to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill entitled the Bail Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, Serial 4.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill entitled the Police Administration Amendment Bill 2024, Serial 5.

Mr MALEY (Corrections): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill entitled the Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2024, Serial 2.

Mr EDGINGTON (Alcohol Policy): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill entitled the Liquor Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2024, Serial 3.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall move that the following committees be appointed and, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, each committee will comprise three government, one opposition and one crossbench member to be nominated by the relevant Whip or crossbench member in writing to the Speaker:

- Standing Orders Committee, to comprise the Speaker, two government members, one opposition member and one crossbench member
- Committee of Privileges
- House Committee, to comprise the Speaker, two government members, one opposition member and one crossbench member
- Public Accounts Committee

- Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

- Standing Committee on the ICAC, with the terms of reference adopted by the 13th Assembly in February 2020 apart from paragraph (4) relating to membership

- Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill entitled Sentencing Amendment Bill 2024, Serial 1.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that this Assembly calls on the CLP government to uphold the bilateral Better and Fairer Schools Agreement in its entirety to ensure every school in the Northern Territory is fully funded by 2029.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that this Assembly recognises the critical importance of improving decision-making, integrity, transparency and accountability in our parliament and to that end commits to the following measures:

- re-establishing scrutiny committees that allow for public submissions and thorough review of Bills before the parliament

- limiting government-to-government questions (Dorothy Dixers) in the Chamber to a maximum of two out of every three parliamentary sitting days

- exploring pathways to enhance public engagement and participation in the legislative process, including through citizens' juries.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from His Honour the Administrator a copy of his speech.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I move that the following Address in Reply be agreed to:

> *May it please Your Honour:*
>
> *We, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, in parliament assembled, express our loyalty to the Sovereign and thank Your Honour for the speech you have been pleased to address to the Assembly.*

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, honourable members, family, friends and supporters and the fighters who came before us, it is with great pride that I stand here as your Chief Minister elected by the people of the Northern Territory having formed majority government with a clear mandate to take the Territory forward.

Territorians are resilient people, tough and unassuming, with big hearts and even bigger smiles. This is a place where the pioneering spirit is in our blood and hardship is stared down. For thousands of years Aboriginal Territorians have been the custodians of our magical Territory, from the turquoise waters of the Arafura Sea to the rich red sands of the Central Desert and everywhere in between.

The Territory story is unique. A big place with a small population, we have always punched above our weight and offered so much to this country and the world. Waves of migration have built the Territory, from the Makassan traders, Chinese goldminers, Greeks and Filipinos. Today we welcome new waves of migrants making their mark on the Territory. Our diversity is our strength and often remarked on by visitors how the Territory is a beautiful kaleidoscope of people, united in their love and pride at being Territorian.

In 1872, just over 150 years ago, people gathered in the bush at Frews Ironstone Pond to watch Robert Patterson create history—the connection of the Overland Telegraph Line. Within months the subsea cable between Darwin and Java was complete, connecting our country to the world through Darwin as part

of the greatest engineering feat carried out in the 19th century, with 2,839 kilometres of wire. It marked a moment in time when the Territory was officially opened for business.

More recently we commemorated 20 years since the completion of the Alice Springs–Darwin railway. For over 100 years this project was fought for, following on from the extraordinary Afghan cameleers. Our train *The Ghan* carries this namesake.

This year we celebrate 50 years since the first fully elected Legislative Assembly, a time when Territorians stood up and said enough of being run by Canberra. It is a pivotal time in our history when we not only proudly elected the CLP's Hyacinth Tungutalum, the first Indigenous Australian elected representative in this country, but also, importantly, set the framework to spearhead self-government on 1 July 1978.

Between 1974 and 1978 the Territory had to rebuild after Cyclone Tracy, which was a catastrophic event that killed many, devastated our community and forced our people to leave with great uncertainty about the future. Like in the aftermath of World War II, when the Territory was relentlessly bombed, we rebuilt.

The Territory story is one of survival and resilience; forged by the fire of disaster, she is stronger and more determined than ever before. We have always had to fight hard to get our fair share and be recognised. It has always been tough for the Territory; we have always had to fight, but the work is worth the reward. Ever-determined people seize the Territory and get the job done. It is where our can-do spirit was born. It is why we stand strong in support of each other as a community during times of hardship. It is what makes us different, and we are proud of that fact. What a privilege it is to follow in the footsteps of the leaders who have come before us, to carve a new path forward for our Territory.

On Saturday 24 August 2024 Territorians did a lot more than just vote for the Country Liberal Party I lead, to govern the Northern Territory for the next four years. It was a bigger and more powerful message, one that is not lost on my team and me. It was a turning point.

The Territory we know and love had lost her way under a Labor government that was focused on itself. It lost sight of why it was there and stopped listening to Territorians about what was important to them. Our promise to Territorians has been clear for a long time, and those promises reflect the feedback we receive from everyday Territorians in every corner of this place, desperately looking for a change in direction.

We promised Territorians we would reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle; that is what my government has set out to do. The CLP has been given a clear mandate by the people of the Northern Territory to deliver change for the better for all Territorians.

It is an honour and a privilege to stand here today as the Territory's 14th Chief Minister on behalf of the 254,000 Territorians who call this wonderful place home. It is also humbling to stand here as the CLP's first female Chief Minister. Just like the Territory, my government—our team—is diverse. They are passionate advocates for their community. They put up their hand to serve because they saw a need to be part of the solution. We are full of hope and optimism about the Territory's future.

When I was first elected by the good people of Drysdale on 25 August 2012, just over 12 years ago, I made a number of commitments to Territorians. Those commitments apply as equally now as they did back then, only in a new context and supported by our 17-strong team. I reaffirm these commitments to the good people of Spillett and, on behalf of my government, to all Territorians.

We will fight for our Territory, our way of life and our future with unwavering vigour. We will speak up and be heard in this parliament. We will treat constituents with respect and humility. We will be honest and frank with constituents. We will be visible, accessible and genuinely available. We will be accountable. Above all, we will not be afraid to fight for the right decisions for our Territory.

As a born-and-bred second-generation Territory kid, I grew up living an iconic Territory childhood, hunting, camping, fishing and playing outside. I was extremely lucky to have the upbringing I had in the Territory. In the 1950s all four of my grandparents migrated to Australia from Italy in search of a better life here in the lucky country. They arrived full of hope and optimism, knowing this place would give them a go, and it did.

My father was born here and, along with my mother and grandparents, instilled in me the values of honesty, integrity and, like all Italians, hard work. I was born here, and my children were born here.

The family I grew up in knew the Territory was a special place, and we considered ourselves lucky to be Territorians. The Territory I grew up in gave me every opportunity. I was free and safe to enjoy time with my

family and friends, making the most of our incredible lifestyle. Being born here was like winning the lottery to all of us.

When the Territory of today is in crisis, with people despairing over an unsafe community and an economy going backwards, it is clear that my government has much work to do in making significant and immediate changes. Reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring the Territory's reputation as a competitive place to live, work, visit and invest is our focus. I will lead a no-nonsense government focused on Territorians. My strong and experienced team is ready to deliver.

Although the Territory is a big ship that will take time to turn around, we have already achieved so much in our first seven weeks of government, and it is just the beginning. There is so much more that needs to be done.

That is why I have restructured our public service, increasing the number of agencies from 12 to 18. We have aligned our public sector structures with our government's top priorities, building a stronger, more specialised public service with technical expertise within smaller departments, empowering quicker and informed decisions that are made closer to the ground.

We have already delivered on key election commitments, including the commencement of our HomeGrown Territory Grants, which provide first homebuyers with up to $50,000 to build a new home and put down roots in the Territory.

Territorians voted for change and our work has begun to move the Territory forward, to deal with the root causes of crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle.

On my first day as Chief Minister I outlined to the Police Commissioner that we must do whatever it takes to support and empower our police to keep Territorians safe.

By the time of the election our police were at breaking point. Our community was at breaking point. Territorians voted for us to fix the crime crisis, and it is no wonder. Police data indicates there were over 70,000 offences in the Northern Territory in the 2023–24 financial year. Seventy thousand offences in one year is nearly 200 offences a day that we know about. That number sends chills down the spine of every Territorian who has been a victim or who knows this place can be better.

This real crisis requires a crisis response. That is why my government will address the root causes of crime and why community safety is our number one priority.

Over this fortnight, in this first sittings of parliament, my government will introduce its reducing-crime package of legislation to turn around this crime crisis. We make no apologies for implementing the swift and decisive action we have taken. Political commentators and special interest groups can say whatever they like, but we have the backing of the people who matter most—that is, everyday Territorians.

Tomorrow we will deliver on our promise of Declan's law. Declan Laverty's mum, Samara, will join us in the Chamber tomorrow. Samara's son was murdered while at work, at the hands of someone on bail for violent offending. Samara has been a powerful and courageous voice for change despite the devastating and tragic loss of her son.

Under Declan's law there will be a presumption against bail for youth and adult serious violent offenders, regardless of whether a weapon is involved. Breach of bail will become an offence for all, and electronic monitoring will be mandatory for the fewer repeat serious offenders who are still granted bail.

We will make it quicker and easier for police to use handheld knife scanners known as wands.

My government will lower the age of criminal responsibility from 12 to 10. Ignoring young people committing crimes is not the answer to turning around their lives. That is why we can intervene earlier in a young person's life and provide them the support they need to turn a new page and start a better journey of skills training rather than end up in an adult correctional facility, which under Labor was almost certainly their destiny.

Our new posting-and-boasting offence will see a penalty of up to two years' jail. If you commit a certain crime and try to be a hero about it by posting it on social media you are glorifying the fact that you have done the wrong thing, which will not be tolerated.

Only last week we saw Pradeep at Moil Supermarket become yet another victim of a cowardly ram raid when criminals used a car as a weapon, causing thousands of dollars' damage. Our new ramraid laws could land someone in jail for up to 10 years. We have seen too many businesses targeted by vehicles used as weapons, and we know that the cost to Territorians both financially and mentally is far too high.

Our government is protecting workers from violent attacks by introducing minimum mandatory sentences for cowardly assaults on police, paramedics, nurses, doctors, teachers, Corrections officers, retail and hospitality workers and bus and taxi drivers. The minimum mandatory sentences will also apply to cowardly assaults on any other NT worker who is undertaking work in accordance with their duties. This includes making spitting on a frontline worker trigger a three-month minimum mandatory sentence. Territorians at work, especially our frontline workers, should be protected; attacking them will not be tolerated by our government.

Our new nuisance public drinking offence will give police the powers to fine, charge and arrest people in public places where alcohol is prohibited, as well as issuing those people with a seven-day banned drinker order.

The CLP government is also determined to fix our economy, which was ignored and mismanaged by Labor for the past eight years. Our government will remove payroll tax for small businesses so that they can grow, create more jobs and back more apprentices and trainees. This will mean the Territory leads the nation with the most generous payroll tax-free threshold. Lower taxes mean businesses can grow, pass on savings to Territorians and employ more locals.

We will establish a new Office of the Territory Coordinator to slash red tape and fast-track approvals. This will ensure that projects of significance are fought for, started quickly and completed on time. The Territory Coordinator will also be able to intervene in decision-making when government is taking too long to finalise a decision. My government has an ambitious target to halve approval timeframes across government. We will cut red tape with the approvals fast-track taskforce, take away unnecessary administrative burdens and make doing business easier.

We will vigorously pursue mining, gas, Defence, tourism and agriculture to rebuild our economy. These industries are the foundation of the Territory's wealth. They can create the jobs and opportunities of the future and real jobs on country for people living in the remotest parts of the Territory. It is in these industries that all others will build strength from.

We want to make the Territory a place where it is easier to do business. Under Labor no new major mines opened in eight years and approval times blew out to ridiculous levels. The development of new mines, as well as the Beetaloo Basin, is an urgent priority.

I mentioned earlier our HomeGrown Territory Grants for first homebuyers and non-first homebuyers. Our $50,000, $30,000 and $10,000 grants can be used by recipients as part of their deposit when applying for a loan through their financial institution. This will support Territorians, particularly first homebuyers, to get ahead in their home ownership journey. It is about encouraging Territorians to put down roots and build a life in the Territory. The cost of living is crippling Territorians, and this scheme supports people to achieve their aspirations of home ownership. It will help boost our population, retain skilled workers and stimulate our construction sector. It also signals to the rest of the country that if you want to build your dream home, come to the Territory.

The CLP government many years ago had the first Asian Relations and Trade minister in Australia. It was a game changer to developing relationships with our Asian neighbours and securing our position as Darwin, the gateway to Asia. Under my government we again have a Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, the Member for Port Darwin, who is tasked with reconnecting these growing economies and ensuring we always have a seat at the table.

We will double the solar feed-in tariff during peak times, lowering the energy bills of Territorians and creating a greener future for our kids. We will double the battery bonus to $12,000 so that you can store the energy your solar panels are producing.

The Northern Territory has the most unique lifestyle in the world; however, the crime and economic crises over the past eight years have impacted heavily on the Territory's way of life. I am here to tell Territorians that my government will restore the lifestyle they cherish.

We will fix our broken hospital system. We will tackle the alcohol-related harm that is increasing demand on emergency wards, with stronger laws and more rehabilitation. We will work with the federal government to increase aged-care facilities to help free up hospital beds and allow our older people dignity in their homes.

We have already announced our free meningococcal B vaccine program, which will be available for 4,200 babies and 18,500 teenagers from 1 January next year. We stood next to Ash and Sally Lawrence, the parents of Skylar Lawrence, who lost her life to this horrible disease. Through their fearless and tireless advocacy in the last seven years we have been able to deliver this legacy for their baby girl Skylar.

We will also make it easier and cheaper to get medical care by expanding the scope of practice for local pharmacies.

With our new housing incentives to build a home here and by making our community safe, we can attract and keep skilled workers. We will move key workers, like teachers, from rolling contracts to being permanent so that they can have job security.

By upgrading our boat ramps we will make it safer and easier for people to launch their boats. We will increase the fish stocks in Darwin Harbour and surrounding areas and ban gillnet fishing to protect recreational fishing across the Territory. Under my government there will be no boat licences, fishing licences or boat registration.

We will provide better facilities at local and community sporting grounds, including change rooms, lighting and parking, to encourage greater participation of all ages and genders.

My government will expand existing campgrounds in Litchfield National Park and identify new areas where Territorians and tourists alike can pitch a tent.

We will expand the Harrison Dam hunting reserve and identify a new area for recreational hunters. We have already provided greater certainty for hunters—it is magpie goose season—by locking in the season dates and bag limits for magpie geese and ducks.

Making the Territory safe will bring back tourists and help put pressure on airlines to schedule more flights to the Territory. We have already extended the Territory Tourism Discount Scheme to six months, which provides Territorians with a discount of up to 25% on tourism products and experiences booked between 1 October and 31 March.

People in Central Australia know clearly that the CLP backs them because we have already saved Anzac Oval. We will build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Gallery of Australia, but we will do it right.

Some members will be aware that when we were in opposition we made it clear that we committed to greater levels of transparency, accountability and good practice in parliamentary procedure. I am pleased that our CLP team is restoring these practices to parliament and delivering improvements to our Assembly, as the Leader of Government Business tabled. This has started with our Independent Speaker, the Member for Araluen—congratulations, Madam Speaker; doubling the time to debate petitions, which is important to Territorians; and establishing the Legislative Scrutiny Committee to have an important opportunity to review and report on legislation.

It is my government's commitment to Territorians that we will reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique lifestyle. It is incumbent on the government, non-government organisations, industry, business and community to all work together with us to deliver what Territorians have given us a mandate to do.

I make no apologies for our swift and decisive action to turn around the Territory and put her on a better path for the future. I call on all stakeholders to stand with Territorians and be part of the solutions for the future, not against. Work with us to deliver the change that Territorians want. Territorians have spoken loudly and clearly and have an expectation that my government will deliver on our commitments.

I tell all Territorians that we will deliver on our commitments, such is our obligation to undertake the task that they have set us to do. Territorians have experienced years of hardship, national embarrassment and a fundamental lack of direction—years of being pushed around by noisy interest groups, people living interstate and people with no skin in the game. We will not be drawn into that noise. The Territory is in too fragile a state to pander or play games. We will simply get on with the job and deliver for Territorians who overwhelmingly put their faith in us.

For too long Territorians have been made to feel ashamed of the Territory's greatest strengths. We teach our kids to be true to themselves and proud of who they are, yet for nearly a decade the Territory has been pushed to be something she is not and forced to hide from her strengths. The CLP is proud of the Territory's proximity to Asia; its abundance of gas, minerals and rare earths; its connection to country and culture; its rugged landscapes; and our real people.

The road will be hard, but the government I lead is up for this challenge. We are ready, and we will deliver.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I pay my respects to the Larrakia people who have lived and raised their families for thousands of generations on this beautiful country where parliament sits.

On 24 August Territorians went to the polls and sent a clear message that they wanted change, voting in the Country Liberal Party to govern the Northern Territory. On behalf of the Northern Territory Labor Party, I offer my congratulations to Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro and her team who have now formed the Northern Territory Government.

We accept that Territorians have lost confidence in our previous Labor government's ability to address key issues that were impacting our lives. We accept that late in our term many Territorians felt let down by Labor, and the unexpected changes in leadership and reshuffles took the attention away from the work being done to improve the Northern Territory. Many Territorians rely on Labor governments across the country to champion social justice, fairness, inclusion and equality. I pledge to each of those Territorians, on behalf of my team, that we will continue to fight for these key Labor principles whilst we are in opposition and to hold the CLP government to account.

I express my gratitude and acknowledge each of our Labor candidates who put up their hand to represent the Territory in each of the electorates that they campaigned for. We were fortunate to have exceptional individuals contesting under the Labor family who remain committed to advocating for a better Territory for all.

I thank those who voted for me in the Arnhem electorate. I am only here because of those Arnhem constituents. I pledge to you that I will continue to do the work in opposition as I did for the last eight years in advocating for betterment of the Arnhem electorate. I acknowledge the towns, communities, homelands and rural and pastoral properties in the Arnhem electorate. I look forward to continuing my advocacy in the Northern Territory parliament on behalf of you.

It is an honour to be the Labor Leader of the Opposition, and it is a privilege I do not take lightly. We have a proud history of peaceful democracy in this country, but for democracy to thrive it is crucial that there is a strong opposition holding the government to account for its decisions and to ensure the government honours its promises and commitments made to the people of the Northern Territory.

Labor intends to be a strong opposition. We intend to do that constructively, collaboratively and always in the best interests of Territorians. Territory Labor will learn from the lessons of the recent election and take on board the strong messages that Territorians have sent us.

We send our own message to the people of the Northern Territory that we accept and respect their decision to vote for change. We do not intend to oppose for the sake of opposing or to criticise for the sake of criticising. Territorians want and deserve much better than that. We want meaningful and effective solutions from this place. We want economic and social challenges to be addressed—everything that is facing the 25 electorates we represent. Labor commits to being part of the solution and working constructively to benefit Territorians.

We have a long way to go to restore the faith of Territorians in the Labor Party, and we will work hard over the next four years to ensure that we do restore the faith.

The Finocchiaro government has made many promises to the people of the Northern Territory about the economy, community safety and upholding the Territory lifestyle. Some of these promises build on the legacy of our former Labor government, such as more school-based police, growing international student numbers, investing in roads and freight, upgrades to boat ramps, tackling gamba grass and extending the Tourism Discount Scheme. We welcome the CLP's continued investment in these critical priority areas. Some of the CLP promises are bold. For the sake of our fellow Territorians we genuinely hope that the CLP can achieve what it says it will.

Labor puts on the record, however, that many of the CLP's plans lack detail. I have read through policy documents and recent media releases, and the initiatives do not go as far as to provide delivery timeframes

or costings. Many are without a strong evidence base that they will make a difference. The job and responsibility of government is to be accountable for those promises.

Labor acknowledges that it is only early days, but we want to see the slide away from slogans and shallow policy statements and for the real work to begin. Implementing these plans and commitments will make a difference if done correctly. We will watch closely to ensure that the Finocchiaro government gets on with the job that Territorians have instilled in it.

The Territory is facing significant and complex challenges, global instability and supply chain disruptions, as well as the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic. Areas that have largely affected the rest of the country are the higher cost of living and essential items costing families more than they did a few years ago, such as fuel, food, electricity and housing.

Like other Australians, Territorians are feeling the pinch. The impact of the higher costs is being felt every day. While in government Labor sought to alleviate hip-pocket pressures with electricity subsidies, early childhood subsidies, the Seniors Recognition Scheme, the Home and Business Battery Scheme, back-to-school and sport vouchers and much more.

Labor invested $160m to keep utility prices from hiking and to ensure price rises were kept below CPI. These initiatives must continue to save Territory households thousands each year, so we hope the new government will endorse that. It is important that the new government honours these initiatives. Labor and Territorians will be watching closely.

We want to see the CLP get on with its commitments that are aimed at taking the pressure off household budgets, like free swimming lessons for all primary school-age students. We also want the CLP to reassure Territorians that it will not rip money from school budgets to pay for such initiatives.

The new government needs to be up-front with Territorians about how it will pay for these commitments. In opposition the new Chief Minister had a lot to say about the Territory budget. Chief Minister Finocchiaro committed to reducing debt and spending responsibly. The CLP's policy commitments will cost about $280m, so the Chief Minister needs to be clear about how she will pay for this, particularly if she intends to cut services, programs or jobs, sell public assets or sack public servants.

When the Labor government took office in 2016 we inherited a dire economic situation—a deficit of nearly $900m and escalating debt levels—despite the previous government's sale and lease of public assets like the Darwin Port and TIO, which Territorians are still hurt by. Our efforts to rectify this situation were hampered by a $2bn cut in GST funding, as well as the challenges of the COVID pandemic and the global recession that followed. In the face of uncertainty we focused on budget discipline, stringent measures to control public spending and responsible financial management.

Labor put the Territory budget on a better path. Gross state product is forecast to grow by 2.3% in the coming financial year before accelerating to 7.1% in 2025–26 as LNG exports from Barossa come online. Inflation is expected to moderate, easing to an average of 2.4% from 2025–26, returning to lower levels more quickly than national inflation. General government operating balances are projected to return to surplus over the forward estimates. GST revenue—the Territory's largest revenue source—is expected to improve by $750m over the 2026–27 budget cycle.

There is a long way to go. We strongly encourage the new government to stay on course when it comes to budget management. So far it has been focused on community safety, and we acknowledge this as a priority, but we are yet to hear—I am sure the business community is keen to hear this too—whether the new CLP government has an economic plan for the Territory.

Strategic government investment is one of the economic drivers in the Territory, but to be truly prosperous we need to be attracting, supporting and growing private investment. Our former Labor government was successful in attracting some critical enabling projects that will deliver long-term economic development in the Territory.

We successfully collaborated with NASA to launch rockets in Arnhem Land, a groundbreaking achievement that showcased the Territory's capacity for innovation. Labor facilitated development of an $80m data centre in Darwin, our capital city, boosting our digital infrastructure. Labor secured backing from the then Morrison federal government for the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct. Labor partnered with the federal Labor government to establish Australia's first combined rare-earths mine and refinery, creating more than 300 local jobs and cementing our position as a renewable energy leader.

We are proud to pass on these achievements to the incoming government to ensure that the Territory's budget and economy can become more solid and the foundations that have been laid for future growth and prosperity in the Northern Territory continue. Territorians need this work to continue.

We know that high airfare costs and the cost of international travel, which has returned post-COVID, are impacting on our local tourism industry. We have no detail so far on how our new government intends to support this or the critical sectors I have mentioned.

We truly hope that the new CLP government can deliver on its commitments to Territorians. We expect the government to be up-front about how it will pay for those commitments without undoing some of the former Labor government's efforts to keep the budget on a good path.

The last time the CLP was in power it cut 500 education jobs, including 330 full-time teaching positions. I do not intend to tar the new government with the brush of the Giles CLP government of the past, but it is important that we do not see a repeat of that horrible decision. New Chief Minister Finocchiaro needs to assure Territorians and our hardworking public servants, including our important frontline staff, that their jobs are safe.

Speaking of education, an area that is dear to my heart, our new Chief Minister also needs to give assurances that her CLP government will honour the bilateral agreement we struck with the federal Labor government that will put an extra $1bn investment into Territory schools over the next five years. The Territory's share of this deal is $350m, and each Territory student in our public schools will be better off by $33,764. It will mean that every Territory school is fully and fairly funded. It will mean that classrooms are well resourced and every child and young person across the Northern Territory has the best start to life.

As a former teacher I have seen firsthand the power of education to put kids on a good path and to lift people out of poverty and disadvantage. Education is truly a great equaliser. It gives young people the choice and opportunity to do something meaningful with their lives.

I am heartened that the CLP has signalled it will have a strong focus on education. Honouring this deal to fully fund schools across the Territory is fundamental to improving our education system and ensuring that every Territory child can thrive. I look forward to the CLP committing strongly to this important deal for Territory schools, students and teachers.

The CLP took credit for the enterprise bargaining agreement that the Territory Labor government struck with our hardworking educators to make them the highest-paid educators in the country. The CLP can share credit for the better and fairer schools agreement if it needs to, as long as it honours that agreement.

We know that Territorians are concerned about community safety. This is no secret. Territorians deserve to be safe in their own homes, at work and when they are out and about in our communities enjoying all the wonderful things that we love about the Northern Territory.

In government Labor implemented a broad range of measures to keep our community safer. We strengthened bail laws. We worked in partnership with police and the legal community to ensure that those laws could be effective. We invested $570m extra into the Northern Territory Police Force, which should roll out over the next five years. This represents the biggest boost in funding for the Northern Territory Police Force in the Territory's history. We expect that the CLP government will also honour this critical investment.

Labor made these investments to look at the areas of high importance for community safety to ensure that Territorians could understand and know that their government had their backs. When people commit crimes they should face the full consequences of the law in court. Labor stands with the new government in saying that we have never, and will never, tolerate behaviour that puts Territorians' lives or property at risk.

The CLP has made it clear that it will spend this sittings introducing more laws to punish offenders across the community. It is becoming increasingly clear that the CLP does not have a plan to prevent offending in the first place or to break the cycle of reoffending. This is what it promised Territorians.

Multiple Territory Police Commissioners have made the clear point that we cannot just arrest our way out of crime and antisocial behaviour. The revolving door of prison sentences alone does not work. We know this because there is ample evidence from the Territory, Australia and around the world that simply locking up people further entrenches them in a life of crime. On 23 May 2024 while in opposition, the now Deputy Chief Minister, the Member for Nelson, said that jailing is failing.

From the CLP government we also need the long-term solutions that turn around people's lives and get them on a good path out of or well away from the justice system. This means implementing enforced consequences for offenders that changes their behaviour rather than criminalises it and listening to those experts who work on the front line and not writing them off as simply political commentators. The people who work at the coalface dealing with community safety every day know that increasingly punitive, headline-grabbing laws without corresponding measures that stop people turning to crime or reoffending do not make our community safer.

Our former Labor government delivered record investment in programs, both in prison and in the community, to help break the cycle of reoffending. We have seen how successful the alternative-to-custody life skills camp in Alice Springs has been in turning around the lives of women who have been caught up in the justice system, through intensive support and tailored rehabilitation. Four out of five women going through this important program have not reoffended.

We also established an alternative-to-custody facility on Groote Eylandt in my electorate as part of the local decision-making agreement which was led by the Anindilyakwa Land Council on behalf of the Anindilyakwa people. Alternative-to-custody programs have also demonstrated success in helping people out of the cycle of reoffending and getting them back on track to be thriving community members.

Labor entered into a new partnership with Charles Darwin University to deliver education and training programs in prison so that offenders who leave prison are job ready, which will help reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Labor expanded the men's behaviour change programs, including establishing a new program in the Big Rivers region.

Labor invested more than $45m in delivering the Territory's first Aboriginal Justice Agreement. I remind the Chief Minister that she is a bipartisan signatory to that agreement. This included the investment in local solutions such as law and justice groups and Community Courts to assist communities to reduce reoffending and address local justice issues.

The CLP has promised that it will address the root causes of crime, but at this stage it is a promise without any substance. We strongly encourage the new CLP government to continue to invest in community-led solutions that are proven to make all our communities safer.

Let us be clear: lowering the age of criminal responsibility is not about addressing the root causes. It is not about intervening earlier, as the Chief Minister has said many times. All the evidence tells us that it will increase youth offending, which makes our community less safe. Victims of Crime NT, the national and NT Children's Commissioners, the Productivity Commission, the Law Society Northern Territory, the Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and many other key organisations have expressed strong concerns that putting children as young as 10 and 11 in prison cells does not do any good; it creates more harm. It does not make our community safer or help Territory children.

The CLP needs to be clear with Territorians about its new plans to ensure that children who come into contact with the law will be supported to get back on track and that they will not be further entrenched into a life cycle of crime. Labor will never support any laws that make our community less safe, which is what the CLP's proposed legislation to lower the age of criminal responsibility will do.

The most effective and sustainable way to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour is by ensuring that we have strong, thriving communities where people can raise their families in a safe and healthy environment and have agency and purpose in each of their lives. Strong communities are places where people have their basic needs met—good housing and schools, connection to culture, strong work opportunities and great skills. Strong communities are functioning communities. Strong communities mean that people are less likely to get lost, sleep rough or problem drink. It means struggling families have access to the supports they need to get back on track.

Too many remote Territorians live in overcrowded houses. It is hard to get kids to school and to get ready for work if you live in a house with 20 or so other family members and have only a few bedrooms and perhaps one bathroom. Addressing overcrowding is fundamental to ensuring that families across the Northern Territory in our remote communities can function well. It will improve community safety aspects.

During our time in government, Labor worked with the Commonwealth Government to deliver 1,440 new homes and to upgrade and repair 1,841 homes. The Member for Barkly used to celebrate it with his selfies.

Working with the federal Labor government, our Territory Labor government committed to jointly invest a further $4bn over 10 years to build another 2,700 remote homes. That is 270 houses per year across the community. In 2023 the Labor government built 390 new homes. The new government can continue with this goal, which is a strong legacy for all remote Territorians. Like the $1bn investment into education, this work is critical to the future of the Northern Territory.

We call on the new CLP government to honour the remote housing and homelands agreement, particularly if it is serious about addressing the root causes of poverty and crime in our communities. The Labor opposition urges the CLP government to openly reassure remote Territorians about this important life-changing investment.

Equally, for the sake of our children and young people, the CLP government needs to continue to invest in training and skills development, which leads to pathways for real jobs. While in government, Territory Labor signed the National Skills Agreement with the federal Labor government, putting an extra $9.4m towards training Territorians.

Working with Canberra, Territory Labor implemented the Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement. So far 1,500 Territorians have had their TAFE fees waived, opening opportunities across the Northern Territory for Territorians to build their skills and to secure better futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

In partnership with the federal government, Territory Labor also brought to life Charles Darwin University's Danala Education and Community Precinct in the heart of Darwin, which opened two weeks ago. Congratulations to everyone involved in this important and exciting project for the Northern Territory.

We call on the CLP government to continue to invest in education and training pathways for all Territorians, to give fellow Territorians the opportunity to gain skills so that they can contribute richly to each of our communities and stay on a strong pathway for themselves.

Businesses across the Territory are struggling to find workers. We are competing with other jurisdictions to ensure we have critical frontline staff—teachers, nurses, doctors and police. There is an enormous opportunity for the Territory to grow our own workforce, and we need to invest in this across every sector of the economy so that young people in the Territory and other people who come to the Territory are ready and able to take on the fantastic work opportunities we have to offer.

The Territory has the highest levels of domestic and family violence in the country. It is a scourge that is ripping apart our families every day. It is largely Territory women, young people and children who are the victims. It is difficult for young people to stay on track when their homes are not safe and they are exposed to everyday violence.

I applaud Chief Minister Finocchiaro for confirming that the CLP government will honour the former Labor government's investment of an additional $180m over five years for domestic, family and sexual violence prevention. However, the Chief Minister needs to be clear about how she would like to see better advocacy for needs-based funding to support our hardworking frontline services and individuals who deal day to day with the scourge of domestic and family violence.

While in opposition Chief Minister Finocchiaro refused to stand with us on our calls for needs-based funding. Since then she has told local media that she supports needs-based funding, but unfortunately failed to advocate for it at the highest level at National Cabinet in Canberra this year. This issue is too critical to play political games with. I want Chief Minister Finocchiaro and the CLP government to walk hand in hand with Territory Labor to advocate nationally for needs-based funding in this much-needed sector to improve the lives and safety of Territory women, young people and children.

I reflect on our former Labor government's accomplishments in healthcare. This is another key area that will make a difference to the future of the Territory. It was an honour to serve as Health minister for eight months. I am proud to highlight achievements such as Palmerston Regional Hospital, which is a vital addition to our healthcare infrastructure in the Top End; the PET scanner delivered in Darwin; the new multistorey car park at Royal Darwin Hospital, eliminating paid parking for patients and visitors; the expansion of the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre; and enhancing cancer treatment services for Territorians.

We continue to advocate for the critical projects delivered under Labor, such as:

- $20m for the new primary healthcare centre in Borroloola, improving healthcare access in the Roper Gulf region
- $12m for a 120-bed residential aged-care facility at Palmerston Regional Hospital
- $22.9m for a 32-bed modular facility at Royal Darwin Hospital, awarded to local business Aspire
- $1.3m for staff accommodation at Tennant Creek Hospital
- $22.6m for forensic mortuary and pathology upgrades at Royal Darwin Hospital
- $25.1m to expand mental health services at Royal Darwin Hospital, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government
- $33.2m to upgrade central sterilisation services across hospitals
- $20m for a new healthcare centre and morgue at Gunbalanya community
- $26.9m for the new ambulatory care centre at Alice Springs Hospital.

I proudly hand over these projects to the new Minister for Health, the Member for Barkly. I urge continued progress on and support of healthcare developments for the sake of all Territorians. Our commitment to healthcare is unwavering. I look forward to witnessing the positive impacts of these initiatives on the Territory.

A clear message from this election was that Territorians care deeply about our environment. We live in one of the most beautiful and pristine parts of the world, and Territorians want it to remain that way.

Protecting the Territory lifestyle, another key theme of the CLP before the election, means also protecting the environment. The Labor government reformed environment protection laws and made inroads on reforming our water allocation system after the previous CLP government handed out water licences to its mates. Labor put in place a range of checks and balances to better protect the environment, which Territorians wanted and expect. It is important that the CLP does not erode those environmental protections.

Economic development is critical for the future of the Northern Territory, but it cannot be at the cost of environmental protections. As we heard the message from Territorians when they went to the polls this year—we will continue to listen to them—the CLP equally will need to heed the message about safeguarding our beautiful environment.

I welcome to the House the new members of parliament. I look forward to working with each of you to make the Territory even better. One of the Territory's greatest strengths is its diversity, and I will acknowledge the new members who represent a number of firsts in this House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO: We have the first member of Bangladeshi descent and first Islamic MLA, the Member for Fong Lim, Dr Tanzil Rahman; the first member of Indonesian descent, the Member for Wanguri, Oly Carlson; the first Indian-born minister, the Member for Sanderson, Minister Jinson Charls; and the first member to represent the Greens Party, the Member for Nightcliff, Kat McNamara. Welcome to you all.

I stand before the House as a proud Nunggubuyu and Wanindilyakwa woman with Estonian, Irish and South African ancestors. I am a proud Territorian born and bred. The Territory is my home, my family's home and my children's home. It is a place that has always been about opportunity, fairness and community. It is a place where we support and back each other.

For the Territory to truly thrive, every Territorian needs to be given a chance to thrive. The job of government is to provide opportunity, be supportive, be a guiding hand for those who get lost, provide a hand up to lift those in need, and build strong and positive foundations to ensure that the Territory is a better place.

My Labor team and I will spend the next four years working hard to ensure that we are a strong, solutions-based opposition that is constructive in our relationship with the government and the crossbench so that we can all build a thriving Territory for the benefit of all Territorians no matter where they live.

Madam SPEAKER: From this point on we will be hearing from our new members of parliament. I ask that we give them the respect they deserve. I recall that it is a nerve-racking experience, so please sit in silence without interjection.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your election. I thank this House and its members for allowing me the opportunity to introduce myself for the first time to the Chamber as the Member for Port Darwin.

To paraphrase Hon John Howard AC, I am not a Member of the Legislative Assembly because of some kind of process of divine selection. I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory through the gift of the people who reside in the electorate of Port Darwin, which encompasses Cullen Bay, Larrakeyah, the CBD and the Waterfront. Thank you to those who placed your faith in me by voting for me to be your elected representative over the next four years. Whilst I appreciate that not everyone in the electorate voted for me I am humbled by the overwhelming support of the majority that was shown by the people of Port Darwin. I reassure those who are still unsure that, no matter what, I am here for you, and I will fight for you and yours. We may not always agree, but I will always have your back.

Thank you to the amazing people who worked with and supported me during the election campaign. Campaigning is relentless, and without the support of each and every one of you I would not have succeeded. If I were to name each of you the list would be long, so I hope you will all accept this heartfelt thank you. You know who you are, and I am forever in your debt for the support you gave and continue to give.

I do, however, need to make special mention of a couple of people. First and foremost, to my husband, Len, who is here today, your unwavering belief in me, especially during those times I do not believe in myself, is what keeps me grounded. You are my rock.

To my two beautiful sons and their wives—Joel and Eliza, and Christian and Cara—you are the reason I do what I do.

To my parents, Terry and Betty, and my sister Helen, who are also in the Chamber today, thank you for supporting me in my endeavours. Family is what matters most, and to have you on this journey with me means the world to me. Thanks also to my sister Julie, who has supported me from afar.

Thank you to Alyson Hannam and Hon Shane Stone AC, your leadership throughout the campaign inspired me to keep going.

Finally, to our Chief Minister and fierce leader, Hon Lia Finocchiaro, and my fellow CLP MLAs, who were there every step of the way, it is an honour to be here with you, working together for the future of our Territory.

It is of no small consequence that the commencement of the 15th Northern Territory Legislative Assembly coincides with the 50th anniversary this Saturday of the creation of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Whilst it would be another four years until the Northern Territory achieved self-government, the establishment of the first fully elected 19-member Legislative Assembly in 1974, with the Country Liberal Party winning 17 of the 19 positions, was a pivotal moment in the NT's journey towards self-government.

One of those elected in 1974 was Hon Marshall Perron. I mention this, as my standing here today as the representative of the people who live in the Port Darwin electorate is in no small measure due to the mentorship of and faith shown in me by Marshall, who was the first person to encourage me to consider representing our community by running for parliament.

At the turn of the millennium Marshall approached me and persuaded me to commence the journey that has culminated in my being here today. The first steps in that journey saw me stand for the seat of Wanguri in 2001. I am delighted to acknowledge my colleague Oly Carlson MLA, who achieved what I did not at that time—the regaining of the seat of Wanguri for the CLP after more than three decades.

Back then I was a relative newcomer to the Territory, having arrived in Darwin in February 1995 to join my then partner, now husband, who indicated to me that our time in Darwin would be brief as he had signed a three-year contract to be the medical superintendent at Royal Darwin Hospital and expected this to be an entree to greater opportunities in other places.

Little did Len and I realise at the time, but we subsequently came to learn that 'I came for a short time, but the Territory captured my heart' is a common theme among those who were not born here but have come to realise that once here, leaving the Territory is simply not an option.

We also learned that there was no need to seek opportunities in other climes, as the Territory was a place of growth and prosperity, a safe place to raise your kids, a place where people were not pigeonholed and where you did not have to work at integrating into the community because it welcomed you with open arms, a veritable United Nations where suburban segregation did not exist and everyone simply got on with it. It was, without question, a place of opportunity.

By the time Marshall asked me to consider running for the seat of Wanguri in 2001, Len and I knew that the Territory was the place we wanted to stay and raise our two boys—Joel, who was six when we arrived here, and Christian, who was born shortly after we arrived. The opportunity to have a more hands-on part in progressing the Territory, which we now called home, seemed a natural evolution. Having made that decision, however, it is fair to say that prior to my discussions with Marshall there was nothing in my upbringing to suggest I would find myself standing in this Assembly today.

The eldest of three daughters, my upbringing was unremarkable in that our family was your average family—a mum, a dad and three kids. My dad, the youngest of his five siblings, was a New South Wales police officer turned small business owner. My mum, the second eldest of five girls, was a primary school teacher who for four decades nurtured her students to be the best that they could be. My upbringing was marked with boisterous family gatherings and filled with love and family traditions. We were not wealthy, but we never went without. My two younger sisters, Helen and Julie, and I always knew that our parents loved us and that, no matter what, our welfare was their primary concern.

I cannot recall a single political discussion at any dinner table or, for that matter, any argument of a political nature at any of our family gatherings. The closest I came to politics when growing up was successfully running for school captain in Year 6 and being part of my high school debating team in Years 9 and 10. My time as the Executive Director of the Australian Medical Association NT certainly provided me with exposure to the machinations of government and politics, but it was not until my conversation with Marshall Perron that I considered I might have something more to offer our community and that politics might be the path by which I might make that offer.

As history shows, as I have already said, I was unsuccessful in winning the seat of Wanguri in 2001, but that loss led to me considering what else I might do to support my community. I turned my focus to volunteering with a number of not-for-profits, such as the Cancer Council NT, the NT Hospice and Palliative Care Association, the Government House Foundation, the CDU Foundation and Total Recreation. I looked for career opportunities that focused on improving the health outcomes of our Territorians across the public and private sectors.

From my time as the Executive Director of the Australian Medical Association NT—when I was fortunate to work with some incredibly dedicated clinicians such as Dr Paul Bauert, who spearheaded the placing of Indigenous health onto the federal AMA agenda, culminating in that body's publication of its annual Indigenous health report card—to my work at the Palmerston GP Super Clinic, where I had the privilege of working with one of the most dedicated groups of healthcare professionals in the country who, in spite of their small size, together delivered more than 70,000 healthcare services to our community through the COVID-19 pandemic, my decision to focus on a career and service delivery rather than politics was never one that I regretted.

A chance conversation earlier this year, however—thanks, Ashley—caused me to confront the reality that the Territory I had come to love and called home for almost three decades was disappearing. The land of opportunity had become a land of broken dreams. Antisocial behaviour had been normalised, criminal behaviour amongst the youth in our community continued to escalate with little if any consequences for offenders, people's castles had become their fortresses, services were crumbling and the Territory's deficit escalated from $1.9bn at the end of 2016 to almost $12bn just prior to the election. Our economy was not stagnating; it was going backwards.

I began to appreciate that my career path over the previous two decades had perhaps been leading me to this point where I could choose to sit and wait for somebody else to fix the Territory or I could utilise the knowledge and experience I had gained over that time and be an active part of the solution. I chose the latter and looked to resume the journey I had started in 2001.

As I had moved from the northern suburbs to Darwin city in 2017, I looked to the opportunity to run as a candidate in one of the city electorates. As a resident of the Port Darwin electorate, after seeking the counsel of Lia in her then role as Leader of the Opposition as well as the counsel of Shane Stone—who had held the seat of Port Darwin from 1990 to 2000 and had taken the lead role in the CLP's 2024 election campaign as party president—and with the blessing of my family, as they would be taking this journey with me, I put myself forward to be the candidate for Port Darwin.

This time history has placed me before this Chamber as the Member for Port Darwin and provided me with the opportunity to work with my colleagues in this House to deliver a better future for not just the people of the Port Darwin electorate but all Territorians.

I stand in the Chamber as not only the Member for Port Darwin but also the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations; International Education, Migration and Population; Workforce Development; Advanced Manufacturing; Children and Families; Child Protection; and Prevention of Domestic Violence. It is deeply humbling. I am incredibly appreciative of the faith shown in me by the Chief Minister, Hon Lia Finocchiaro, in entrusting me with the responsibility of these portfolios.

There is a synergy to each of the portfolios I am responsible for that at first glance may not appear obvious, but on reflection it can be seen how each intersects with the next, with the ultimate goal of creating opportunities for our Territory.

Whilst our local businesses have been doing it tough over the past decade, they have proven resilient and uncompromising in their commitment to work to rebuild the Territory economy. I am committed to working with the almost 17,000-strong network of small businesses in our Territory, as well as the multinationals which have chosen to invest in the Territory to not only continue their existing businesses but also expand and develop them.

The placing of Asian relations back onto the Territory's economic agenda with the creation of the Trade, Business and Asian Relations portfolio sends a clear message that the Territory is open for business, and we are once again looking to our north. I make the commitment to work tirelessly to re-establish the Northern Territory as Australia's gateway to Asia. I have already had the opportunity to meet with several key stakeholders in this space and am buoyed at the welcome the restoration of this portfolio has received.

The rebuilding of confidence in our economy and reconnecting with our partner to the north sits comfortably with the portfolio of International Education, Migration and Population. We cannot grow our economy without growing our population. As has been demonstrated time and again, the Territory is perfectly placed to offer opportunities to international students who, in turn, will play an essential part in Workforce Development.

The portfolio of Advanced Manufacturing marries well with each of the previously mentioned portfolios as an area of opportunity, both internally and externally, with a number of homegrown Territory enterprises already exporting their products and intellectual property overseas.

The close links between the areas of Children and Families, Child Protection and Prevention of Domestic Violence are relatively obvious. What may not be so obvious, however, is the support framework that the business community can provide in dealing with what are historically incredibly challenging and diverse issues.

I will look to engage with the business community to create circuit-breaker opportunities for young people who find themselves on the wrong path. There are also opportunities for business-led mentorship and job skill programs.

Fundamentally, as the minister for these critical portfolios, I will be measured in my approach. I recognise that in order to provide our children the opportunity to be the best they can be, if we are to keep our children safe and do right by them and protect the victims of domestic violence from the perpetrators of that violence, we cannot approach the needed solutions cautiously for fear of condemnation. I commit to not abandoning another generation of Territory kids by being afraid to say what needs to be said and doing what needs to be done in the best interests of the child to the exclusion of all else.

This brings me back to the coincidence of the CLP government winning 17 seats in the recent Territory election and the 50th anniversary of the CLP winning 17 seats at the formation of the Legislative Assembly in 1974.

In 1974 Territorians elected a 17-member strong CLP team to complete the Territory's journey towards self-government. In 2024 Territorians elected a 17-member strong CLP government to do the necessary to deliver a safer, stronger and more resilient Territory.

On achieving self-government in 1978, the *NT News* reported the Territory's first Chief Minister, Paul Everingham, as saying:

> *How far would we have got with self-government if we had heeded the voices of caution and fear?*

If posed in today's political environment, I expect Paul Everingham's statement would be along the lines of, 'How far will we get in securing the Territory's future if we heed the voices of those who believe they know better than Territorians what is needed in order to make our Territory safe, to make it prosper and grow, and who do not have the lived experience of what it means to be a Territorian?'

Territorians loudly and clearly proclaimed on 24 August 2024 that they want the CLP government to work to make our community safer by reducing crime, to make our Territory prosperous by rebuilding our economy and to restore the lifestyle that led to us calling the Territory home.

The strength of our government's plan to achieve this lies in its simplicity. We will hold to account those who do not respect the rules that we all agree to live by. We will simplify doing business. We will take the necessary steps to enable Territorians to once again enjoy the freedoms offered by our Territory's unique and relaxed lifestyle. We will not resile from making the hard decisions.

Sir Robert Menzies said:

> *More good things in life are lost by indifference than ever were lost by active hostility.*

I make an unequivocal commitment to not only the people of Port Darwin but also the Territory community more broadly that I will not fall prey to indifference, nor will I be swayed by the hostility of those who disagree with our approach.

As John Howard said:

> *… if I am wrong and you are right then the democratic processes of the Australian community will vindicate you and condemn me.*

As the Member for Port Darwin, I will work hard to deliver on the commitments made. Our journey over the next four years will not be a straight line; there will be obstacles and challenges, but there will also be opportunities. We will take this journey together, overcoming the obstacles and challenges and making the most of every opportunity.

In the words of Sir Winston Churchill, who never resiled from a tough decision or backed away from a challenge, even when the odds appeared insurmountable, I make this final commitment to the people of Port Darwin and everyone who has supported me in the journey I started in 2001. I will:

> *… never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.*

Madam Speaker, thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to speak on this auspicious occasion, the commencement of the 15th Legislative Assembly. Thank you to the people of Port Darwin; I will not let you down.

Mx McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, it is with great honour that I address this Chamber as the Member for Nightcliff and give my first speech.

Thank you to Larrakia elder, Danggalaba man, Tibby Quall, for walking me into the Chamber this morning. Tibby is a senior traditional owner from a renowned Darwin family, the Batcho family, an integral part of this place's community and history. Tibby has led and continues to lead many campaigns to protect country and return it to its traditional owners. In his words, they have been waiting for their land a long time.

I stand on Larrakia country, Garramilla. This is stolen land. Larrakia people never ceded sovereignty. I am but a guest on this land. I acknowledge and pay my deepest respects to the thousands of generations of Larrakia people who have lived, learned, hunted, slept, dreamed and birthed on this land—to the Larrakia mothers and fathers who raised their children and are still raising them on their country. I extend this acknowledgement to all First Nations peoples in the room, particularly the First Nations MLAs, who I will be working alongside over the next four years.

I am beyond humbled to be sworn in as a representative for the Nightcliff community. It is a wonderful, vibrant community. The Nightcliff electorate follows the coastline from the mangroves of Kulaluk in Coconut Grove to the mouth of Gurambai (Rapid Creek). Famous for sunset picnics, walks along the jetty, food trucks galore and swimming—for those brave enough—it is definitely the best foreshore in Darwin. Sorry, Fannie Bay. Nightcliff has been known as a progressive heartland in the Top End, and while it has always had a large contingent of progressive environmentally conscious residents, it is so much more than that. It is an incredibly diverse electorate. Walking along the foreshore you can hear languages from all over the world—Tagalog, Hindi, Greek, Punjabi, Spanish, Nepalese, Swahili, Yolngu Matha and the list goes on.

We have families and students, home owners, renters and people living in public housing, retirees, migrants and people living with disabilities—everyone is welcome in Nightcliff. Whilst this means that there is a broad range of issues people are concerned about, there are still some key concerns held throughout the community. I will get to those in a moment.

But first, how did I get to be standing here before you all today? I grew up on the Wurundjeri and Bunurong lands of the Kulin Nation in south-east Melbourne. Yes, sorry, I am from Victoria. Although growing up I did not know those names because our education system had not and in many ways still does not acknowledge and teach the truth of First Peoples and our colonial history.

In many ways my childhood was an unremarkable one. It was a regular, middle-class, public school upbringing in the suburbs. It was not a very political upbringing, although I had a strong drive to understand the world around me and try to fight things I thought were unjust.

In primary school in pre-internet times I used to collect old *National Geographic* magazines and cut out the articles on endangered animals, making my own endangered species files for all the animals I was going to save when I grew up. Jane Goodall was a big influence at that time.

At 14, I joined the Australia Tibet Council and used to do long treks on public transport through Melbourne suburbs to join the Free Tibet protests at the Chinese Embassy. I always tried to get my classmates to join me, in vain; my community organising skills had clearly not been developed yet.

It was not until I was older that I learned that I came from a line of justice seekers and agitators. My father, Simon Taylor, initiated the 1989 interest rate blockade. That was an attempt to stymie the banks during a time of exorbitantly high interest rates, which were lucrative to big business looking for foreign investment but crushed families and led to many foreclosures.

My great-uncle Frank Hardy is the communist and author who wrote *Power Without Glory*, in 1950. While Frank was not a perfect man by any stretch, he was radical for his time, deeply concerned with the plight of the working class and other oppressed people. He was unafraid to look into the racist heart of white Australia and speak plainly about how mateship and a fair go did not extend to the original people of this country.

Frank spent much time in the Northern Territory. After befriending Gurindji man Vincent Lingiari, Frank used his connections with unions, the media and politicians to support Vincent and the Gurindji in the Wave Hill Walk-off, the monumental and ultimately successful strike for Indigenous wages and land rights in 1966. Walking under Frank's banner in the commemoration march at the Gurindji Freedom Day Festival in 2022 with his children, my cousins Alan and Shirley, was one of the proudest moments of my life.

If you had told me then or at any time in the past that in 2024 I would be standing here being sworn in as an elected Member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, it is safe to say that I would not have believed you, not for a second. You see, I have never had an office job. I have only ever worked in runners and steelcap boots. I did not think that the halls of parliament were for people like me.

I tried uni in my early twenties, but without support and finances and with poor mental health I was never able to finish, so I worked in every menial job you can imagine. When I saved up enough money I would take time to travel and volunteer, doing things I was passionate about. At 19, I spent time volunteering in refugee camps on the Thai–Burma border. I then spent most of my twenties hitchhiking, working and volunteering around Australia, finding that I loved the hot, sweaty and unbelievably beautiful country of northern Australia.

I became a rigger and rope-access technician, building huge steel communication towers across remote locations in the NT and WA. Whist I loved the freedom of this work—I loved using my hands, the hard physical nature of it and the technical skills I gained—the sexism and blatant misogyny I endured in this extremely male-dominated industry wore on me. It is one of the reasons I feel so passionately now about changing that culture and supporting women's and girls' access to learning trades.

Coming from a trades background goes against the stereotypes not just of Greens politicians but of politicians generally. I am proud to have real-life working experience, not being a career politician, and will unashamedly be fighting for the interests of working people. I am proud to be a union member, and I support the work of Unions NT.

I have used my technical skills in many environmental volunteer roles, such as spending 12 months volunteering on board one of the Sea Shepherd vessels, the MV *Steve Irwin*. Getting to the middle of the Indian Ocean chasing illegal fishing vessels to then realise that I had incurable seasickness was not exactly a highlight.

This experience further solidified for me the importance of the role of nonviolent direct action in defending people and our environment, because not all laws are good laws. Legal does not always equal ethical. Direct action has played an important role in so many instances of social progress that we take for granted from the eight-hour work day to women's right to vote. It is a fundamental part of changing society for the better, and changing society for the better is what Greens politics is all about.

I never had political ambitions. I am simply someone who felt massively let down by decisions made in our name by our representatives and put up my hand because I believed we deserve better. I saw my community raise their voices time and again, and they were shut out by those in power. I stand here before you as the first Greens representative in the Northern Territory parliament, and that is a responsibility I do not take lightly. The NT might not have had a Greens representative before, but it has a history and present that involve staunch activism, thriving community organising, incredibly active constituents and people striving to make this place a more equal one.

One principle that will guide me in this place is the idea of acting for the common good: does what we do benefit wider society as a whole as opposed to the private good of individuals or sections of society? As our entire existence depends on our natural environment, we need intact ecosystems for the water we drink and the air we breathe. That must be included. Does what we do benefit our natural environment?

I spent the past six years studying whilst having and raising children, graduating this year with an environmental science degree and a Graduate Certificate of Emergency and Disaster Management from CDU. Even though I understood and believed what climate scientists were saying about climate change before doing the degree, having done it has given me a much deeper and, to be honest, much more terrifying understanding of what is happening to our planet. It is a visceral feeling of doom deep in my gut that never leaves.

Fighting climate change—or, more precisely, fighting the corporate greed and deranged political decisions that are destroying our planet—is the greatest challenge in human history. We are at a precipice now.

Climate scientists are at a point of despair. Joelle Gergis, one of my science heroes, is a renowned Australian scientist and lead author in one of the latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports. She has given up her career as a researcher because what is the point of dedicating your life to evaluating data and evidence on things that impact our existence on Earth if the people in power will not listen to you?

This is from her latest essay, 'Highway to Hell', which I implore everyone in this room to read. She says:

'Most politicians and their advisors do not have a science degree, or science education beyond high school. Yet we are entrusting these people with the most important decisions humanity will ever face. The very least they could do is listen to what our community has to say and act in the national interest of future generations.

'People in decades to come will look back at the world's collective failure to shut down the fossil fuel industry in time, and see it for what it really is, an intergenerational crime against humanity.'

The environment movement in the Northern Territory has an enormously strong history. I acknowledge that history. From the Jabiluka blockade against uranium mining led by the Mirarr to opposition to a nuclear waste dump at Muckaty, the NT has been the site of many of the most influential and significant environmental campaigns in the country. I want to see the environment movement grow and flourish because, my gosh, we need a strong community voice right now with the challenges we have ahead of us.

In the Northern Territory we are on the front line of not just the climate crisis but also the fossil fuel expansion that is fuelling that crisis. Have you seen the number of anti-fracking triangles on fences in Nightcliff? Time and again people I spoke to throughout the campaign raised climate and our environment as a concern. People know that Darwin is getting hotter. Our Dry Seasons are not what they used to be. They also know

that the fossil fuel industry is a chronic underpayer of tax, taking our resources for its own profits whilst paying barely, if any, royalties.

First Nations communities from the Beetaloo Sub-basin up to the Tiwi Islands have been raising their voices to protect their songlines, country, air and water from exploitation.

Instead of taking seriously what is an existential threat to life in the Top End—indeed, to life everywhere—governments in the Northern Territory have continually turned away from addressing climate change and towards the fossil fuel companies that fund them and give them what they want.

Because I am listening to my community and scientific experts, I vow to be a strong voice in this parliament against fracking, new gas development and the establishment of a petrochemical and gas hub at Middle Arm.

Instead, we have an incredible opportunity to become a leader in renewables. I want long-term, sustainable jobs here with a trained local workforce. We can manufacture here and create training centres. The future is in not a dying gas industry but a renewables economy. Those investing in it are looking for jurisdictions that have a clear vision and understand this new economy. We are already late in this race; let us not fall any further behind.

I am extremely concerned about the rhetoric from the government which dismisses and demonises experts and their advice. Would you ignore the expert advice from a builder who told you your house will fall down just because you do not want to hear it? This is dangerous and blatantly acting against our self-interests.

It is not just gas expansion; we are facing a nature crisis too, with our precious tropical savannah being bulldozed at an alarming rate. The people of Darwin were galvanised under the leadership of Larrakia people over the proposal to bulldoze Binybara (Lee Point). This senseless and rational destruction of cultural sites in old-growth forest has been put on pause for the moment, at least, as a result of people power and community campaigns. I support and amplify the voices that are calling for Lee Point to be returned to the Larrakia people.

The world is witnessing a genocide unfolding before our eyes, committed by Israel against the people of Palestine. Yesterday morning I watched footage of more children in bloody body bags after being bombed whilst playing soccer. Overnight more refuge camps have been bombed, with people being burnt alive in their tents with no water to put them out. If you were to attend one funeral a day for each of the children who have been killed so far, you would be attending funerals every day for the next 41 years.

I will not be told, as we have heard from politicians on both sides, that this issue is not relevant to Northern Territory politics. It is so relevant; genocide is always morally relevant. Members of our community in Darwin have family in Gaza who cannot escape. During the campaign I had many members of the Muslim community tell me that they were voting Greens for the first time because we were the only ones who were listening and speaking out.

As Israel's indiscriminate bombings have turned to Lebanon, in the past two weeks, my own constituents have told me about the distress of being unable to help their families. They say that nowhere in Lebanon is safe. Imagine waking up every morning and wondering whether your elderly parents, siblings or cousins have survived the night. These people are in our community and they are hurting.

We have heard politicians at all levels of government accuse those speaking out about these atrocities of stoking division and affecting social cohesion in our community. This is insulting. The only thing causing division and distress in our community is people helplessly watching a literal genocide unfold and hearing nothing of substance from their representatives about it. That is distressing.

Beyond that, the genocide in Gaza is relevant to us here because we are part of the system that is allowing it to happen. Australia exports weapons parts to Israel and some of those companies operate in the Northern Territory. To take one example, community members in Darwin have held protests out the front of the office of the weapons company, Thales, in Darwin. Thales manufactures parts that are used to bomb children in Palestine.

For the past year our leaders have ignored this powerful, multi-faith movement of Territorians who are speaking up for a free Palestine and an end to the genocide. I will be supporting and amplifying those voices.

I am indebted to the activism that is ongoing in the Top End community for my place in this parliament—and there is more than I have had time to describe here. I will strive to represent these movements of people who

are motivated not by self-interest, financial gain or professional obligation, but who are active in their corner of the world because they care about it and have a desire to see justice.

I do not think that social change begins and ends in parliament, but certain people demonstrate to us the role that electoral politics and parliament can play in making our society a fairer one. In light of this I take this moment to acknowledge the Independent Member for Mulka, Yingiya Guyula, a senior Yolngu leader and law man. I quote Mr Guyula from his first speech in this Chamber eight years ago:

> *We talk about closing the gap, but what gap are we talking about? The people of my electorate understand that this gap is the gap created when Yolngu law is not properly acknowledged. When the power of self-determination is increasingly being removed.*
>
> *…*
>
> *The gap grows … Our right to maintain justice has been revoked by Balanda institutions.*
>
> *… the only way to fix this is with policies of self-determination, self-management, self-governance and, ultimately, a treaty.*

I support and echo his calls for treaty. A treaty is a tangible way to recognise the First People of this country and create a new path forward. It is essential in reckoning with the historical and ongoing injustices of colonisation, the ongoing effects of which we can see in the proposed crime legislation before us this week. The ramifications of these are so dire that I need to mention them.

These punitive measures will not make our community safer. The argument that the only way to engage vulnerable children as young as 10 who may be involved in illegal activity and the only way to offer them support is to criminalise them is a monumentally irrational, ineffective and morally bankrupt conclusion.

The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory found:

> *… that children and young people, many of whom came from trauma and disadvantaged backgrounds and needed help, were put at risk by the environments in which they were held under the government's care.*

At any given time, virtually 100% of the children incarcerated in the NT's youth detention centres are Indigenous.

The evidence is clear that imprisonment as the default response to crime fails to keep our community safe. Despite our prison population increasing 30% in the last decade, our community feels less safe than ever. I spoke to so many people in my electorate who were hurting and not feeling safe. I heard people say time and again that what we are doing is not working. Locking people up over and again is not working.

We all want the same thing: a safe and vibrant community for everyone. There are proven cost-effective alternatives to prison and the tired, old tough-on-crime measures. These will actually break the cycle of incarceration and improve community safety. The funding needs to be long term and supporting Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. We need to establish a 'breaking the cycle' fund to properly fund and expand evidence-based, independently evaluated programs and services, including bail support programs—which significantly reduce reoffending and increase compliance with bail conditions—and post-release programs for people facing homelessness, drug dependency and other complex needs. First Nations post-release programs have reduced reoffending to 4% in other parts of the country.

Throughout the election, if I ever heard mention of domestic, family and sexual violence it was often tacked onto the end, almost as an afterthought. I have said this many times before and will say it again: domestic, family and sexual violence is the largest social issue we face. It is the largest aspect of crime; it is a driver of crime. Over 60% of all the men incarcerated in our prisons are there for domestic violence-related offences. We must look at all crime through the lens of DFSV.

Women and children are being turned away from shelters every day. Those frontline services have been crying out for adequate funding for decades, from both sides of politics. This is not good enough.

I also received news today that another Aboriginal woman has been murdered in a DV incident, presumably by a man she knows. This is four women in seven weeks. This is the crime crisis.

I am an assault survivor, and I will fully and relentlessly force the spotlight on to properly addressing this violence once and for all. The safety of my community is of the utmost importance to me. We are not safe as a community until everyone is safe.

We cannot continue to blame kids for falling through the cracks that our government and society have created; we must do things differently. If we want safe communities we need to focus on what people need right now: a safe place to live, access to quality education and nutritious food, and a sense of purpose and belonging.

We need to urgently meet the basic needs of young people because the long-term harmony and safety of our community depends on it.

I know I am now the name and face of the first Greens member in NT parliament, but what you cannot see are the hundreds of other dedicated people in this grassroots movement who have come before me. I truly am standing on the shoulders of giants, some of whom are, unfortunately, not with us anymore.

Greg Jarvis was the first-ever Greens member elected to local government, to the Darwin City Council. He passed away in 2010. He was a popular, well-liked local, a brilliant teacher and school principal. He showed us it was possible for the Greens to have a seat at the table.

Sophie Trevitt, whom we lost last year far too young at 32, spent many years working behind the scenes in other states and then volunteered as the NT Greens convenor whilst working as a human rights lawyer and an advocate for women and children experiencing violence in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

To Justin Tutty and Grusha Leeman, integral in creating the NT Greens and building the movement, thank you for your friendship.

This campaign was the largest in the history of the NT Greens. I had many conversations, too many to count, where people told me they were voting for the Greens for the first time and were excited. Hundreds of volunteers joined the campaign to provide a progressive alternative to voters, seeing record results in Braitling, Fannie Bay and Nightcliff. In Braitling, Asta Hill and her team achieved the biggest swing to the Greens that Australia has ever seen. We have built an incredible movement and we are not going anywhere.

To every Greens volunteer who delivered leaflets, made phone calls, stood at market stalls, put up signs and doorknocked, to the volunteers on the management committee and those working quietly on our policy initiatives, to every candidate who stood before me, none of this would have been possible without you and all your incredible passion and perseverance; thank you.

To my good friend, comrade, Suki Dorras-Walker, you make me want to be a better version of myself. Your energy and conviction are second to none. Thank you for standing with me. Your time will come.

I thank Dr Victor Hurley, who has known me since birth. The first person to teach me to abseil, your faith in me to handle any challenge thrown at me has been integral to my self-confidence.

To Amy Broomhall, thank you for being the greatest friend anyone could ever have. You own a piece of my heart.

Thank you to my mother, Michelle, for teaching me not to take myself or life too seriously. Thank you to my father, Simon, for nurturing my intellectual curiosity and teaching me that you never stop learning.

Thank you to my siblings, Xavier, Lucy and Rafael, for keeping me grounded and never laughing at my jokes.

To my little sisters, Yumika and Aurora, I hope I can give you the confidence to go out in the world and bravely be whomever you want to be.

To my three beautiful, precious children, Arlen, Fintan and Rufus, you are my life. Every day I strive to make you proud and to make the world you will inherit a little bit better.

To my incredible partner and love of my life, Tom, lest anyone mistake your gentleness and humility for weakness, you are the strongest, kindest and bravest person I know. None of what I do is possible without you.

To the people of Nightcliff, thank you for every conversation you had with me on your doorsteps; there will be many more to come. I am eternally grateful and humble that you have chosen me to represent you. I will

carry your voices with me here every day. I work for you and you alone. I look forward to the next four years and what we can achieve together.

Mr CHARLS (People, Sport and Culture): Madam Speaker, it is with a profound sense of gratitude and duty that I stand before you today as the newly elected representative for Sanderson in the Northern Territory parliament. I am here because of the trust and confidence that the voters of Sanderson have placed in me and this team. It is an honour I deeply cherish and hold with the utmost respect.

During the campaign I had the unique opportunity to visit each residence in Sanderson electorate not once, but twice. This extensive journey allowed me to engage directly with many residents, to understand their concerns, hopes and vision for our community. The support for change was palpable at doors; many individuals expressed a sincere desire to see a new direction for the Territory.

These interactions were not only enlightening but also deeply enjoyable. The discussions we had and the challenges that were voiced have shaped my understanding and commitment to serve with integrity and passion. I am truly thankful for every conversation, every piece of advice and every word of encouragement received during these visits. It is these engagements that have reinforced my dedication to represent and advocate for the needs and aspirations of Sanderson residents in this parliament.

I am immensely proud to serve as a member of Lia Finocchiaro's Country Liberal Party government. As a proud Territorian, I consciously chose Australia and the Northern Territory as my home from among many possibilities around the world. This decision, made with deep affection and careful thought, reflects my commitment and heartfelt connection to this vibrant community and stunning region.

I will take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to those whose support has been foundational in my journey to this parliament. First and foremost, I owe a tremendous debt of thanks to my family. My wife, Anu, and our children, Aimie and Anna, have been my constant support and joy. Their love and encouragement have been pillars of strength throughout this demanding campaign.

I am also immensely grateful for the ongoing support of my parents, Charls Antony and Daisy Charls, who have been by my side not just during this campaign but throughout my life. Their wisdom and sacrifices have shaped the person I am today.

My in-laws, Johny Varghese Chukkiriyan and Salamy Paul Vettiyangal, who joined us early in the year and supported me through my preselection and subsequent campaign activities, have been a source of great encouragement.

Additionally, I acknowledge my brother, Dr Jeo Tom Charls; my sister-in-law, Maaya Davi Chalissery; and my niece, Thara; my sister, Dr Anit Catherine Charls; her husband, Dr Sunny John Chandrankunnel; and my niece, Saasha; my brother-in-law, Arun C John; his wife, Melba Francis; and my nephew, Arthur for their emotional support.

A special thanks to my grandmothers, Kathri Thomas and the late Chinnamma Antony, whose lessons in compassion and care have guided me throughout my life. I am also eternally grateful for the love and affection bestowed upon me by my late grandfathers, Kuruvila Antony Punnathaniyil and Valiyaveettil Varkey Thomas. Their influence remains a strong force in my life.

I also express my gratitude to my uncle, Anto Antony MP, and my cousin Jeffin Jose, who is here with me today, as well as all my family members and friends watching this online from around the globe. Each one of you has supported me in different ways throughout various stages of my life, and your collective encouragement has been instrumental in my journey.

My gratitude goes out to all my teachers who have been pivotal in my education and development. Hearing of your pride in my election to the Northern Territory parliament fills me with immense gratitude and motivates me to serve with honour.

Continuing with expressions of gratitude, I must recognise the efforts of my campaign manager, Mr Salas Abraham. His dedication and coordination were instrumental throughout this campaign. Equally, I thank my friend and schoolmate Bibin Kuriakose Thudiyanplackal. His support has been a constant source of strength for me. From the earliest days of our campaign to the final moments of election day, his enthusiasm and dedication were invaluable.

It is often said that it takes a village to achieve significant milestones, and this campaign was no exception. Many referred to my volunteer team as an army of volunteers, but to me they were more than that; they were friends and supporters who believed in a cause and joined me in this journey. This includes many individuals I had never met before the campaign who came forward to lend their support, trusting in my ability to make a positive change. Their belief in our goals has been incredibly humbling and motivating.

I am especially thankful to Kiernan and Trish, who helped me in our doorknocking efforts. Their dedication helped me reach many voters and convey our message effectively.

Our campaign was fortunate to have the help of numerous young volunteers—children as young as six, who, along with their parents, helped distribute campaign materials. Their enthusiasm was infectious and brought a unique joy to our efforts. Likewise, individuals in their seventies and eighties joined us, demonstrating that commitment to community transcends age.

The campaign drew together a diverse group of professionals—doctors, teachers, nurses, engineers, admin officers, support workers, drivers and many others—who contributed in various ways, from letterboxing and roadside waving to hosting barbecues. Each played a vital role in spreading our message across Sanderson.

Lastly, I acknowledge those who offered spiritual support. Many people continuously prayed for the success of our campaign. I am deeply grateful for these prayers and the positive vibes sent our way, which provided an additional layer of support that was felt each day.

Allow me to share a bit about my background, which has profoundly shaped my commitment to serving the people.

I grew up in a culture where we were instilled with deep respect, encapsulated by the belief that one should regard their mother, father and teacher as divine. This fundamental respect also extends to how we treat guests, embracing the age-old adage '*Atithi Deva Bhava*' or 'Guest is God'. This principle influences every interaction I have and underscores my approach to governance and serving the community.

When I apply this principle, it extends even to learning from the younger generation. For instance, last month an 11-year-old resident of Anula and a Year 6 student at Wagaman Primary School, Sophie, became my teacher, giving me lessons on golf. Her ability to guide and teach me in this sport is a perfect example of how everyone, regardless of age, has something valuable to teach us.

Growing up, I was deeply influenced by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, a visionary leader and the past President of India, who rose from humble beginnings in a village to become a renowned aerospace scientist and ultimately the president. Dr Kalam articulated a powerful formula for success that has profoundly resonated with me: success comes from setting a great aim, continuously seeking knowledge, putting in hard work and maintaining perseverance. This philosophy not only fuels my personal ambitions but also significantly shapes my responsibilities in the community.

These principles shape my aim to foster an environment where respect and integrity are paramount, supporting a structured, peaceful society that benefits all. I carry these values into every aspect of my role, striving to achieve order and harmony through diligent service and ethical leadership.

I was born in Bharananganam in Kerala, a place distinguished by its association with St Alphonsa, whom the Catholic Church has raised to sainthood. My schooling was at St Alphonsa School in Aruvithura, St Vincent School in Pala and St George School in Aruvithura, where I received a foundation in discipline and education.

I chose to pursue a career in nursing to serve those in need, completing my Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery at the Little Flower College of Nursing in Kerala. My professional journey as a registered nurse began in the intensive coronary care unit at the Little Flower Hospital and Research Centre, where I first developed a profound commitment to patient care.

I moved to Australia and completed the Initial Registration for Overseas Registered Nurses program at the Institute of Health and Nursing Australia to gain registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

My career then led me to the emergency department at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in New South Wales, where I developed a keen focus on caring for individuals with mental health disturbances. This focus was driven by not only the pervasive stigma these individuals often face but also a deep commitment to supporting their recovery journey. Witnessing their challenges firsthand motivated me to advocate for and provide the

compassionate support they need to navigate their path to wellness. I commenced working as a registered nurse at the mental health inpatient unit and joined a transition program to mental health nursing.

I relocated to Darwin to join the Darwin Alcohol Assessment Service as a registered nurse, which was part of the alcohol mandatory treatment program at the time. I returned to mental health services after the discontinuation of the program.

I started to work in senior nursing roles from 2015 and in leadership roles from 2017. Recognising the need for specialised skills, in 2016 I completed a Master of Mental Health Nursing from the University of Newcastle, Australia, with also a focus on alcohol and other drug abuse. I enhanced my leadership capabilities by completing a Graduate Certificate in Leadership (Health and Human Services) from the University of Tasmania in 2021. Additionally, I sharpened my governance skills by graduating from the Australian Institute of Company Directors in 2023.

Throughout my career I had the privilege of working alongside many dedicated consumers, carers and colleagues. I specifically acknowledge my former General Manager, Maraea Handley, for her unwavering support before she retired and returned to her home in New Zealand.

The turning point in my decision to enter politics came with the tragic murders of Declan Laverty, a 20-year-old bottle shop worker, and Md Ishaqur Rahman Sifat, an international student, in Darwin. The community's outcry and the palpable grief of these families compelled me to step beyond my professional role. This led me to offer my candidacy, believing that I could provide deeper insights and more effective solutions to the challenges posed in our community.

As a migrant myself, I have navigated both subtle and overt challenges throughout my journey in this great country. These experiences have not only shaped my perspective but also reinforced my commitment to fostering an inclusive community. It is essential that we, as a society, come together and work collaboratively, valuing each individual not by how they look or sound but by what they contribute to our community.

I am determined to see that children from diverse backgrounds gain confidence in the inclusivity of the 15th Assembly—a parliament that truly reflects diversity and offers opportunities to people from all backgrounds and with varied skill sets. It is imperative that we cultivate an environment where merit and capability are the sole criteria for employment and advancement in the Northern Territory. We must ensure that our people have faith in a leadership that acts with compassion and considers the wellbeing of the community.

During our campaign we focused on three critical themes: reducing crime; rebuilding the economy; and restoring the vibrant lifestyle that the Territory is known for. These are not just goals but commitments to the people of the Northern Territory. We aim to enhance our community's safety, stimulate economic growth and ensure that the unique lifestyle of the Territory can be enjoyed by all. These initiatives are designed to foster a safe, prosperous and dynamic community where everyone can thrive.

I pledge to serve the people of the Northern Territory with unwavering dedication and utmost integrity. It is my solemn commitment to work tirelessly to effect positive change and rejuvenate the trust our community places in its elected officials and the broader political system. My mission is to safeguard and enrich our unique way of life, advocate passionately for our collective interests and ensure a prosperous future for all Territorians.

I will be a vocal and active presence in this parliament, always ready to speak on behalf of my constituents. I promise to approach this role with humility and respect, maintaining open lines of communication with the people I serve. My office door will remain open and my phone line always ready to receive your calls, ensuring that I am visible and accessible to everyone. I commit to being forthright and transparent in my dealings, holding myself accountable to you, the people who have entrusted me with this great responsibility. Above all, I will stand courageously in this Chamber, advocating for policies and decisions that truly benefit our community.

I firmly believe that the chronology of one's arrival in this great island—whether thousands of years ago, hundreds of years ago or in recent times—holds no bearing on our shared commitment to enhancing the Northern Territory. What truly matters is our collective dedication to improving our community. We are all part of the fabric of this Territory. Each thread is equally important, regardless of how long it has been woven into the tapestry. Our diversity is our strength, and it is this diversity that will enable us to build a better Northern Territory together.

As I am representing Sanderson, I am deeply moved by the trust and responsibility entrusted to me. My approach to community service is rooted in the belief that true personal fulfillment comes through helping others. This service is not just an obligation, but a privilege that allows for self-discovery and personal growth.

Leadership, in my view, should not be measured by the number of followers one has but by the ability to foster leadership in others. It is about empowering individuals to take initiative and lead, ensuring a legacy of growth and success. True strength in leadership emerges not from effortless victories but from the resilience built through facing and overcoming challenges. Each hardship endured and each obstacle surmounted fortifies my resolve and enhances my ability to serve effectively.

My actions and decisions are shaped by core beliefs and values, guiding me towards a future I aim to achieve. By aligning my actions with these principles, I cultivate habits that reinforce my values, ultimately defining the destiny I strive for. In this role, I commit to a path of integrity and dedicated service, aiming to not only envision a brighter future for the Northern Territory but also actively bring it into being through concerted effort. Together, we will build a legacy of prosperity and harmony.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Minister, Hon Lia Finocchiaro, for entrusting me with the significant responsibility of serving as the Minister for People, Sport and Culture; Disability; Arts; Youth, Seniors and Equality; Multicultural Affairs; and Veterans. This trust not only honours my commitment but also challenges me to strive for excellence in these varied and vital areas. Each of these portfolios touches the lives of our community's diverse members, from our energetic youths and inspiring seniors to our valiant veterans and vibrant multicultural populace. My vision is to foster an inclusive, supportive and dynamic environment where culture thrives, sports inspire and every individual feels valued and empowered.

As a new parliamentarian this opportunity is an immense privilege and a profound responsibility. I am committed to advocating for policies and programs that enhance the quality of life and access to opportunities for all, especially those who are most vulnerable. Through collaborative efforts and dedicated service, I am determined to make a positive impact that resonates across all sectors of society, ensuring that the Northern Territory not only grows but also becomes a model of community engagement and cultural richness. My aim is to work tirelessly so that our collective actions today help shape a more equitable, vibrant and inclusive tomorrow for all Territorians.

To all the remarkable people from diverse cultures who have built the Northern Territory and this country, I extend my deepest gratitude and respect. It is your hands that have shaped our present and your traditions that will inform our future. As we continue to build and grow, let us remember and celebrate the multitude of cultural threads that make the Northern Territory and Australia vibrant and strong. Thank you for your enduring influence and for the legacy you continue to build for generations to come.

Finally, to the cherished residents of Sanderson, I am deeply honoured to serve as your voice in the Northern Territory parliament. My heart is committed to championing our community's needs and aspirations. Together, we will navigate the challenges ahead with resilience and embrace opportunities with enthusiasm. I am dedicated to making a tangible difference in our lives, ensuring that Sanderson is a vibrant and inclusive community in which to live. Thank you for entrusting me with this profound responsibility; I am excited to embark on this journey with each one of you.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, fellow members of parliament and, most importantly, all the people here in the people's House and those watching today, witnessing the beginning of our 15th Assembly, I hope this Assembly will be marked by wisdom, inclusion, compassion and justice.

I rise today with deep respect for the traditional owners of the land on which we gather, the Larrakia people. I acknowledge their enduring strength, resilience, wisdom, generosity and grace. This land was taken all those years ago, and it is the land on which the capital of the Northern Territory and this parliament sit. It is the Larrakia people who, since that time, have contributed their labour, knowledge and culture to this place that many of us now call home. Larrakia people were always here and will always be here.

I also acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal peoples across this country. I pay my respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people present, including my fellow MLAs who represent their First Nations communities—my *mari,* Yingiya; Dheran; Selena; Chansey; and Manuel—and thank them for sharing their country.

As we meet here today we cannot ignore the painful truth of our nation's unjust history that saw First Nations people dispossessed of their lands, languages, rights and often their lives. It is a history marked by violence, oppression and broken promises. It is not just history; it is also our present. The legacies of that past persist

today in our institutions and communities. We must never shy away from this truth, nor from the responsibility we bear to seek justice, reconciliation and reparation.

This week marks the anniversary of the Voice referendum, a moment that reminded us all of the deep need to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Wherever you stood on the question posed by the referendum, we must recognise the pain that the process and its outcome caused for many people.

My commitment to truth, treaty and voice remain firm. Too often First Nations voices have been ignored, and this must change. In this Chamber we have a responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are not only heard but also central to shaping the laws and policies that affect their communities, people and lands.

My commitment today and every day is to work for that vision where we all walk together, all voices are heard and valued and every decision we make is rooted in wisdom, fairness, respect and a shared future. Let this parliament be a place where we learn from the past, heal the present and build a more just tomorrow.

I come from a family of migrants. My parents' families arrived in Australia with little, yet they built homes, raised children and grandchildren and worked with their hands, minds and hearts to create better lives. Their sacrifices, wisdom and resilience shaped me, as did the lessons from my parents, grandparents and aunties. They raised me to connect with others, think critically, speak up and always show up.

Today I am thinking of my dad who left school at 13 to work on the family farm in Queensland and then worked in factories. He educated himself, learned on the job to be a journalist, a political adviser and later a filmmaker telling important stories. He spent much of the last 20 years of his life living with us in our house in Millner, being involved in local issues, mentoring Territory filmmakers, being on the board of the Miriam Rose Foundation, learning Yolngu ways of making peace, gaining a degree in Indigenous knowledge from CDU and campaigning for asylum seekers and others less fortunate.

He always spoke truth to power and he was my constant sounding board for ideas until his passing in June 2023. Were he still here, he would look at all of this with pride and wonder, and discuss political strategy with me over his morning marmalade, then go out and sit on a stool outside Parliament House with a purple sign.

My mother's Jewish family left Europe and Palestine and settled in Australia. Many of my relatives have experienced discrimination and some died in the Holocaust that killed 11 million people—six million of them Jews. In my family this history teaches us to work for peace and justice. My Jewish heritage is part of my deep commitment to this work for peace and justice, and has taught me that until we are all free none of us are free. In these times of terrible war and conflict that we heard about from my fellow member, I mourn every life lost and every person harmed.

My amazing mother, at age 86, continues to learn and grow. She published her first two books in her eighties. She speaks her truth always and was with me every day in the past six months, along with her partner, Kit. She was my number one supporter throughout the campaign on market stalls, polling booths and streets, delivering coffee and chocolate honeycomb and campaigning like an 18-year-old.

My aunties, both artists and scientists in their unique way, gave their lives to health, education and family and created homes of welcome and inclusion for everyone. I miss them greatly. Their songs, stories, sayings and actions inspire me to this day.

I am also fortunate to have an incredible sister in every way, Annie; an amazing brother, Josh; beautiful children, Jack and Zeph; and my partner, Johnnie. They have stood by me, helped me and inspired me with what they all do in the world.

I stand here too with the guidance of First Nations elders, mentors and friends, especially my Yolngu family and friends who have taught me love, strength and perseverance.

From my friends, neighbours, colleagues and comrades, I have learned the power of working together for change.

My experiences as a rebellious teenager, a student activist, a youth worker, a mediator, a refugee advocate and an ally for First Nations rights shaped my understanding of how to build communities and drive meaningful change. I have learned from everyone I have connected with. I am and we are nothing without those who came before us, those who work with us and those who will come after us.

I am not from this place, but I have lived in Darwin for almost 30 years, and I raised my family here. I have been privileged to learn and work in Darwin and all over the Northern Territory, and I am deeply grateful for everything this place and its people have given me. I love the Northern Territory, and I am committed to working to repair the deep problems we are facing and the harm that we are doing to people and to country.

Throughout my life when I have seen something broken or systems causing harm I have stepped forward. My law degree has helped me to do my work across the Territory as a mediator and justice expert. In this role I have worked with families, communities, the police, government and businesses to manage conflict in ways that are peaceful, constructive and restore balance. For more than 25 years I have spent my days bringing people together to solve complex problems and create solutions that provide lasting, positive outcomes for everyone. This has shown me that change is possible, even in situations that seem impossible.

While I have always been deeply politically engaged, I never thought I would become a politician, even though it had been suggested to me over the years. Last year, however, two powerful calls to action came. One from my *mari*, Yingiya, and one from my community. Both asked me to stand with them to help create change. I did not take this decision lightly, but ultimately my love and care for this place and community that I have been part of for over half my life, along with my commitment to our future generations, told me what felt right, and I cautiously and intentionally decided to enter this space. I am not someone who enjoys being the centre of attention, but I am here because people wanted to someone to stand up, and I was willing to do that. Those who know me know that I like a challenge, and I truly believe that we can do things better.

I want to live in a place where the people we elect make decisions that are in all our interests and are informed by the best evidence we have and where we do this constructively by working together not against each other. I am ready to bring my experience through a different kind of politics, one which has people at its heart. As an Independent member in this Chamber I promise to listen to my community, and I commit to work to bring integrity into parliament, so we can create that future together where we all thrive.

I am so proud of the campaign we ran. It was one of hope, inclusion, positive values, respect, care and openness. In this election we saw the community's huge desire for change, connection and being listened to and heard. I saw so many examples of what our future can hold, with neighbours connecting, people supporting each other and people coming together.

I have been lucky enough to live, work and raise my family in Millner in the Johnston electorate for more than 25 years. My children grew up here; one was even born in our house—a true local. They attended local schools, celebrated birthdays in the water gardens and played sport every weekend at the local park. I have spent many years with my kids and now my dog enjoying beautiful Gurambai (Rapid Creek). We are so lucky to have a living river flowing through our electorate.

Moil, Jingili, Millner and Alawa are places where, like in much of the Northern Territory, we have incredible diversity, with people from more than 30 different countries speaking more than 45 first languages. I reckon we have the best food in Darwin, and we have unique local markets selling all the fresh local produce you can imagine.

During the campaign it was such a joy to meet so many of the people whom I have lived alongside for so long—people like Patricia, who has lived in Johnston for 53 years and still walks to the corner shop every day, and Ali, who moved here last year with his family. Although he is not yet a citizen, he is deeply involved in his community. I am here for everyone in my electorate, no matter how they got here or who they are.

I cannot express enough my gratitude to and admiration of the incredible more than 150 volunteers of all ages who were involved in our campaign. Thank you to 10-year-old Margot who said, 'I want to help you be the best person you can be so that you can help us have a future'. Thank you to 93-year-old Mirella who came and sat at our stall because she believes that there really is a better way to do things. I also give the biggest thankyous to the many people in between.

We started our campaign with nothing but people's hopes and dreams—no money, no staff, no profile. Through the power of community we won. I am so proud that a campaign like ours can bring a member to parliament against all odds. I commit to keeping that community spirit alive and to bringing it into this Chamber.

I do not have all the answers, but I have a vision for how to move forward. I know that when we use the right processes and we do things properly we create better outcomes. I believe that together we can strengthen the communities of the Northern Territory to be ones where everyone is safe, where everyone has a home, where people feel connected, where people feel safe enough to take down their fences instead of hiding behind them, where governments and services listen to the communities they serve and where, us, the

elected representatives make decisions based on evidence and expertise and we care for people and country, keeping our land and waters healthy and thriving.

My vision is not about parties or private interests; it is about putting people and our future first. Some people say that I am an optimist, but I see myself as a hopeful pragmatist. My work and life here have shown me that when people listen to each other and act together we can create a future that works for everyone.

I am committed to bringing the community's vision into this building. This House, Parliament House, belongs to the people. Its members, all of us, are here to represent the people. Our politics must reflect that. People and communities must be at the centre of what we do.

I am inspired by my *mari*, Yingiya Guyula, the Member for Mulka, who has worked for his electorate and the betterment of the Northern Territory, transcending the party system and walking together with others, and by other strong Independents also transcending party politics in the Northern Territory and throughout Australia. We already have so many examples of how to do this.

Like many of you, I have heard the frustration with politicians and politics, but I also have hope and ideas for change. People want to strengthen, fix and reshape the Northern Territory into a place that is healthy, safe and for all of us.

Justice has always been my passion and I have dedicated my professional life to mediation, peace building and conflict transformation. I have seen how these tools can heal harm, restore balance and promote equality. Much of the time those in power do not understand these approaches or give them the resources that they need. For many years I have been trying to convince decision-makers to do things differently, so now I am here to bring my ideas into this body, the highest body in the Northern Territory, to work with all of you to make sure that we make the right decisions, which will keep us all safe and help us live the lives we deserve.

As an Independent I do not have the power of numbers, but I have the freedom and power to collaborate. I will listen to everyone. I will bring the diverse voices of our community with me. I will work constructively with others. This is how democracy strengthens and flourishes.

During the election we heard frustration and confusion about many issues that we will now talk about in this Chamber. Community members and my colleagues here have all said that they want us to find lasting and wise solutions to locking up children, unsafe communities, poverty and homelessness, and family and domestic violence. We just heard from my fellow member that, tragically, three women have been killed in the last two weeks in the Northern Territory. We cannot let this continue.

Fast decisions do not equal good decisions. We need long-term solutions to create lasting change, and we need those solutions to be made properly. I believe that politics can change; we can live in a democracy where every voice is heard and decisions are made with everyone's input. This is not a fantasy; examples of this exist in Australia and all over the world. My work has shown me there is never a problem that is impossible to solve when we bring people together and learn from each other.

We can and must have politicians who are courageous and make brave decisions, who listen to their communities and then lead with wisdom, who are not just trying to win the next election cycle, who are doing what is best in the long term for our children and theirs. This morning's opening of parliament was graced with the happy sounds of many children, reminding us of our responsibilities.

It feels fitting to me that tomorrow brings a Jewish festival, the harvest festival of Sukkoth, where we build a house roofed with palm leaves, where everyone is welcome, where all who are hungry can come and eat and where everyone has a place. That is the kind of house I believe we can create here.

I believe that no matter what our party or whether we are Independent, we are all members of parliament because we believe in a better future for our whole community. I believe we will get there by working together to make the right decisions with the right information in the right ways and for the right reasons.

I look forward to working with everyone in this Chamber and in the community over the next four years to build this strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive future we all believe in. We have the chance to do things better and differently, to make bold, effective laws that work for generations to come which address the things we care about, making us all safer and caring for our children and our future. That is the parliament I want to be part of and have heard that others in this room want to be part of. It is the one we all need.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, we might have a bit of noise in the gallery during my speech, so with the will of the House, I hope you do not mind. Fellow members, guests and Territorians—wow! What a journey it has been to get here. I start by thanking those who came before me.

First, there was the inaugural Member for Blain, former Deputy Chief Minister Barry Coulter, who did so much to build the Territory and had such a vision for the future, fighting to build the railway and laying the foundation for infrastructure for decades to come. That infrastructure has now come to fruition and we get to enjoy it.

Then former Chief Minister Terry Mills led the party in opposition and took back government in 2012, on the back of a revolt in the bush against the removal of community councils and the self-determination they enabled.

I also thank Nathan Barrett for his hard work for Blain. Doorknocking in the electorate years later, I still heard stories about how hard he worked for the community and how much he genuinely cared for them.

I thank Mark Turner for his service to the community, and I hope he can enjoy more time with his family post-politics.

I will outline some of my background, how and why I came to stand before you, and what I hope to achieve in this place. I will also thank all the people who helped me a long way.

I will go back a fair way. In 1873—do not worry; I have timed this, so I will not go over—my great-great-great-grandfather Johann August Kerle left war and economic depression to emigrate to Australia, seeking hope and opportunity for his family. He came from the village of Barenklau, in the region of Brandenburg in what we today call Germany, with his wife and two children, one of whom was my great-great grandfather Johannes August Kerle. They came on the good ship *Lammershagen* and settled in the Rosewood area in Queensland. Johannes grew up and had my great-grandfather August Theodore Kerle. There are a lot of Augusts in my line; they like that name.

August met and married a Polish girl, Ellen Czislowski, and in 1915, just as World War I was breaking out, my grandfather Roy Henry Kerle—or Pop, as I knew him growing up—was born. Pop married a pretty lass by the name of Marjorie Barnes, and around Rosewood and Ipswich they had six sons and daughters.

Pop was an old man by the time I came along, but he was amazing. He was a carpenter, builder, mechanic and mad poultry nut. The former Member for Nelson would have loved him. He had a collection of bantams and various chooks.

There was nothing he could not build if he set his mind to it. He enlisted in the Australian Defence Force in 1942 to help the war effort, was trained as a flight mechanic and supported the No. 549 Squadron as a flight mechanic working on the Spitfires, including a brief stint in the NT as part of the northern defence.

Mum and dad met and started courting in Rosewood just outside of Brisbane, fell in love and got married there on 10 December 1960. But yet again, times were tough, and opportunity beckoned, this time at the Rum Jungle mine in the far-away Northern Territory.

Dad was a qualified electrician and mum was a trained teacher. Both qualifications were in high demand up north, so they packed up their lives and took off on the long journey driving to the NT in 1961 where they settled in Batchelor. Dad was working at the powerhouse for the mine and mum was teaching kids at Batchelor Area School where she would continue for 28 years, teaching multiple generations of Batchelor kids. Eventually the mine shut down, so mum and dad bought some land on the Finniss River and started a farm. That is where I grew up, hunting, fishing and roaming around the bush.

Mum always tells me the story of how before they had us kids, they would go exploring on the weekends in their little jeep all over the Territory, including to Peppimenarti and Corroboree Billabong. One day they crossed the Finniss River and found a little grass hut. Staying inside were Nugget Majar and his wife, Bilawuk. Mum and dad forged a lifelong relationship with them. When I was growing up on the farm, their children were my uncles and aunties, and we would often go and find sugar bag, fish for turtles and hunt buffalo in the bush. Sadly, their children are not with us any longer; they were victims of the violence that is all too common.

Growing up on the farm was great fun and taught me a lot of skills that I still value, like resourcefulness, grit and determination and the ability to weather the heat and humidity without complaint. One thing the farm did not teach me was how to swim, as even in the 1980s any water deep enough to swim in usually had a snapping handbag hiding in it. Little Matt did not learn to swim, and as a result I nearly drowned at Wangi Falls on a visit as a child, but luckily my mate Isaac Fraser spotted my troubles and saved me.

Credit to AUSTSWIM which—subsequently, not because of me—came to Batchelor and ran free swimming lessons in the public pool. Teaching Aussie kids to swim is a great policy, and it should never be left by the wayside. I am not sure what happened to it in the decades between when I was a kid and now, but I am proud that one of our CLP commitments is to bring back free swimming lessons for all NT kids.

Time went by, and I moved to town with mum and attended high school and then the Northern Territory University where I studied computer science. I thank my long-suffering lecturers who put up with me always pushing the boundaries of when I could submit an assessment. Thank you, Bob Pascoe, for putting up with me.

Now, on to politics. Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, Hawke and Keating were in charge federally. They implemented such socialist leftie reforms as floating the Aussie dollar, dismantling the protectionist tariff system and privatising state-owned assets. Growing up, politics was never a topic of discussion at home; we were always too concerned about moving chooks and grading eggs, so I did not have an opinion on politics for a long time because it did not affect me, until one day it did.

The cattle industry was always a big part of growing up around Batchelor. In the early 2000s, the live cattle export trade started cracking and it breathed new life into all the struggling cattle stations around the Top End, providing a market for their Brahman cattle at a competitive price. We had a few cattle at the time, and every year we would muster them in and sell what we could to pay the council rates and other costs of owning property.

I was flabbergasted to learn in 2011 that some down-south politician had decided to put a stop to the entire live export industry overnight, without warning, because of a TV report. It was framed at the time as just stopping the live export of cattle, but there was nowhere else for those cattle to go. There were no abattoirs to process them and the southern markets did not like Brahman meat.

It was not just the cattle; there was an entire industry behind those cattle. The trucks that transported them, the farmers who managed the properties, the agricultural suppliers in the towns and the schools where those kids attended—there was an entire supply chain operating across northern Australia that relied on the ability to export cattle. By slamming shut that gate, a body blow was dealt to the entire industry. That decision was subsequently found to be unlawful, as it should have been, but the damage was already done.

From that experience, I came to the conclusion that any political party that could end an entire industry without any consideration or due process was not worth my vote. Who is to say what industry will next fall foul of its ill-will?

Fast-forward to September 2016 and a Chief Minister of the same party, but a different branch, put an end to onshore gas exploration in the NT, only to lift the ban a few years later. In the meantime, the businesses that were supplying pipes, valves and fittings, the truckers who were driving up and down the highway and the businesses that were involved in exploration all came to a grinding halt. People were let go from jobs and unable to make mortgage payments because of that decision.

The people who make decisions like this do not realise that in the public sector you can pause projects. It is fine; you can put them aside and everyone continues on with their life as they still have a salary. In the private sector, if you stop an activity, you are taking the lifeblood out of a business. It means that husbands and wives do not bring home money for their family, mortgage repayments are missed and mum and dad start looking at the household shopping list, trying to see where they can economise.

That same Chief Minister also had an ideology, a belief that the way to fix our high rates of Indigenous and youth incarceration was to simply stop taking offenders into custody. That is what happened. The rights of offenders were prioritised over the rights of victims. The hands of police were tied, so offenders who breached bail were released and police were not allowed to apprehend stolen vehicles.

I remember driving around Palmerston in 2017 and being dismayed by the number of stolen vehicles dumped on the side of the road; it was a constant occurrence. We had meetings about crime at that time in Palmerston, trying to figure out what to do about the sudden increase in crime. People's houses were being invaded by offenders chasing car keys to then drive cars around the streets and bait police into car pursuits, knowing the police had to call off a pursuit if the offender drove in a dangerous manner.

This came to a head for me in March 2017 when one of my close friends in Gray was packing one night to go on a work trip to Alice the next day. He left his car keys on the kitchen bench inside his house, beside his wife's bag with her wedding rings. He woke up the next morning to find his car keys, his wife's handbag, her

rings and his car missing. The offender was arrested a few days later, but the car was ruined and the family was turned upside down for weeks until they got it back in mostly working order. It was one night of joyriding for an offender and weeks of trauma for a young family.

One thing I remember clearly was that the only public figure taking a strong stand against this growing lawlessness, and indeed for years to come, was Lia Finocchiaro, the Member for Spillett. She was my local member at the time. When in 2019 the government of the day decided in its infinite wisdom to remove breach of bail as an offence for those under 18, the Member for Spillett was rightly pointing out the consequences that would flow if this happened, which they unfortunately did.

Eventually, enough was enough, and I decided I could not stand by and complain about all the terrible things the government was doing anymore, so I reached out to Lia and asked how I could help. The rest is history.

Now that I am in this House my goal is to serve the people of Blain, be a voice for the voiceless and do my best to make the government work for the people. My entire career before politics has been about improving business processes so that they are more effective. Often you find that, for historical reasons, sometimes the left hand does not talk to the right hand, and if the head does not get involved you can end up in trouble.

For example, during the campaign the Moulden Oval was a hot topic. This is a classic case of things slowly going out of kilter through no individual's fault. Ovals traditionally belonged to schools and were used by various sporting groups. Over time the maintenance of the sprinkler system was handed over to DIPL and the bore was managed by the City of Palmerston. When the sprinklers stopped working there were at least three different groups that had to get together to get it resolved, with the result that during the Dry Season the entire oval burnt out. That was not a good result for anyone.

Throughout my career I have been constantly amazed by the hardworking and passionate public servants in the NT Government, who often tear out their hair—particularly over the last eight years—about the decisions that have come out of this building. My hope while I am in this House is to be the bridge that brings the commonsense voice of my community to this House to achieve good outcomes for all Territorians.

One of the things I am passionate about is sport and the way sport fosters a sense of community and family for those who may not have a constructive family unit at home. During my time in this House I hope that I can support the growth of sports clubs in Palmerston, specifically for youths at risk of going down the wrong path.

I finish by thanking everyone who got me here tonight. First, I thank the people of Blain who put their faith in me and the CLP team to deal with the crime on their streets and bring back safety to their community. There is a lot of work ahead, but every day I will be putting my shoulder to the wheel to make Blain a great place to raise a family, with safe streets like the ones I remember having growing up in.

There are so many stories from the campaign that motivated me every day to get out there, such as the retired grandmothers who suffered home invasions and endured flashbacks and panic attacks afterwards. I have lost count of the number of people I have sat with who have cried while talking about their experiences as victims of crime, unable to sleep while drinking and fighting goes on for all hours on the street outside their home, with threats of physical violence, rocks thrown at houses—the list goes on.

Thank you to the community groups that invited me into their space:

- the Palmerston Market committee, for the smooth running of a true institution where you will find me every Friday night throughout the Dry Season

- the Palmerston Raiders Rugby League Club, with Greenie and the committee members and coaches—they all do amazing work and the impact that the Raiders have on Palmerston cannot be understated

- the Palmerston Rugby Union Club—snap, snap go the Crocs—Jacob Brant and committee; thank you very much and I look forward to working with you as we go forward

- Auntys Free Feeds—Sal, Romaine and the team—you guys do amazing work and it is deeply appreciated by the community, thank you

- the Palmerston 50+ Club—Mary and the committee—I love joining you guys every week; I will not use unparliamentary language to describe one of the card games we play, but it is a lot of fun, and when you lose you say, 'Oh …'

- the Woodroffe Care Community—Francis, Dianne, Gary and the team—I hope you guys enjoy using our community room; you are an inspiration for the work you do in our community

- Palmerston and Litchfield Seniors Association, with its regular meetings at Cazalys, is an institution I love to attend

- and many more.

Thank you to the CLP grassroots members and those in the Palmerston branch who believed in me enough to preselect me as a candidate and support me through the campaign. There are too many to list them all, but a few deserve special mention.

Kay Stevens, you are amazing. Your service to the nursing community over so many years is a tribute. Your energy and enthusiasm are a constant inspiration. Thank you so much for all the help you gave.

Suzanne Cavanagh, your wisdom and experience have been invaluable, and in no small part contributed to this result.

Michael Delosa, thank you for getting up every morning and roadsiding with me, for all the barbecues and letterboxing. Your support through the campaign has been invaluable.

Thank you, Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro, for standing up for Territorians for all those long years in opposition and for inspiring us to fight against tyranny. I can honestly say that in my professional career I have met few who are as smart or hardworking and, above all, passionate for the Territory. I am excited to be a member of your team as we rebuild the Territory.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped during my campaign in ways big or small. I was overwhelmed by the support I received. From letterboxing and folding to helping at barbecues and handing out coffees, there was a groundswell of support from all directions, and I honestly could not have done it without you. Thank you all.

Thank you to my mum, who was here this morning when I was sworn in. While dad was busy with the farm, mum gave me a love for learning and reading. When we lost dad, mum was the glue that held our family together. I love you, mum.

Most of all, I thank my wonderful wife, Olia, who is upstairs in the gallery with the kids. You are my rock and my foundation. Thank you so much for everything you have done. They say who you choose as your life partner is the second most important decision you make in life, and I think I have made a pretty good one.

Thank you everyone. To the people of Blain and the Territory, I look forward to serving you faithfully.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, members of parliament and fellow Territorians, it is with a deep gratitude and immense pride that I stand before you as the newly elected Member for Casuarina for the 15th Legislative Assembly.

Casuarina is a place of rich culture and resilience, surrounded by families who embody the spirit of community. It is both an honour and a privilege to serve the people of this vibrant and diverse region of the Northern Territory. I am proud to be a member of the Finocchiaro Country Liberal government, a team rich in diversity of age, race, religion and gender.

I am a proud migrant Territorian and today I am here to contribute to making our home a better place for all. Today marks a significant milestone in not only my journey but also the journey of all those who have supported me, stood beside me and guided me to this point.

My journey from Gujarat, India, to Cyprus and finally to this great land of Australia has been filled with challenges, triumphs and an unwavering determination to serve the people of the Northern Territory which I now proudly call home. My journey to this moment has been long and filled with many challenges. I migrated to Australia from another country. Settling in the Northern Territory, I wanted to find a place I could call home. I express my heartfelt thanks to the people of Australia, especially in the Northern Territory.

The Territory has given me the opportunity to build a life, raise my family and pursue my dreams. This land, its vast landscapes and diverse communities is not just where I live; it is where I had children to build my future. I intend to give back in every way I can. The Northern Territory is a place like no other. It is a land of resilience, strength and opportunity, and I am incredibly proud to call it home.

I thank my family, especially those who have travelled from the other side of the country to be here today. I am forever indebted to my mother, who gave me every opportunity to achieve my goals, and my father who passed away when I was just one year old. Although God took him away, I believe he has been with me in spirit supporting me through the incredible people who shaped me into who I am today.

I acknowledge and thank the Cypriot and the Greek community. When I first arrived in Cyprus, I was a stranger. It was a new land, but it was this warm and welcoming community that accepted me and helped me to build a foundation for my future. The Cypriot people taught me the importance of community, hard work and perseverance. The lessons imparted to me about humility, kindness and the power of unity have stayed with me throughout my journey and will continue to guide me in this role. To all Greek and Cypriots, I say this in Greek: *sas efkaristo para poly gia tin agapi kai tin ypostirixi sas*.

I will also take a moment to reflect on all the Australian and Italian families from Melbourne to Darwin who helped me along the way. These families provided me with invaluable guidance, particularly in striking a balance between professional ambitions and building a strong, supportive family.

To my beautiful wife, who is not here due to our two children—sorry—where would I be without you? Nilam, you have been my rock through every step of this journey. From the early days of our marriage, through the difficulties of life, you have been my constant strength and support. You have given me the greatest gift of all, our two beautiful children, Anika and little Krishna, who are proud Territorians, born and raised in this land we love. Watching them grow up here fills me with hope for the future.

To my sister and brother-in-law, thank you for supporting us during Nilam's pregnancy and for looking after my son while I was campaigning. Your support has been invaluable, and I would not be standing here today without you. You have been such a big part of my children's goals, and we are forever grateful.

To my dear friends and mentors Kashyap Sagar, Leonie Melder and Derek Mayger, you have guided and mentored and been a source of constant support. You helped me to believe in myself, inspired me and empowered me. You have always known how to lighten the mood with your humour, lifting my spirits when times were tough. Your wisdom and guidance have been instrumental in shaping who I am today. I am forever grateful for your friendship. Thank you for standing by my side and for reminding me to stay grounded while aiming high, to always thank God.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the incredible volunteers who worked tirelessly alongside me throughout the campaign. You walked with me every day, knocking on doors, talking to our community and providing me with the feedback and confidence I needed to keep going. You never let me down, and for that I am incredibly proud to have had you by my side. This journey would not have been possible without your dedication and belief in our shared reason. I am grateful to each of you, and I look forward to continuing this journey together.

As I was doorknocking during my campaign, many people asked me, 'Why did you, a businessman, decide to join politics?' It was not an easy decision. I had noticed the decline of the Territory's economy since Labor came to power. Businesses struggled with high costs, crime had soared and people felt like no-one seems to care. I used to bring my daughter to Casuarina shopping centre regularly, but over time we no longer felt safe, due to rising antisocial behaviour.

I reached a point where I said to myself, 'Enough is enough'. I could not keep asking others to fix it; I had to stand up and be the change I wanted to see. We want to return the Northern Territory to its original state, to the place I fell in love with when I first arrived, a place where we can live freely, raise our children safely and grow our economy.

I assure my fellow Territorians that I will fight to protect our unique Territory lifestyle. All of us in this House must do everything in our power to ensure that young Territorians and future generations do not have to leave because of a lack of opportunities. We must make the Northern Territory a place where young people can gain a good education, find exciting jobs, start a family and afford a delightful home.

I am fiercely passionate about Casuarina; it is the heart of Darwin. I am grateful to all residents of Casuarina who have shown their interest in and support for delivering our vision of a safer and growing Northern Territory. Casuarina citizens deserve carefully planned northern suburbs and infrastructure that will serve them for generations to come.

As I look to the future I see a Northern Territory that is brimming with potential, a region positioned to be a vital gateway for not only Australia but also the entire southern Asian region. The Northern Territory is geographically and strategically placed to become a major entry point for business, tourism and trade, with

direct connections to southern Asia. It is here at the crossroads of Asia and Australia that we can build a hub of commercial activities that will drive our economic growth.

Imagine business leaders flying directly from Darwin to bustling economic centres like Bangalore or Taipei. Picture our minerals—gold, bauxite, uranium, lead and zinc—being exported directly by air or ship to major cities such as Hanoi, Hong Kong, Singapore and those in India. The opportunities for trade are immense and the Northern Territory is perfectly positioned to capitalise on these direct international connections.

The tourism sector also holds enormous potential. South Asians are known for their love of travel, and the Northern Territory has so much to offer. We should actively pursue partnerships with airlines like IndiGo and Air India, which are two of the fastest-growing carriers in the world. Both airlines have recently placed orders with Airbus for hundreds of new planes, signalling their commitment to expanding their international routes. By welcoming these airlines we can create direct connections between Darwin and destinations like Chennai, Bombay, Delhi, Jaipur and beyond, attracting more inbound tourists and creating a new gateway for Australians to explore the wonders of southern Asia.

The Northern Territory is ready to become a commercial leader in Australia. We are preparing for growth across industries such as tourism, mining and finance—so many opportunities await us. With our strategic location we can turn the Northern Territory into a bustling hub of economic activity, creating jobs, fostering innovation and positioning ourselves as a key player in the global marketplace.

The future is bright for the Northern Territory. I am committed to working with all of you to turn this vision into reality. In this role I am committed to working tirelessly for the people of Casuarina, the Northern Territory and beyond. I understand the challenges we face, whether it is addressing safety concerns, reducing crime or creating opportunities for our children and local businesses. I am here to listen, act and ensure that our streets are safer, our economy is stronger and our future is brighter. The trust you have placed in me is not something that I take lightly. I pledge to work every day to make our community the best place it can be.

As I look to the future I do so with hope and optimism. I believe in the strength of our community, the resilience of our people and the potential that lies ahead for all of us. I am committed to working together with each of you to build a future that honours our shared values of family, hard work and community spirit. Together we will make the Northern Territory an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Today I observe how far I have come from a migrant seeking opportunity to a proud Territorian ready to serve this great community. The Northern Territory is not just where I live; it is where I have chosen to build my life, family and future. We are the community that welcomes newcomers, values hard work and accepts the diversity that makes us stronger. Together we are ready to shape the future of the Northern Territory and make it a thriving hub for business, tourism and opportunity for all.

I am excited about what lies ahead. With all my heart and soul I am ready to serve the people of Casuarina, the Northern Territory and all Australians. I am deeply grateful to be here today as your representative. Together we will create a future that is safe, prosperous and filled with opportunity for all.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker and honourable members, today I stand before you as a humble servant to the people of Drysdale. This appointment brings forth an immense sense of gratitude to the citizens of the electorate who, through their vote, have bestowed upon me the most sacred duty of representing them both within and outside this noble Chamber.

To every man, woman and child of Drysdale, I pledge myself to you to act, speak and live in accordance with the values I presented to you. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this tenure, and please know that I take nothing for granted. I will fight day-in and day-out for you and your families. As I take on this role, I am reminded that a politician is above all a servant. We are here not for ourselves but for the people who have entrusted us with this sacred duty.

My life has been dedicated to service. I was honoured to serve the late Queen as a commissioned officer in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, a service I previously thought would be the greatest civic duty of my life. But in this I am pleased to be wrong, for it is this duty, in service to the people of Driver, Gray, Gunn and Palmerston city, that I find the greatest of civic responsibilities.

My election to this Chamber is one that proves the inherent fairness in our Westminster system, that I, as a local father, could and would proceed to challenge the then-leader of the Territory government for my daughters and the people of Drysdale. I would defeat a sitting Chief Minister so that we may change the course of history and bring justice to our streets. That is the type of people we are in Drysdale.

I promised the people courage, and for their trust I will repay them with grit, determination and decisiveness. I will never give up in fighting for them.

We are an aspirational people in Drysdale; we wish to build wealth, create a sense of community and have better lives for our children. We seek justice to return to our streets so that we can continue to live free and prosperous lives. We value our inherent liberties and do not seek the overburden of bureaucracy and government in our lives. We wish to live and let live so that our community can prosper and together we can raise the opportunity afforded to each of us.

To all my volunteers; members of the CLP Calder branch, including Suzanne Cavanagh, Mike Delosa, Markus Tumuls and Kay Stevens; our party president, Shane Stone; and everyone who helped me along the way, I thank you for your tireless efforts and for helping me liberate Drysdale.

To Alyson Hannam for managing the party's campaign and to Penelope for managing the Drysdale campaign, I will be forever grateful for your efforts.

I wish to thank the Palmerston team, especially the Member for Brennan, Marie-Clare, for your mentorship, constant guidance and unwavering support since I first came to you with the idea to run. To the Member for Blain, Matt Kerle, I thank you for your camaraderie and mateship in campaigning together and our shared vision of the future.

To our Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro, through your tenacity and grit you have shown boundless courage in taking on government and day after day restoring the reputation of the Country Liberal Party. You have been an unwavering champion of Liberal conservatism; for that I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your years of sacrifice. I am proud to serve as part of the Finocchiaro Country Liberal government.

My campaign was a long and hard-fought battle. It would make my Duntroon instructors proud to know that I planned my campaign around the 10 principles of war and executed my plan precisely as I set out to. My plan was based on the idea of commitment and hard, gruelling work. I doorknocked more than 6,000 houses. I can tell you that the ABS data is wrong because there are exactly 3,838 doors in Drysdale; I know because I went to every one, and I did it again.

My family sacrificed greatly as we gave up significant income. In fact, there were entire weeks in my campaign in which I consumed simply Weet-Bix and milk for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I do not complain, for this is the self-sacrifice that comes with running for office.

On these doors I met thousands of my fellow citizens. I have listened to the countless stories of suffering from seniors, parents, police officers, nurses, teachers and bus drivers, as tears welled recounting their stories of crime and abuse at the hands of criminals. I assure you that no matter how broke I was or how sore my feet were I would never give up on them.

Amongst all this there were many moments of joy, including organising A Night for Digger, in which the Drysdale team raised funds for Mates4Mates and awareness for veterans leading into Anzac Day. We even pulled a World War II Army Jeep from the Palmerston cenotaph to Sanctuary Lakes, which gave the Member for Blain, Kris Civitarese and I one hell of a workout.

My life has been defined by service. Whether it was as a youth worker helping at-risk young men find their path or as an Army officer leading soldiers through the challenges that tested not just our skills but our character, I have always believed that true leadership comes from a deep-rooted sense of duty to others. It is this philosophy of service that guides my approach to public office. As the Member for Drysdale, I see my role not as one of power but of responsibility.

Politicians are, first and foremost, servants to the people. We are here to enable the success and wellbeing of those who place their trust in us. Government should seek not to control but to empower individuals to lead free, productive and meaningful lives. Our job is to build the foundations that allow people to stand tall on their own terms.

My journey with the Northern Territory began when my father decided to relocate the family here in the 1990s following the economic prosperity that this place, the Territory, could offer. I arrived in the Territory as a young impressionable boy at the age of six. The sense of adventure and wonder of this place gripped me instantly.

I was soon enrolled at The Essington School Darwin in Rapid Creek where I received an education from primary to middle school under the leadership of Principal David Cannon who remains the greatest educator

I have encountered. Here I met lifelong friends such as Markus, who is here in the gallery today, and his wife, Penelope, both of whom have been great supports.

For my senior education I was fortunate enough to have received a partial scholarship to attend Geelong Grammar School where my love of history and politics blossomed, thanks to Mr Featherstone, my Year 12 history teacher. It was there that I first encountered the once revolutionary ideas of the Enlightenment and saw firsthand the dangers posed by broken political systems.

Although not here today, I acknowledge my good friend and confidant Angus Dowling, from my time at boarding school, with whom I have shared years of friendship. May we continue to quote *Gladiator*, *Braveheart* and *Predator* until we are old men.

In 2012 I marched into the Royal Military College Duntroon where my mind and body were shaped to lead soldiers into war. I graduated as a tank troop leader in the 1st Armoured Regiment, so as I joined the Army for great adventure, I would find my first posting back in Darwin.

There are simply too many fine men and women who influenced me in the Army to individually acknowledge, but may this Chamber know that the Australian Defence Force is filled with some of the greatest and noblest our nation has to offer. My time in the Army was filled with camaraderie, learning and the honour of serving under our nation's flag. Though I never saw the face of war, I will always stand for those who have served, ensuring that the Territory remains a place where veterans can rediscover their sense of service. For my praise upon the ADF, there are many within our community who carry the scars of service, both at war and in peacetime. I will always be a voice for my fellow veterans who still suffer.

I would then join my father, and together we expanded Master Air Conditioning. My first contract saw me back at Robertson Barracks. It seemed I could not escape, but I found the skills that the Army had trained into me to be of incredible use on the construction site. There was, however, no hiding the fact that the Northern Territory construction industry was deeply suffering. Relying wholly on Commonwealth Government contracts, the health of our economy brought me great concern. This is why I will forever advocate strongly for the construction industry.

Inspired by Victor Hugo and his story of second chances in *Les Misérables*, I had men on release from Holtze prison to have entry-level positions in the construction industry. We had great success; however, following a review of Defence contracts, the work pipeline froze, making life significantly harder for these men who were keen to change their lives.

I know what it means not to pay yourself for weeks, even months, on end to ensure your people are looked after. This is the reality of small businesses throughout the Territory, and in me they find a friend so that together we can look after our workforce, grow it and provide opportunities to those who wish to change their lives for the better.

Arriving here, I reflect on the many people who shaped me into the man I am. In the spirit of gratitude, I offer my heartfelt acknowledgements. From my father, I learned courage, grit and the value of never giving up. Like a prayer, my father had my brother and I recite 'Never ever give up' every night before bed, and it worked. He taught me to fight and take up arms against a sea of troubles. From my mother, I learned how to nurture and be nurtured. For providing solace in the dark, I thank you for your constant love.

From my late brother I learned the bonds of brotherhood, mateship, loyalty and honour; from my late sister, loyalty, spontaneity and compassion; from my wife, companionship, family and trust; from my daughters, unconditional and never-ending love and the importance of kindness; from my stepfather, commitment and the art of listening; from my grandmother, perseverance; from my late grandmother, grace; and from my late stepmother, independence.

As my story shows, education has always held a special place in my heart. It is the vehicle to every success in my life. It is through education that I found the key to opportunity, and it is through education that I believe we can unlock the potential for every person in the Northern Territory.

Education is more than a tool for employment; it is a tool for understanding, wisdom and true freedom. As Carl Jung taught, knowing oneself is the beginning of all wisdom. It is education that provides the framework for self-discovery, the development of individual potential and cultivating a mind that can think critically and navigate the complexities of modern life.

Great minds have helped shape my thinking throughout my life. From Homer, I learned the timeless value of courage and heroism. Hugo and Dickens opened my eyes to the struggles of the downtrodden; Hardy taught me the need for equality; Jung illuminated the human psyche; Nietzsche taught me to embrace adversity and find strength in struggle; Peterson challenged me to pursue meaning amidst chaos; and Orwell warned me of the dangers of tyranny.

Let it be known that I will never submit to the kind of oppressive regimes Orwell warned us about in *Animal Farm* and *1984*, where truth is twisted and facts are rewritten. No matter how many times they say it, two plus two will never equal five.

At the heart of any thriving society is a strong economy. We must place the economy first, for it is the vehicle that provides the noble pursuits of government. A strong healthcare system, a better education system, funding for research and many other facets to improve our lives and those of our children all need a strong economy.

Currently the public sector is the largest employer and offers the highest wages in the Territory. Although our public servants do vital work, this imbalance is stifling the growth of our private sector. When talent is drawn primarily to government roles, we miss out on the creativity and innovation that could thrive in a dynamic private market. To foster a truly competitive and innovative economy we must focus on growing our private sector so that it can offer wages and opportunities that drive entrepreneurship and productivity.

At the heart of everything I do is a commitment to courage. Courage is not just a virtue; it is the foundation of every action worth taking. As Winston Churchill once said:

> *Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities … because it is the quality which guarantees all others.*

It is only through courage that we can pursue justice, protect freedom and fight for the values that define our community. That is why I made 'Time for Courage' my campaign slogan. The challenges we face today, whether they be economic, social or cultural, require bold and courageous leadership. I will not back down from the hard decisions or from standing up for what is right. For every citizen of Drysdale, I pledge to act with courage, knowing that it is the key to everything else we shall achieve.

In any society that values freedom, the right to speak openly and honestly must be held sacred. In a world where ideas are often silenced it is essential that we protect the right to free speech, even when it is uncomfortable. It is only through the open exchange of ideas that we can challenge falsehoods, refine our thinking and grow as a society. With freedom comes responsibility, and I hope to inspire the young minds of Drysdale to take up ever greater responsibility and exercise the greatest liberty of all—that of self-discipline.

The Northern Territory and particularly my electorate are facing rising crime, substance abuse and social disorder. My family was threatened by out-of-control youths over a year ago. The families of Drysdale deserve to feel secure in their homes and communities. We cannot allow the erosion of the values that make our society strong.

Our current approach often treats offenders as victims first, through the lens of identity politics, but as I see it, true justice comes from personal responsibility. A society that believes in the strength of the individual must also hold them accountable when they violate the rights of others. We must foster a system of rehabilitation, yes, but that system must be built on a foundation of accountability and consequence. The path to rehabilitation begins with an understanding of personal responsibility. Real reform comes not from coddling, but from confronting one's own actions and striving for redemption.

The family is the beating heart of society. As a father I know firsthand the importance of being a present and engaged parent. In my time in office I hope to engage young and disconnected fathers throughout my electorate and teach that fatherhood is about guidance, protection, encouragement, nurturing, commitment and love. Masculinity, when understood properly, is about using one's strength to serve, protect and uplift others, particularly our families.

This is not about gender roles, but the responsibility that comes with strength and the positive outcomes that stable homes with healthy, engaged fathers provide. It is through this ideal of masculinity and the role of men that I wish to combat domestic violence. There is no honour or masculinity associated with harming those we are meant to protect. We must do everything in our power to support families to create a society where the family unit can thrive, whether that means supporting home ownership or ensuring that parents can balance work and family life. Our society's strength depends on the strength of our families.

In today's world we often speak of rights, but we must also speak of responsibilities. Citizenship is not just about claiming what we are owed; it is about contributing to the society we live in. Every individual has a role to play in making the Northern Territory a place of opportunity and prosperity. As citizens we are given rights, but we also have obligations to our community, our country and each other. We must vote, participate in civic life, respect the law and support our fellow citizens. As citizens we are part of something greater than ourselves, and it is only through this shared responsibility that we can build a stronger, more cohesive nation and Territory.

I am a proud seventh-generation Australian; my daughters are eighth generation. My family has a long history of service, stretching from Gallipoli and France to the Kokoda Track and the Pacific. I will defend my own heritage and that of all Territorians. I am a patriot of this great land, dedicated to preserving its values and its promise for future generations. I sing *Waltzing Matilda* to my daughters. I stand fast for the national anthem and I proudly face the Australian flag. It is these values of individual responsibility, economic prosperity, education for self-realisation, accountability, love of nation and equality of the law that reflect what we are all about.

As I stand here today, I will work tirelessly for the people of Drysdale with these clear objectives in mind: reduce crime, build the economy in the private sector; improve education; focus on men's health, leadership and families; protect liberty and freedom; and protect equality under the law.

We call reveille on a new era of Territory politics, with our commitment to justice, liberty and opportunity for all. Let us build a Territory where every individual has the opportunity to succeed, where division has no place and where we embrace the renaissance that lies before us.

To my wife, I love you and cannot honour you enough. Your silent sacrifice may go unnoticed by the public, but it does not go unnoticed by me. None of this would be possible without you. May together we bring forth a brighter Territory for our girls.

To Emmeline and Cosette, I love you more than the whole universe. May history show that when the wolves came, your father did what many said was impossible, and I did it because I love you.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am proud to stand here as a member of the Finocchiaro Country Liberal government. I thank the people of Goyder, who put their faith in me as their representative in the 15th Assembly. I am incredibly humbled by this responsibility and will strive to serve the community. I will ensure that I remain accessible, informed and true to those who put their faith in me. I have confidence in our team to deliver for Territorians.

The electorate of Goyder covers the outer Darwin rural area and is approximately 9,770 square kilometres. It includes Virginia, Bees Creek, Humpty Doo, Noonamah, Acacia, Marrakai, Middle Point, Lambells Lagoon and Mount Bundey. The seat of Goyder was represented for the last 16 years by Kezia Purick, who retired before the election and left incredible boots to fill. I wish her well in her retirement and hope her dog's needs are finally met. The seat has also been represented by Ted Warren, Peter Maley and Terry McCarthy. It is incredibly humbling to join this list of great Territorians who have represented this seat.

I am thankful to every person who has put their faith in me to be their representative in this Assembly and the support I received on this journey. There are so many people to thank, I apologise to those whom I will miss.

I thank my number one supporter, my rock and the bright light in my life, my wonderful partner, Melissa Brown, who is in the gallery. I know it has been rough and that sometimes it might have appeared that I took you for granted, but I cannot express adequately just how much your support and love has meant to me. I love you, Mel, and I promise that I will make sure you know just how much every day.

I thank my parents, Gae and John. My father is also in the gallery today. They have supported me through my journey to be here and have always encouraged me to pursue opportunities and challenges whenever they have arisen. I often joke, much to my mother's dismay, that my interest in politics stems from either too many hugs as a child or not enough. Regardless, I love them both and I thank them.

I thank my brothers, Chris and Daniel, and my sister, Katherine, for putting up with me growing up and never letting my humour go unchecked.

My grandmother Elsy Edwards, at the age of 96, assures me that she has never voted for those opposite. Although she wished I pursued a more publicly honourable career, she believes that I will do a good job and wishes me the best.

My friends, Lachlan, Sean, Chris and Jack, of which a couple are up there in the gallery, have been with me for many years and have always been there for me and threw their support fully behind me in both my council elections as well as this Territory election. I first met Sean when I was nine years old at Girraween Primary School, and the other boys when I was 11 at Taminmin. All have gone on to do incredible things, and the friendships we maintain are some of my most cherished.

Those in this Chamber know all too well that it takes a team to run a campaign. I can state confidently that without the guidance and support of my campaign manager, Melissa Cabot, who insisted that I retire my pair of thongs, purchase a pair of long pants and get a haircut and a tie, I would not look so suitably dressed today. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your dedication, support, political wisdom and friendship. I hope the maths tutoring for your children throughout the campaign was worth putting up with me.

Seven weeks ago a group of volunteers helped on polling booths across my electorate. I give thanks to Peter Maley, Gary Ashford, Jackson and Erin, Fran and Kate and the young Ben Andrews for their support on the day and for making a long day interesting and a bit of fun.

To the Member for Nelson, Gerard Maley, and Kris and Nicole Civitarese, thank you for the support you have given me and the collective efforts of the rural team. Thank you to Joel and Tory, who kept us honest, along with Melissa Cabot.

I thank the CLP Wishart branch, the Litchfield branch and the Territory director, Alyson Hannam, for all the work she and the team put in behind the scenes. I also thank the many campaign volunteers who contributed, whom I will not name out of respect for their wishes.

I will now briefly talk about my journey to this place. I came to the rural area when I was in primary school—with three siblings and the family dog, Lucy, who has since gone to wag her tail over the rainbow bridge—after my mother took a job at the Territory Wildlife Park. I grew up exploring the rural area on push, moto and quad bikes as age permitted, climbing trees and developing an appreciation for seeing the stars at night and hearing the birds by day. I have fond memories of both Girraween Primary School and Taminmin College, where I formed friendships with many people whom I remain close with today.

After high school I attended Charles Darwin University for a year before transferring down south to Monash University to pursue a degree in mathematics. During this time, I decided to take a gap year and ended up working on Melville Island in the forestry industry. The wildlife, people and culture of the Tiwi Islands hold a special place in my heart.

After returning from university I landed a job at the incredible Humpty Doo Barramundi down the Arnhem Highway. Humpty Doo Barramundi is a success story of family giving back to the community and sustainable barramundi production. The opportunities for growth I had there have been very much appreciated and helped lead me to where I am today. My time there gave me a love for aquaculture, industry knowledge and an appreciation for the hard work that goes into producing the food that ends up on people's tables.

I thank the Richards family, Nathan and Tracey for the opportunities and their mentorship throughout my time at the farm. However, perhaps the best thing about my time there is that Humpty Doo Barramundi is where I first met my wonderful partner, Mel.

After leaving the farm in 2022 I continued my journey in the aquaculture industry and have since worked with a vast range of species under production around the world and in Australia. However, the thing I valued most from this experience has been meeting all the incredibly dedicated people across what is, to my knowledge, the fastest-growing primary production industry in Australia and seeing the hard work and dedication these people have to putting food on people's tables. Out of respect for their privacy, I will not name those people. B, C and T, you know who you are, and I thank you.

In 2021 I was elected to Litchfield Council at the age of 24. To the best of my knowledge I was the youngest councillor in that council's history. I now stand in this Assembly as, again to the best of my knowledge, the youngest ever Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory.

I acknowledge the hard work that was achieved in my time on the Litchfield Council and the respect my fellow council members provided me regardless of my age. To Mayor Barden, Councillor Sharp, Councillor Harlan, Councillor Salter, Councillor Wright and Councillor Sidey, I look forward to seeing the good work you will continue to do in my absence.

The Northern Territory I grew up in is the land of opportunity and an incredible place for young people to develop and build their lives. I am a believer in the saying that the standard you walk past is the standard you accept. This phrase, combined with the other good saying, decisions are made by those who have turned up, guided my time in council and will continue to guide my time in this Assembly.

It should not be normal or acceptable to go to sleep worrying that your car will not be there when you wake up or that an intruder might try to harm your family or your property.

It should not be normal or acceptable to be humbugged for money or a cigarette when you are trying to have a glass of wine with your wife or a beer with some mates.

It should not be normal or acceptable to have to step around people sleeping on footpaths while taking your dog for a walk.

It should not be normal or acceptable to take your kids—or in my case, my niece—to a park and have to worry about broken glass, drunken people and fighting going on.

It should not be normal or acceptable to have to go to a funeral for another young friend who lost their life on our roads.

It should not be normal or acceptable to worry about being harassed when you want to go for a quick trip to the shops.

It should not be normal or acceptable to read about the death of a young man who has been the victim of a stabbing while working.

Territorians deserve to live in a place that is safe. Territorians deserve to live in a place that affords them every opportunity to get ahead. Territorians deserve to live in a place that is the envy of the world. While I am in this Chamber, in this role and a part of a strong Finocchiaro government, I will strive to deliver that. I will not forget those who have put their trust in me to deliver for them and the people of Goyder.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, it is my honour and a privilege to share with you all my feelings, emotions, beliefs and life learnings, along with my visions, goals and aspirations for my time in the 15th Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

My speech today will be characterised by a number of three-word phrases that have guided my life and will continue to do so.

Let us begin with love, compassion and tolerance. These are the virtues that my darling Irish mother, Breda O'Gallagher, instilled into our large family as being the most important to follow. They were also shared by my father, Rory O'Gallagher, in his own distinctive way.

Mum and dad were both born in Ireland, as were my four eldest siblings, Aileen, Rory, Fergus and Eithne. In the late 1950s they moved to England to find better work opportunities, noting my father was a hardworking bricklayer.

I was born on Christmas Day, 25 December, 1957 at home. I am pretty sure mum and dad welcomed this, but I am unsure whether my eldest siblings shared this joy, as it may have interfered with their Christmas expectations and the arrival of Santa and some toys. You can probably understand that three or five-year-old children may vote differently if given the choice between another brother or a Lego set.

In 1960 dad and mum took the adventurous plunge again and took the 10-pound offer to migrate to Australia with their young and growing family. My youngest sister, Grainne, was born here soon after arrival. Suffice to say, we were never rich, but we had a great family life being raised in Cockatoo in the Dandenong Ranges of Victoria.

Like many loving parents, mum and dad were focused on creating a great opportunity for their children and giving them a strong education. Dad used to say that his goal was to help all of us to either finish high school or get a trade and he did not care which.

We were never rich materially, but we were always well fed, had clean if maybe second-hand school uniforms and had parents that cared and loved for us. Unfortunately, as I walk the streets of Karama, Malak and

Knuckey Lagoon, I see many children who do not have this loving and compassionate environment to support them. They are having their lives derailed and are being pushed into crime and antisocial behaviour.

When I look back at my family, I know that each one of them is loving, compassionate and tolerant. One example was during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires, when my father and eldest brother both lost their family homes. A couple of days later, a friend of our family offered mum and dad a spare house he had for them to live in. Dad smiled, thanked him for his kind offer and politely declined, suggesting that he offer it to a young family who were also staying at the emergency community centre, as they needed it more than he and mum did.

I do my best to embrace these virtues. I genuinely feel that giving gives me greater joy than receiving. On that note, I thank Tejinder Singh and the Sikh Family Food Van for the opportunity to help him and his family in their charitable work to deliver food at the weekends to the vulnerable people of Karama and Malak. Such work keeps me grounded and reminds me of the residents I have been elected to serve.

This brings me to my second three-word phrase—visible, accessible and service.

Having walked the electorate almost three times during the election campaign, I know that the biggest concern from residents was that nobody wanted to listen to their cries for help, let alone act upon them. Nobody had come around to find out how they were travelling. Getting a response to any approaches they made about their concerns fell on deaf ears and got caught up in bureaucratic waffle.

This will not be me. My motto—or brand or whatever you want to call it—listed on my shirt, stationery and soon-to-be office signage defines me for the residents as visible, accessible and serving our community. I expect my community to hold me to account on these.

Talking of concerns, the greatest and most frequent concern raised with me by residents of Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon was and remains crime and antisocial behaviour, especially antisocial behaviour associated with many public housing tenancies.

I put on the record that I am all for public housing and I recognise that there are wonderful and well-deserving public housing tenants. I also recognise that there is an eight-year waiting list and we will need to invest in more well-planned public housing in the future. However, we have five significant issues with public housing, particularly in Karama and Malak.

First, public houses are being used as drug houses, where dealers in misery sell drugs 24 hours a day, including to young children.

Second, public houses are being significantly vandalised at great expense to the taxpayer. We are not talking about wear and tear—a phrase a former Chief Minister used to use—but about $50,000 to $80,000 worth of damage. This seems to be fixed quickly, just to happen again; whereas, I know some long-term well-deserving tenants struggle to get a blocked tap or broken air conditioner fixed for months or even years.

Third, public houses are being overcrowded with sometimes up to 20 or 30 visitors, continually fighting, screaming and causing chaos all night—and sometimes all day—destroying the lives of neighbouring residents. I know of residents who have reported such behaviour to police and Housing 25 days in a row during a single month.

Fourth, public houses that remain vacant for a long time are subject to disrepair and squatting. Overgrown gardens and verges are unsightly and a potential fire hazard for the neighbourhood.

Fifth, the other major issue with public housing, is the overly high density and concentration of public housing in many streets of Karama and Malak compared with elsewhere in Darwin. We are essentially creating ghettos in some of our streets. This needs to be urgently addressed, including the option of selling some of these houses to first homebuyers.

I will be a loud voice for residents who have had their lives, and in some cases house values, destroyed over the last eight years. To just name a few, let me openly say for Jim, Barbara and Linda, who have continual antisocial behaviour occurring in neighbouring units in Tabletop Place in Malak, I am here for you.

For the wonderful Moore family in Connor and Magdelene Courts in Malak, who have suffered sleep deprivation for many years from neighbouring antisocial behaviour, I am here for you.

For Kia and Tony, who had to spend about $40,000 to improve the safety of their own house in Fig Court, Karama, I am here for you.

For Mikayla and her young family whose husband had a knife put to his throat by a bunch of youths demanding money at 4 pm on a Sunday in front of his young family, including their one-year-old and three-year-old children, I am here for you. The Chief Minister visited this family with me during the campaign.

For Foula and Drosso, who have almost had to turn their verandah into a prison to stay safe in Koojarra Court, Karama, I am here for you.

For Dean White in Karama, who has major concerns about neighbouring public houses operating as drug houses and has been reporting this quite often, I am here for you.

For James Hawkes and the 20 residents who met with me and the Deputy Chief Minister during our campaign and aired their concerns about the antisocial behaviour happening in Dalwood Crescent, Malak, and neighbouring streets, I am here for you.

To all the other residents whom I have sat down with across the electorate, including those living in Karama in Dorrigo, Karama, Mahogany and Copra Crescents; Mistletoe Circuit; Sedge Court; Manunda Terrace; and Applegum and Kalymnos Drives; and in Malak in Abbott, Chambers and Dalwood Crescents; Hummel, Maddock, Marshall and Squier Courts; and Darwent Street; and Lagoon Road in Knuckey Lagoon, I am here for you.

I will make other special acknowledgements across the electorate. Thank you to Bill from Malak and Melanie from Karama who publicly supported my campaign via press conference and video, urging for a change of government.

Thank you to the Filipino community, including Kristy and other parishioners at the Holy Family Parish Church in Karama, for your longstanding support. Special thanks go to my good friends John and Edna Rivas.

Likewise, thank you to David Dinh, Thai Tung and other members of the local Vietnamese community.

Thank you to the Papathomas family; Peter and Mary in Kalymnos Drive; and Lefty Spyropoulos in Applegum Drive, Karama, along with all my Greek and Cypriot friends who supported me in this campaign.

I especially acknowledge the long-term Indigenous residents of the electorate, including Larrakia elders, who openly said about 18 months ago that they had always voted Labor and would continue to do so, but stated that as a local councillor I was the only person publicly voicing their concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour.

Six months ago many of them reached out to me again to say that whilst they had always voted Labor, they had changed their mind and, although they were not necessarily voting for the CLP, they would vote for me to represent them in this parliament. They, like many other residents, wanted to change the government and want us, the CLP, to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

Now let me move on to my next three-word phrase—vision, judgement and attention. By ‘attention’, I mean attention to detail.

Without reading out my résumé it is suffice to say that I have had the pleasure of working with many great leaders in the federal and Northern Territory Governments and in the private sector. With both governments, I worked with and led core teams focused on delivering major projects, such as bringing a strong focus on the development potential of northern Australia, the Darwin–Adelaide railway project, the INPEX gas project, the development of the Darwin Business Park; and the development of an offshore supply base at East Arm. All these projects required vision, judgement and attention to detail.

As Managing Director of the Office of Major Projects, Asian Engagement and Trade, I directly supported various Chief Ministers, ministers and people from local industry in their trade missions to our key Asian markets, including Japan, Indonesia, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Timor-Leste, as well as visits to the USA and Europe.

We always punched above our weight with our international engagement. I was successful in getting our Chief Ministers one-on-one meetings with the President of Indonesia and the Prime Ministers of Japan and Vietnam, despite initial advice from the Australian Government that this would not be possible. Do not ever believe it; we can do it if we want to do it.

A highlight of my team was the initiation and development of the live cattle trade, over a three-year period, with Vietnam. That proved invaluable for our local industry when the Australian Government, in a kneejerk reaction to a *Four Corners* report, suspended our trade with Indonesia. I heard that referenced by the Member for Blain. On that note, I give due credit to two of my team members, Jeff Stewart and Thai Tung. Once again, vision, judgement and attention to detail were required to deliver this new trade.

After leaving the Northern Territory Government in 2014 I had the pleasure of working as the Deputy CEO of the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce for five years, with the then CEO and my good friend, Greg Bicknell. It was here that I worked hard to support our small to medium businesses, which I publicly described as the heart and soul of our economy.

One of our highlights was getting the NT Government to focus on local procurement, including the introduction of local content weightings. These recognise that the net benefit of local businesses employing local people and reinvesting locally far outweighs a contract going to an interstate company that may be able to offer a slightly cheaper price.

Hence, I was astonished and publicly stood against the City of Darwin's decision to reduce its local content weighting from 30% to 20%, noting that the NT Government still maintains a 30% weighting. Surely, if there is one level of government that should be fully supportive of local business, it should be local government. I will continue to advocate for the City of Darwin to reverse this decision.

I left the Chamber of Commerce in 2020 to contest the 2020 election. No surprise, I came second, but I gained a small swing to the CLP, whereas the other northern suburbs swung strongly to Labor. I believe that there is a number of reasons for this, including people staying with the existing government during COVID; the disruption to our CLP campaign with the rise of Territory Alliance; and lingering anger over the ego fighting legacy of the Giles government. The old axiom of 'disunity is death' certainly influenced the electorate in 2020.

This disunity was highlighted in the book *Crocs in the Cabinet*, which should have highlighted for any future government the pitfalls to avoid. However, unfortunately it seems that the former Labor government mistakenly adopted it as a manual for operations. I cannot wait for the sequel to come out to be called 'Crocs in the Cabernet—The Dan Murphy Saga'.

This brings me to my next three-word phrase—park your egos.

I congratulate the Chief Minister and all my CLP parliamentary colleagues on running a disciplined and unified campaign. I am happy we brought forward a clear plan to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our lifestyle, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by Territorians.

We are now part of a great 17-member CLP team. We need to hold each other to account that we deliver and implement the plan we put forward. Although I understand everyone can have ambitions, let us all learn from the past mistakes of the former Labor and CLP governments and focus on serving and staying connected with our community. Parking our egos and focusing on working as a unified team to improve the lives and opportunities for Territorians is what Territorians want from us. We all have the opportunity to be part of a wonderful new Territory government, so let us do it.

My next three-word phrase is life long friends.

I have to admit that during my life and working career, my greatest reward is making new lifelong friends. For example, I have friends from university and my career in the federal government whom I may not see for many years, yet when we catch up it is like we have never been apart.

Like other members, as a successful candidate, many new people are now approaching me to become their friend. Fair enough. However, it is the friends who have supported and stayed with me during the hard times—including during the previous election, which I lost—that I value most. I thank some of those lifelong friends.

First and foremost is my darling wife, Marylou, who is my love, rock and support. We met in the 1980s when we were both working at the Bureau of Transport Economics in Canberra. You could not get a clearer example of a work colleague becoming a lifelong friend.

Marylou and I have been blessed to raise our family in Darwin. I am not sure whether he has made it—yes, he has. We had to change the schedule. A big shout-out to my 29-year-old son Fergus who was born in

Darwin and is a fantastic paramedic working with St John Ambulance. No wonder I am a great supporter of our frontline service officers. I am glad the CLP is strengthening the legislation to support them.

Equally, I give a big shout-out to my wonderful 28-year-old daughter, Nadia, whom we were blessed to adopt from Fiji when she was only seven months old. A couple of years ago Nadia completed her criminal and justice degree at Griffith University—I think she saw too many *CSI* shows—and is now working for the Queensland Corrections department. Most importantly, Nadia and her then partner, Kailab, have given us a fantastic grandson, Arlo, who turns six years old on 23 October. Happy birthday, Arlo, and thanks for the joy you bring to all of us.

Thank you also to all of mine and Marylou's brothers and sisters and their families; you are the nucleus of our lives.

I pass on my thanks to all our wonderful neighbours; my former work colleagues; the CLP team, including the members of the Darwin North branch; and all those who donated to and helped me during the campaign.

We are blessed to live in a great neighbourhood. Many times after a long day campaigning, it was our lifelong friends Brian and Janicean Price who would invite us to come over and unwind and have a meal and a chat. The phrase Pricey used was, 'Would you like a lemonade?' On a late Friday, yes, we did.

Likewise, a number of local businesspeople are lifelong friends. I especially thank Lance and Wendy Martin for their fantastic friendship and support.

I thank my dear friend and campaign manager, Sean Mahoney. He has been a great lifelong friend for many years.

For those who do not know, Sean owns and is the CEO of the International College of Advanced Education, which is the largest hospitality training college in the Northern Territory. For the last four years, until June this year, I worked for Sean as his international business development manager. ICAE has about 180 international students from about 17 countries studying commercial cookery and hospitality along with remedial massage and beauty therapy. The Member for Katherine, in her previous role as shadow minister for International Education, gave a number of speeches and awards to graduates. I think she was impressed to see what was happening on the ground.

Sean recently received the prestigious 25 Years' Service Award from Hospitality NT in recognition of the importance that his students make to our local industry. Most restaurants and hotels around Dawin rely on ICAE students to help them function. Many of these students have gone on to become Australian citizens and have raised their families and set up businesses in the Northern Territory. It is a really good story.

However, the success of these and many other international students who have come to study, live and work in the Northern Territory is being jeopardised by the one-size-fits-all approach by the Australian Government to reduce the number of student visas. Here is an opportunity for a Team NT approach from the new CLP government and the Labor opposition in partnership with Independent members, local industry and education institutions to collectively lobby the Australian Government to adjust its policy to better reflect the needs of regional Australia where we need more people and workers, not fewer.

Let us turn to my final three-word phrase—just do it.

How many times over the years have Territorians been frustrated by endless reviews, the establishment of new consultation committees and the commissioning of new and expensive inquiries only to get some report that gathers dust in the bookcase, and yet we know from gut feel and a commonsense perspective that we should have just got on and done it. Here are two suggestions that I put forward to all elected members to get behind.

First, we all hear of the housing crisis occurring in the Northern Territory. Let us seize the approach of previous CLP governments which had the vision and will to develop Palmerston many years ago. I believe that it is time to develop Weddell now. Much of the design and technical work has already been done. Let us put out the challenge to our local private sector to get on with developing Weddell as our next major project. Apart from creating a major stimulus to our economy with many local jobs, it will give us a chance to deliver affordable housing for our essential workers such as teachers and nurses and many first homebuyers in well-designed neighbourhoods that serve all our community.

Second, we need to invest in new aged-care facilities now. I recall visiting my old friend Ron Smith when he spent months, along with many other aged patients, lying in a ward at Royal Darwin Hospital. This was a sad reflection on the lack of suitable aged-care facilities in the Territory, and it was taking up a lot of much-needed beds at RDH. Let us invest in new aged-care facilities in all our major Territory centres, including Darwin, Katherine, Tenant Creek and Alice Springs. As I said, just do it.

In the spirit of 'just do it' we must deliver on the plan that we promised Territorians during the campaign. All members of our united CLP team must keep each other accountable to this. This also includes the election commitments we made to our electorates.

In this regard we must deliver on the promise to trial a permanent police presence at Karama shops, which was made in response to a petition to the previous Assembly from 1,200 local residents, predominantly from Karama and Malak. It is time we listened to and acted on what the community wants. We are seeking to trial a mobile caravan for six months to see whether it works.

To wrap up, I am privileged to be one of the 25 people elected to the 15th Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory. We will no doubt have genuine and vigorous debates and arguments about various pieces of legislation, policies and programs that come before the Assembly, as we should. It is part of our democratic process. However, my hope is that we will treat each other with due respect and, when we can, collaborate on creating a brighter future for all Territorians. As a start, let us share some love, compassion and tolerance with each other. Who knows—we may make new lifelong friends.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, honourable members of parliament, distinguished guests, family, friends and those in the gallery, it is with profound humbleness and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today to deliver my maiden speech as a representative in this Chamber. As I take up this role, I hope to continue the tradition of accessible and responsive representation.

I pay my respects to past members who served before me in this parliament. Whilst my predecessor and I may differ in our approaches, I hope that we share the common goal of serving the best interests of our community.

The 2024 election campaign was tough, both physically and emotionally, but I am glad to say that the Fannie Bay campaign was a relatively clean fight. As a female candidate, my success contributes to increasing female representation in politics, aligning with global trends where women are breaking barriers in leadership roles. I look forward to building on the foundation that has been set in my electorate.

The seat of Fannie Bay has been held by big names over the years, from Clare Martin and Michael Gunner to Grant Tambling and Marshall Perron. Labor held the seat from 1995 to 2024—29 years—and I must say that it is a pretty special feeling to be the Country Liberal Party's representative who turned the tide in this seat. This win is an historic win, and I am proud to have played a big part in it.

I acknowledge my family and extended family. To my parents, thank you for not being helicopter parents. During my childhood I experienced the ups and downs, the good times and the bad times. All these shaped me to become the person I am today. Mum and dad, you helped to make me the independent, strong and well-rounded woman I am today.

To my siblings, long-time friends, new friends, colleagues over the years and mentors—you know who you are—each of you has helped in one way or another to guide, support and educate me, thank you.

To the members of the Country Liberal Party, the campaign team and, most importantly, the volunteers who came out to support me in my campaign, as a person who has dedicated quite a large piece of my life to volunteering, I am filled with immense gratitude for every one of you. Your dedication, passion and hard work were the driving force behind our success. I cannot thank you enough for your unwavering support.

I am beyond grateful for those who have placed their trust in me, especially the people of the Fannie Bay electorate. They voted for me to be their voice, and I am truly honoured to represent our community in the Northern Territory parliament. I would not be here today if I did not have their votes. This victory belongs to all of us; it reflects our shared vision for a brighter future and a commitment to addressing the issues that matter. I am excited about the opportunities ahead and eager to work tirelessly on your behalf. To the people of the Fannie Bay electorate, thank you so much.

I would not be here without the support of my immediate family: my husband, Riva; daughters, Kalani and Ella; and son, Jacob. I am acutely aware that I would not be in this position without the unwavering support and love of my husband and best friend, Riva.

Riva and I met 27 years ago in Alice Springs. In 1997 I was not long out of school. Although I will not bore you with all the details of how we met, I will say that as I got to know Riva, I quickly realised that I had found an ally with shared values, beliefs, morals and ethics. I had found my life partner.

Riva was born and grew up in the Solomon Islands. He moved to Queensland as a young child and resettled in the Northern Territory as a young adult to find work. He joined the NT Police in 2001, not because he wanted to be a police officer, but purely because he wanted job security for his family.

Throughout my journey into politics, Riva did not skip a beat in his support for me. This support goes far beyond the political realm; his love for me and the kids, his strength, kindness, integrity, determination, sense of humour and killer karaoke skills—there might be some video evidence of that later—have truly made me a better person. Riva, your belief in me has been unwavering, even when my belief in myself has faltered. You have always supported your family, but the support you have shown over the last year has lifted me up and given me the wings I needed to push through and be standing here today.

To my three NT born-and-bred children, Kalani, Ella and Jacob, you continue to encourage me when I doubt myself. You challenge my thoughts, behaviours and ways of working. You make my heart smile. You are my greatest teachers, and you inspire me every day. You remind me of the importance of compassion, resilience and curiosity. You continually motivate me to grow as a person and strive for a better future in the NT. You are the reason I am doing this.

The four of you have always been my constant and my moral compass. You are most definitely not afraid to let me know when I start travelling off track. You will teach me how to be a better person every day, and you have no idea how extremely grateful I am to have you all in my life.

As I embark on this new journey, I know that with all of you by my side I will always start with a solid grounding of simply doing the right thing. Your love and support are the greatest gifts I could ask for, and I am profoundly grateful and proud to have you all as my family. Our regular debates, conversations, games nights and planning sessions at the dining table are something that I cherish and hope we will continue in the years to come. I cannot wait to sit at the dinner table soon and ask you all what your favourite part of this day was. Seriously, it is with every ounce of my being that I thank you for everything.

To my esteemed colleagues in this Chamber, I hope that in the years to come you will get to know my family as I do. As you get to know them you will see that they truly embody the values that I hope to bring to my work in this parliament.

Standing here today is an extremely humbling moment for me. I come to this parliament as a proud Territorian. I am the product of the NT's education system, the NT's community and its people. My 30 years of life in the NT have shaped and fuelled my passion for public service on many levels.

When I made the decision to step into the political realm, I asked myself: what kind of Territory do I think our kids, and hopefully grandkids, should have in 20 years, and how do we get there? What would I do if I knew that my actions today could positively change the future for generations of Territorians to come? How do we create a Territory where every child has access to a quality education and a brighter future and where we could all walk safely down the streets at night, in a Territory where businesses are thriving and opportunities are behind every door for everyone? Was I willing to sit on the sidelines and continue to watch others take the reins while I sat quietly and critiqued them? Finally, if I continued to sit on the sidelines now, would I regret it in the future?

I did not have the answers to all those questions, but I definitely had the answer to the last one. Yes, I most definitely knew that I would always wonder, 'What if?' I knew I would regret not trying. I knew I wanted to be part of the change, so I took the leap, threw my hat in the ring and here I am today.

If you will all indulge me a little, I will talk about the process of getting here today, because the decision to step into politics was extremely hard for me, as I am sure it was for some of you. Talking to my family about it; reaching out to friends, family and colleagues for their thoughts, advice and opinions; submitting my application; being in front of a group of at least 15 people; being nominated for candidacy; telling my extended family, friends and work colleagues that I was now a candidate; being photographed; participating in media opportunities; standing on the side of the road waving to strangers; holding events where lots of people

showed up and events where no-one showed up; walking the streets at all times of day knocking on strangers' doors, not knowing whether they would greet me kindly or slam the door in my face—many of these activities are far from normal.

I never knew what each day would bring or how it would impact me or my family. It continues to be a scary process. Throughout this process I have publicly labelled myself as a member of a party, and because of that people have thrown things at me, obscene words have been yelled at me by people who have not taken the time to meet me and people have stereotyped me and made negative comments and refused to listen to my perspective. I have acquaintances who no longer acknowledge me and a few friends who have pulled back from being a part of my life.

It is a little sad, but I am strangely okay with all of that because I know I am doing this for the right reasons. Those who really know me know this about me and are still by my side. I send out an enormous thank you to those people who are still with me.

I also send a quick message to all the keyboard warriors and faceless men and women who think it is okay to judge from behind a screen. To the people who only throw out problems without offering solutions and who think that the challenges we face can be fixed overnight, I am putting myself out here and having a crack; where are you, and what are you doing to help? In a society where life is already so hard for so many people, we need to be kinder to each other, and we need to become solutions focused.

In the Territory we face many challenges, such as access to affordable quality healthcare, access to a safe and quality education and access to economic opportunities, the opportunity to have a go and be successful. We have poverty and racism, and I am sorry to say that I have witnessed all these challenges at many different levels.

My family and I have experienced ups and downs over the years. These ups and downs provide me with a broad spectrum of life experience that I will take into this role. We have travelled the Territory, and have lived in urban, regional and remote locations. We have a mixed-race family and have been the target of racist comments and actions. We have family members who have been the target of homophobic comments and actions. Members of our family have dealt with ill mental health for extended periods of time, and we have suffered immense loss. We have struggled, succeeded, supported, laughed and cried. One thing is certain; we do it together.

I stand here because of the resilience and determination of the people I represent in my family and in my community.

The Fannie Bay electorate is well known across the Territory as the jewel of the Top End. It is a place where property prices are high. It is home to local business men and women, and it is a known high-end area of town. The Fannie Bay electorate has much to offer to those who reside in the area and to the business and tourism sectors, but the truth is that within the Fannie Bay electorate it is not all beer and skittles.

The constituency has its fair share of issues. We have watched our shopping precincts deteriorate. We have watched our way of life decline, almost becoming prisoners in our own homes. We have watched as more and more local meeting places have become home to the homeless or to people living rough. We have watched home owners and businesses spend more and more money on keeping their premises safe and secure, placing them in more and more debt. We have watched as the rising cost of living and ever-increasing cost of running a business causes families to make the move from red meat to canned tuna.

In Fannie Bay families, workers and business owners are striving to improve their lives in the face of these challenges and have asked for a representative who will ensure that their concerns are addressed. Whether it is the quality of public services, the safety of their homes or their neighbourhoods or the opportunities for a better future, in almost every conversation I have had with constituents one message is clear: they expect us to act decisively with compassion, empathy and fairness. They want to know that this parliament will not just engage in debate but also deliver meaningful solutions. I am here to ensure that those solutions reflect the needs of constituents.

I have spent time talking to individuals, families, small business owners and community leaders. It is my job and my commitment to ensure that the voices of Fannie Bay are heard loud and clear in this parliament and that we make real progress on the issues that matter most to them. I imagine a society where no-one is left behind and everyone has the chance to succeed regardless of their background and where our institutions work for all and not just the privileged few.

Rapid advancements in technology, shifts in global economy and societal changes present us with immense opportunities and serious challenges. It is our responsibility to ensure that the policies we implement are not only forward thinking but also grounded in the realities of those we represent. We live in times of rapid change, economically, socially and technologically. Whilst this brings opportunities it also presents challenges, especially in ensuring that progress is inclusive. My vision is one where innovation and growth do not come at the expense of the most vulnerable and where we prioritise people equally.

During my time in parliament I intend to focus on several key issues that are of paramount importance to constituents and to the NT as a whole.

One issue is reducing administrative burden and red tape. Whether it is in business, education, healthcare or law enforcement, too often the people providing essential services are overwhelmed by bureaucracy and paperwork. This slows down the delivery of critical services, frustrates frontline workers, slows progress and ultimately impacts us all. Doctors and nurses should be spending their time caring for patients, not battling through endless forms and red tape.

Accessible and affordable healthcare is a right not a privilege. I will push for reforms that reduce wait times and improve remote healthcare access. We must also ensure that healthcare is accessible, affordable and equitable. Our healthcare system must meet the needs of everyone. Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish historian said, 'He who has health, has hope; and he who has hope, has everything.' No-one should be forced to choose between their health and financial stability.

Teachers should be focused on educating our children, not bogged down with non-essential administrative tasks. Education is the cornerstone of any thriving society and the key to unlocking a better future for everyone. Nelson Mandela said, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'. I will work to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, has access to a quality education. This means investing in our schools, supporting our teachers and ensuring that our curriculum is relevant and prepares students for the challenges of tomorrow. Access to a quality education is a right not a privilege. Investing in education at all levels will equip future generations with the skills they need to navigate the complexities of tomorrow's world.

We need to ensure that our police force is well resourced and supported with the tools and training that police need to keep our streets safe. When people feel secure they can pursue opportunities, build businesses and raise families with confidence. However, rising crime rates threaten this sense of security. I believe we need a comprehensive approach to tackling crime that focuses on not only enforcement but also prevention. We must invest in programs that address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, overcrowding, lack of education and unemployment.

I believe in an economy that works for all. In the words of John F Kennedy, a rising tide will lift all boats. We must ensure that as our economy grows it lifts up everyone not just a select few.

I understand that the work ahead of us will require compromise and collaboration. My focus will be on policies that promote job creation for all—urban, regional and remote opportunities. We need investment in sectors that foster innovation and sustainability while supporting small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy.

I will advocate for streamlining processes, implementing smart technology solutions and cutting unnecessary regulations to ensure that our frontline professionals can do what they do best, which is serving the public efficiently. When we reduce the administrative overload we free up time and resources, improve service delivery and enhance the overall wellbeing of our people. I believe this is key to building a more efficient and compassionate public service.

As I take my place in this parliament I recognise that progress is a collective effort. No single party and no single individual can solve the challenges that we face on their own. It is through collaboration, compromise and dialogue that we can achieve the best outcomes for our people. No single party or individual has the monopoly on good ideas. The challenges we face are complex and multifaceted. It is only by working together with all sectors of society that we will achieve the progress we seek. I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the room to find solutions that move us forward.

Over the last nine months or so I have listened and asked questions, but mostly I have listened without too much comment. I deliberately stayed quiet. I have listened to the voices, the concerns, the advice and the commentary. I have listened to everybody. I have also watched. I have watched an uncompromising and out-of-touch government fail to listen. The government members did not listen to the people they wanted—

the people they needed—to vote them in for another term. I watched members of that same government stand up in this very room and deliver speeches that ridiculed the advice or opinions of those on the other side of the room and those of the people whom they served.

The recent Territory election outcome clearly demonstrates the lack of understanding the previous government had about what the NT stands for and the people it serves. The former government simply forgot the very people it was meant to represent. It forgot the things that it was supposed to fight for.

I do not say this to pour salt on the wounds of the many members of the Labor Party who are no longer with us in this room; I say it for the benefit of the members I now share a bench with. As we work our way through the next four years of government I implore us all to remember that the Country Liberal Party won the election on a glimmer of hope that we could do things differently and better, could be transparent and accountable and would genuinely give a voice to those who do not have one. We need to do things differently. We need to do things better, to be transparent and accountable and to keep listening to those who voted for us and give them a voice.

In closing, I again express my deep gratitude for the opportunity to serve. It is with humility, passion and determination that I take on the responsibilities of this role. Those who know me know that I have never claimed to be the smartest person in the room; in fact, the only reason I am here is that I was brave enough to have a crack. I promise you today that I will do things differently. I will do things better. I am not scared to surround myself with people who are smarter than me—that is not hard to do—so that we can make the right decisions. I will be transparent and accountable. I am not afraid to put up my hand when I get things wrong.

As a newcomer to this parliament, I look forward to learning from all of you. I am eager to contribute constructively to the robust debates and discussions that take place in this Chamber. We may have our differences, but we are united by a common goal—to make life better for those we represent.

I look forward to being an active and engaged member of this parliament. I pledge to work tirelessly on behalf of my constituents and the people of the Northern Territory. My time in this Chamber will be dedicated to addressing the concerns of the people I represent. I will fight for a more efficient public service, safer communities and a better quality of life for Territorians. With humility, passion and determination, I am ready to serve and deliver on the promises that I made to my constituents.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I thank you and the parliament for allowing me to introduce myself for the first time in this Chamber as the newly elected Member for Wanguri in the 15th Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

In August this year the voters of the Wanguri electorate, which includes the suburbs of Wanguri, Leanyer and part of Muirhead, placed their faith in me to represent them for the next four years in this parliament. I thank them for making this resounding change, after a record 35 years, when they showed courage, trusted the policies our party wanted to deliver and looked to a new direction. I must make special mention of all those who were brave enough to vote for change and the residents who displayed my corflutes on their fences and in their yards.

The electorate consists of nearly 10,000 persons with almost 50% males and 50% females, with a median age of 34 years. The majority of the ethnic groups are Australian, Chinese, Indian, Greek, Filipino and now Nepalese, with nearly 45% of people having both parents born overseas. Many are public servants, with a large number working at the hospitals, in Defence, education and retail, and being small business owners. Many have retired and still live in the electorate.

I formally thank my two parliamentary colleagues the Member for Braitling, Joshua Burgoyne, and the Member for Katherine, Jo-Anne Hersey, who exactly a year ago today met me for the first time in this Chamber and encouraged me to run as the CLP candidate for Wanguri.

Special mention must also go out to the CLP members who endorsed my candidate application. They are Fiona Darcy, Glenda Stripling, Christina Boothby, Richard Setter, Leonie Melder and Derek Mayger. They also became my great supporters throughout the campaign, many times attending functions, markets and roadsides.

I thank the members of the North Darwin and Trower CLP branches who also supported my campaign. I make special mention of the campaign team in headquarters, Alyson, Brett, Will, Michael and many others.

I thank the residents who opened their doors or stood at their gates and shared their common concerns and stories. On many occasions it was a lonely walk each day, but over the months I became familiar with the residents and they trusted me enough to share their concerns. Our party listened and created policies to reflect that. I thank those who gave up their time to doorknock with me: May; Discuss; Marie-Clare; and our leader, Lia.

I thank the community groups that accepted me into their activities and cultural festivities, which has enriched my life as I was able to resonate with many of them, as a child of migrants myself growing up and living in the Territory.

I thank the neighbouring electorate candidates, Casuarina, Sanderson and Karama, for having the same determination to bring back the Territory lifestyle. During the campaign we forged a team that would work for the betterment of northern suburbs residents.

To my pre-poll team and volunteers, thank you. I make special mention of Cheryl, Katherine, Malay, Nilham, Vicki, Aaron, Sanzeev and many more.

It is a privilege to now serve the Wanguri electorate in the Finocchiaro CLP government. I am proud to be a part of this newly elected government which consists of a team with experience, gender, age, religion and race.

I am proud of my Indonesian heritage. Both my parents are Indonesian migrants who made Darwin their home and raised their family here. I proudly state that I am Territorian and am the first with Indonesian heritage from both parents to be elected to the NT parliament. I am a Territorian who was born at the old hospital at Myilly Point.

My late father, Amos Helwend, arrived here in 1937 with the pearling industry. My mother, Chatarina Bungalay, arrived in 1974 on a business trip. I wish to acknowledge my parents' sacrifice in moving to a new country and laying the foundations for the next generations.

When my father came to Australia as a 20-year-old he did not know what to expect and what paths he would follow. He followed the early migration of his uncle Tempsia Carsina to Thursday Island and worked for a Japanese pearling company between Broome and Darwin, earning £4 per month. He was working in Darwin during the Bombing of Darwin and survived.

He later joined the merchant navy as a crew member moving cargo and dodging air raids in Port Moresby Harbour during World War II. Working on his last cargo ship, the merchant vessel *Tulagi*, saw him earn £120 per month. It took flour and mail to Colombo, in what is known today as Sri Lanka. In 1944 MV *Tulagi* was torpedoed in the Indian Ocean by a German U-boat and sank, leaving 15 men who survived the sinking. Thirty-nine perished in that fatal attack.

The survivors drifted on two makeshift rafts. My father was on raft 1 with six other men and drifted for 59 days in the Indian Ocean, landing in the Seychelles. Unfortunately, raft 2, which carried the other eight men, perished only days before the landing. My father speared fish and a turtle with a makeshift spear from a pair of scissors he had grabbed during the sinking. Food such as milk tablets and biscuits ran out earlier but had kept them going in the initial stages. They collected rainwater, catching it with a tarpaulin. My father was later awarded his British Empire Medal for bravery and attention to duty by the Governor-General Mr McKell in 1949.

I share this story as this laid the foundations of my father becoming an Australian citizen and to remind people of his courage as a young migrant. It also lets others know that our family has a long history with Darwin. In fact, the road to Robertson Barracks from the Stuart Highway is named after the MV *Tulagi*; it is Tulagi Road.

My father now lies at rest at the General Cemetery in Jingili. His Australian War Memorial plaque is also mounted at the Thorak Garden of Remembrance.

My father survived not only the Bombing of Darwin and the sinking of MV *Tulagi*, but also Cyclone Tracy. He was a council worker with the Darwin City Council at that time. My mother was pregnant with me during the cyclone and, luckily enough, we had family at Berry Springs with a large, solid brick house which kept them all safe.

Although my father is no longer with us, he was the quiet achiever and our family pioneer, which has given me the qualities to lead my community today. I sincerely am grateful for his determination, even when things were tough.

This brings me to my mother, who was here this morning and is always a pillar of strength. Although her health has slightly declined over the years, she is always full of encouragement. Thank you, mum, for always being a guide and our strength.

Mum and dad raised us at Rapid Creek, but in 1981 moved to our farm at Acacia Hills, where we had an amazing Territory upbringing. We were long-term residents of the rural community and to this day have lifelong friends we call family. I was lucky enough to have an education at Rapid Creek Primary, Berry Springs Primary and Taminmin High School. The schools were an integral part of the community. I still have many friends from those days.

I remember we would leave home early to catch the bus, and school was the place to be. The teachers were the pillars of our community and wonderful role models for me and many others. With not a lot of fancy technology back then, sport was prominent. On many afternoons the school bus would transport many of us to different events where we represented the school. We always rallied around the children who would go on to represent at higher levels.

I am fortunate that, for nearly 19 years now, I have lived in a street that fosters the same values and connections I had as a child. We look after one another, and rarely does one move from this street in Leanyer. This brings me to the reason why I stood up at the August election; I could see this wonderful Territory lifestyle being eroded. I was, and am still, concerned for the safety of the community, which needs to be restored, and our lifestyle reputation needs to be repaired. Wanguri, Leanyer and Muirhead residents deserve to raise their families and retire in a safe community.

I have raised my family here. I look forward to the next generation enjoying what we had in the earlier years. Most people in the electorate, including my family, choose to live there due to the close proximity to shops, the hospital and other lifestyle needs, but in the last few years constituents have been prepared to give up this lifestyle due to the increasing levels of crime and antisocial behaviour.

I better understand the community and its needs because I have invested and set roots in this electorate by raising my own family there. We have adopted the local park, Peace Park, and initiated tree planting. My husband was instrumental in getting additional footpaths for all abilities, which now sees the park being utilised by people of all ages and abilities. I have lived in the electorate for nearly 19 years and will continue to do so. I bought my first house in Leanyer and raised my family there. I continue to live in that same house.

I worked for the Commonwealth Bank for almost 25 years. The majority of that service was in the financial planning industry, which involved listening to clients' concerns and providing strategic advice for better outcomes.

I began as a teller at the Casuarina branch, and the team was a dream team. To this day, many of the people I worked with are my closest friends and have supported my working career. I moved into customer service and for a short six months, transferred to Bondi Beach in Sydney. Due to a tragic family incident, where the family farmhouse unfortunately burned down, the CBA assisted in transferring me back to Darwin to help my family. I was the manager of telling during the 2000 millennial changeover and, luckily, all the planning in place was not needed as we rolled into the 21st century.

I moved into financial planning, as this was the space where I could hone my skills in listening and solving. During that time I helped many clients, solving financial pressures and preparing them for self-funded retirement. I am proud to say that our small team in the Northern Territory won a number of state and national bank awards due to our commitment to our clients. I believe that these skills provide me with the best attributes to be able to listen to constituents and resolve their concerns with a party that cares for their community. These clients are now informing me that they struggle to go out and spend their retirement capital safely in this community.

Whilst working for the Commonwealth Bank I became a mum and learned to juggle work and parenting. I was fortunate to work in a team that supported this. I had a break for a year and during that time reflected on all the good things I had done to help people become financially secure. I missed interacting with people, and returned to work for a year at a medium-sized firm in the financial planning industry, but something else was on my cards to help even more people.

In February I was endorsed to run for the CLP and began to transition into my new role, listening to constituents and using my knowledge and skills to piece together solutions from the get-go. As stated earlier, the majority of the constituents are frontline services workers, public servants, small business owners, families and senior members of our community who just want to live the Territory lifestyle in safety. I am privileged to have met a lot of the residents in the electorate through my past work in finance. I am now more privileged to assist them all on a bigger scale.

I understand the cost-of-living pressures, as I have had mortgages, raised my family in the electorate and continue to live there. As we continued to live in the electorate, many of our family, friends and acquaintances raised the issue of crime and antisocial behaviour and the flow-on effects of the rising cost of living. This motivated me to run in the seat of Wanguri and the result of that hard work and determination is me being that voice in parliament today.

When the community is at risk of crime it is no longer acceptable to stand back. The electorate deserves a member who will listen and work with a team that has lived experience and will get the Territory back on track. I am prepared to bring my work, life experience, cultural background and hard work ethic to bring the NT back to the forefront where it belongs on the map as a member of the Finocchiaro CLP government. My promise to the people of Wanguri is that I will not rest; I will work every day to make this place resemble the wonderful Territory I know and love. I will continue to fight and advocate for those who need it.

Many who know me can attest to this work ethic. I have already seen some results in the last few weeks as we began to work from the office at the Hibiscus shopping centre. I know the team at the office will work just as hard as me. I thank my team members in advance; they are led by Jade at the moment.

In closing, there are a few more thankyous for my family, some of whom were here this morning to present me to this parliament. They have been my biggest supporters. Apolnia, Veby, Yohanes, Faizal, Michael and Benhur stood by me and letter dropped each time I asked. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To my son, Rian Amos Helwend Carlson, you made me the person I am today, fighting for everything I missed out on as a child with parents who were less fortunate. I hope that I have made you proud, as I know you have missed out on a lot as I have worked many hours and will continue to do so, always advocating for others. I hope you see a parent who wants to make this place a better place for you and your future generations.

Last but not least, thank you to my husband, Aaron Carlson, who supported me through this journey. After being together for 25 years, he has stood by me when I have made decisions for our family. He did not agree but trusted all would be good. He encouraged me to be the new voice for the people of Wanguri. He worked tirelessly in the background and continues to do so every day. Thank you for all the early mornings and late nights, and till today nothing has changed. Thank you for letting me be a part of a bigger community and helping those in need.

Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to thank those who helped the people of Wanguri have a new voice. Thank you to the people of Wanguri for trusting me to be their advocate for the next four years. I hope there will be many achievements in this new term to show you all that I am committed to the community.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, let me begin by thanking my colleague the Member for Wanguri for her touching and heartfelt words and for the beautiful cultural ceremony with which she entered this place this morning. I thank all others who partook in a similar ceremony; it is an honour to be witness to those kinds of proceedings.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your ascent to the Speakership. I commend our Chief Minister for her inspired leadership in dragging you to the seat and, no less, to the Leader of the Opposition for supporting your nomination. We all repose an enormous amount of faith in you and hope that this will be a well-functioning parliament.

Madam Speaker, colleagues, distinguished guests and fellow Territorians, almost 30 years to the day I first entered this place on 4 October 1994 as a 15-year-old member of the Darwin Schools Wind Symphonic Concert Band to participate in the inaugural sitting of the Legislative Assembly in this Parliament House. I was in awe of this place on that day, and I remain so to this day. I have carried this small commemorative token with me over the many years ever since, interstate and abroad, to remind me of the place of opportunity from which I originate. In that spirit, I am enormously proud and grateful to have the chance to return here as a member of a different sort—as the Member for Fong Lim.

Fong Lim is, by NT standards, a relatively new electorate, having been created only in 2008 as a composite of original inner Darwin and newer northern suburbs. It is named after Alec Fong Lim AM, the first-ever Chinese-Australian Lord Mayor of Darwin, who was awarded the Order of Australia in 1986 for his services to the community and local government.

It has been represented by those across the political spectrum—Hon David Tollner, Jeff Collins and Hon Mark Monaghan. They are three people of longstanding public service in business, the legal profession and the education sector respectively. I pay tribute to them all and their collective contribution to our shared electorate, hoping to build upon their legacy.

That Fong Lim has changed hands electorally is testament to its informed and passionate constituents, whom I have the privilege of engaging with daily. They motivate and inspire me, with their open-mindedness, good humour, willingness to support good ideas and courage to fight for positive change. They are the type of people I am honoured to represent—willing to take chances and take you to task. I thank them for their conversations, support, honesty and even criticisms, without which I would not be here.

Likewise, to the many volunteers and campaigners who have reposed their faith in me, to afford me the privilege of standing in this Chamber today, I say thank you. Those people include Shane Stone, Terri Hart, Fiona Darcy, Carole Miller, Ray Bail, Geoff Hunter, Peter Hopton, Glenda Stripling, Noel Land, Peter Perrin, Chris Foy, John Horgan, Lucio Mattarazzo, Manny Koulakis, Sakib Awan, Penny Tastula, Nathan Lewis, Saifur Rahman, Fahad Alam, Denise Raymond, Kamal Masum, Vic Minchin, Maria Rust, James Perrin, Michael Poulter, Luke Myall, Jason Hanna, Eddie Willoughby-Smith, John Brears, Michelle Dunham, Peter Forrest, Sheila Forrest and Shirley Hooper.

That long but still non-exhaustive and discourteously short list is indicative of a simple truth: I stand on the shoulders of others and would have little to show for myself but for the sacrifice of many. No-one sacrifices more for us, though, than our families, and mine is no exception.

I am indebted above all others to my dear father who cares for me like no other and remains my enduring source of strength. Collectively, though, my parents, uncles, aunts, siblings, cousins and I owe our bountiful lives in Australia to the courage and the tenacity of my late maternal grandparents, Muhammad Nurul Huq OAM and his loyal and loving wife, Mrs Nargis Huq.

My grandfather was an enterprising Bangladeshi hydrologist, who first toured Australia in the late 1960s to work on the Snowy Mountains on a Colombo scholarship. Thereafter, in the aftermath of the war in East Pakistan and via a stint of refuge in India, he migrated to Australia in 1971 with his wife and three children, with the support of two kindly Darwin Rotarians, Peter and Nancy Fuchs.

My grandad taught me much—to appreciate cricket, read widely, cook generously and, indeed, eat heartily, but perhaps most of all he instilled in me the idea that gratitude makes optimism sustainable. Moreover, he helped me to appreciate the virtue of expressing gratitude through service. I am deeply committed to the idea of public service and proud to wear my grandfather's Order of Australia Medal today in his memory and in recognition of his services to multiculturalism.

Thus began Darwin's Bangladeshi diaspora, seeded from just a family of five—Nurul and Nargis; my mother, Nasreen; Uncle Nazmul; and Aunt Nazneen—to today's bustling Bangladeshi masses. It is a classic migrant tale no different from countless others, of course, punctuated by the happinesses, hostilities, hardships and heroism of starting life anew in a new place. What is distinctive and worthy of reflecting upon on this occasion, though, is not the who or the how, but the where in this tale—this Territory to which we all belong and collectively will seek to make an ongoing contribution towards.

In my heart I am a kid from Karama. It is where my father, Jillur Rahman, then an employee of the Northern Territory University library, established our family home in 1981, and where he stubbornly remains to this day. At that time, Karama was a brand-new suburb filled with young, aspirational families. Our house was modest but embedded within a strong community sharing a common favour: security of tenure owing to the munificence of public housing under the then government's Housing Commission.

From that home I enjoyed the luxury of walking a few hundred metres to Sanderson Primary School, the local primary school. Over seven years I gained not just a basic education, but exposure to extracurricular activities, including a quality musical education, the fruits of which I carry through to today.

A short bike ride away, adjacent to my grandparents' place in Anula, I continued on to the pedagogically vanguard Sanderson High School, where I was taught by committed educators of the highest order. Again,

I was exposed to a litany of broad educational opportunities—science fairs, maths Olympiads, sports carnivals, eisteddfods, Beats, debating and oration, performing arts productions, music camps and so much more. It was, by any measure, a privileged education, the depth of which I had no certainty of acquiring in any other part of Australia.

Two figures loomed especially large throughout my schooling, and it would be remiss of me not to mention them specifically. Jan Moore and Nora Lewis, thank you for your past, present and continued pastoral care.

Today I am a denizen of a different locale—Stuart Park, on one end of the vast urban electorate of Fong Lim. My connection to my electorate is nascent but growing daily, not least because, again, I see in it the opportunity of the old and the possibility of the new.

It begins in East Arm and Wishart, encapsulating much of Darwin's strategic land reserves in the Darwin Business Park, the Marine Industry Park, Wishart Estate, Berrimah West and Hidden Valley Estate. It then covers Berrimah Northcrest, a new promised land for young families aspiring to home ownership and community connection, before traversing Coonawarra and winding through Winnellie, the industrial heartland of Darwin. Across the way lies Charles Darwin National Park, the only such location enclosed within a capital city in Australia. Finally, there is the contrast of the old and the new—the tradition of The Narrows juxtaposed with Eaton's modernity and Woolner's serene suburbia, alongside the beauty of Bayview.

It is an electorate of contrasts, and one I am sincerely grateful to represent. It is illustrative of symbiotic harmony and the diversity of Darwin. It is, furthermore, a constituency of prospect, whose aspirations I hope to champion. Nowhere is this truer than in Stuart Park, the historically proud inner-city gateway to the CBD, replete with potential for rejuvenation and growth.

Rejuvenation and growth are constant themes I encountered whilst on the campaign trail, listening to the concerns and frustrations, but also the aspirations, of the people of Fong Lim. Ours is an electorate not immediately associated with natural beauty, civic activity or dramatic development, but things are happening in Fong Lim and opportunity beckons for all Territorians in that regard. Visit Dinah Park on any given day and you will find connections forming amongst community sport. Tipperary Waters has amazing food and views to rival the best of Darwin's offerings. The nooks and crannies of Winnellie offer entertainment and artisan products, not just manufactured goods. Fong Lim will surprise you.

It is a unique electorate and, I would argue, a potential powerhouse location for the Territory from which our next industrial revolution could be propelled. It contains more active businesses and NGOs than all other electorates combined, with quality residential options interspersed throughout, commercial facilities, attractive ready-to-go land and vastly unrealised growth potential.

Potential without commensurate facilitated opportunity is nevertheless hollow. That is why I am proud to be a member of the Country Liberal Party. I am the beneficiary of the opportunity afforded to me by a strong and stable CLP government that for 27 consecutive years delivered equitable access to high-quality public health, housing, education and infrastructure. It is that platform—in the most ethnically, racially and religiously diverse place in the country per capita no less—which laid the foundations for my successes thereafter, interstate and abroad.

I had the opportunity—indeed, the luxury—to earn qualifications at the University of Sydney in music, economics and law under the auspices of people like Professor Mary Crock, Professor Bill Pritchard and the Reverend Canon Dr Ivan Head. Ultimately, I had the good fortune to work as a research fellow, management consultant, government executive, project manager and policy adviser across the globe.

Failure too, though, has featured prominently in my life, never more so than in respect of my doctoral studies. Interrupted by myasthenia gravis, for a long time I felt my DPhil was a mountain that I was trapped on the side of and would never be able to scale. Lost down a crevasse, and forgotten by my expedition team, were many dark years. Eventually though, I freed myself. Then, for better or worse, I stubbornly refused to return to the nadir until, ultimately, I reached the summit and concluded the descent.

I am sincerely grateful for the help and support of those who helped me survive the long journey—Thyrone Hodgson, Tomi Johnson, Ruth Stackpool-Moore, Georgia Costigan, Rory Hill, Rob Campbell, Professor Gordon L Clark, Gordon Cunningham and Mary Smith, amongst many others. I am grateful, moreover, to those same people for guiding me back to Darwin to try in earnest to make a contribution here using the skills and knowledge that I have acquired on my journey to date.

Demography is indeed destiny. It was with that aphorism in mind that I returned here a year ago to work in partnership with others to try to address the demographic decline of this great Northern Territory. To that point it bears reiterating that our current workforce and population prospects were not always thus; rather, in the 40 years since 1983 we have trended from growing at approximately 30% population growth elapsed over a decade to approximately 20% in the 1990s and 2000s to less than 5% in the 2013 to 2022 period. It is an alarming trend, and one that is unlikely to abate without direct intervention.

Certainly that is my professional opinion, based on a life's work thus far, examining welfare reform and north Australia, future directions for Australian immigration policy and competitiveness in the global market for skilled migrants. To put it another way, the Northern Territory is like a swimming pool where the water level is just getting too low to swim in comfortably and the water quality is starting to go a bit funny. Do we put up a shade cloth to slow the evaporation? Do we tackle the plumbing to slow drainage? Do we try to keep turning up the existing taps or simply pray for rain? More pointedly, why does it even matter?

To quote from Hon Shane Stone AC's maiden address to this House:

> *The fact is that population is the key to the Territory's … success, growth and eventual statehood.*

That sentiment remains as true today as it did when expressed almost 25 years ago.

Fortunately, I now count myself amongst a team of colleagues who share the view that it is time to find new hoses to fill the pool with. The Finocchiaro government is to be lauded in this regard, being the first in the history of this place to overtly acknowledge the importance of addressing sustainable population growth as the key to achieving sustainable NT economic growth.

We collectively recognise the existence of interstate, overseas and diasporic workers with families who could live, work, and contribute to the NT, given the right inducement. Moreover, we are providing new generations the chance to build here for the long term, as was the case for old Territorians. Already, the Finocchiaro government is signalling to market our commitment to enhance liveability, opportunity and upward mobility, through initiatives to turbocharge housing supply and help small business.

Fortune favours the brave and, to quote a freshman colleague, it is 'time for courage'. It is time to welcome people and enhance opportunities to connect them to local communities and activities, knowing that empirically this is what results in long-term retention and better integration outcomes. It is time to provide renewed hope and optimism, and ensure that newcomers once again get a fair go to become multigenerational Territorians.

Fellow Territorians, I come before you not as an evangelist, but as an empiricist, a social scientist and an applied economic geographer, driven by data not by dogma. I am fiscally conservative, socially liberal and economically rational, as was the foundational self-governing legislature of this Northern Territory.

No doubt, we all come to this Assembly with a unique perspective and biases. Nevertheless, I hope a shared aspiration to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the Territory lifestyle permeates amongst us all at some level. We will, of course, differ in our specific progress prescriptions. I trust, though, that we share fundamental altruism in common.

In this regard, it remains incumbent on all of us in this House to protect, promote and advance the aspirations of self-governance, necessarily including a commitment to fiscal responsibility, to ensure opportunity for generations ahead. A collective commitment to raise investor confidence, stimulate population growth, re-imagine revenue models, ensure energy security, target industry support, reduce government wastage, promote market competition and deliver efficient services—these tasks will not be easy in the aftermath of decades of negligence on economic policy.

Fortunately, this government, of which I am a proud member, is making headway already, by addressing our economic reality and eschewing fiscal fantasies, as it must. Why? Because no less than the fate of our self-governing Territory rests upon the rebuilding of our economy.

Undeniably, we live in uncertain times in which the Northern Territory's geopolitical significance is heightened. Geography matters; the Northern Territory matters. We must succeed in restoring economic integrity for the benefit of not only Territorians but all Australians. I believe we can, and I trust we will, under the direction of this new government.

As the concluding maiden speaker on this first day of the 15th Assembly, permit me to say to my fellow members, the class of 2024, that it is an honour to be amongst you. Individually you are all remarkable. Collectively you reflect the depth and diversity of the NT and demonstrate passion and a commitment to public service that I am inspired to follow. Your first speeches give me hope, and I share your determination to work towards making the Territory the best that it can be. Moreover, I am inspired by your common commitment to listen. I believe this will be a parliament that listens to its people, led by a government that listens for the collective good.

I was privileged to be the beneficiary of opportunity gifted to me by this polity. It is why I am driven to ensure we revitalise opportunity for future generations of Territorians. I am yet further honoured to represent a constituency named after Alec Fong Lim AM, the embodiment of Australia's most successful multicultural community. I proudly bear my father's name alongside my eponymous electorate, knowing how much I owe to both.

Thank you to the people of Fong Lim for entrusting me with the opportunity to be of service. I commit sincerely to cooperation, compromise, contest and competition for the greater good, alongside my fellow parliamentarians, for the benefit of Fong Lim constituents. I hope to be worthy of the faith that you have placed in me. Our time here is fleeting, and our opportunity ephemeral. Let us therefore be compelled not by a desire to change the world, but rather to improve the socioeconomic conditions of existence for Territorians with whom we share our Territory journey.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I congratulate everyone on their maiden speech. Welcome to Parliament House; it is an honour and a privilege to serve the people of the Northern Territory, but most importantly the constituents whom you serve.

I congratulate the CLP government on its election win and welcome our new Independent and Greens members. Welcome and congratulations to the first-ever Greens member. I look forward to working with you both and our colleague Yingiya Guyula. Welcome and thank you for your maiden speeches.

I firstly acknowledge the Larrakia people as the rightful custodians of this land and extend an acknowledgement to all traditional custodians across the Northern Territory and Australia.

I also acknowledge the other four Aboriginal members who sit on the floor today: from the Territory Labor team, the Member for Arnhem, Selena Uibo; the Member for Gwoja, Chansey Paech; and the Member for Arafura, Manuel Brown; and the Independent Member for Mulka, Yingiya Guyula.

As a proud Yaegl man from the small coastal town of Yamba in Northern Rivers, New South Wales, my connections lie elsewhere. But since moving to the Territory, I have felt a strong affinity to this beautiful place. Like many other Territorians, I made the choice to live and work here. It is my honour to stand in the 15th Assembly as the re-elected Member for Daly.

I extend my thanks to the Assembly and the Legislative Assembly staff for entrusting me with the Office of the Speaker in the 14th Assembly. It was an honour to serve the community and parliament in this capacity. I am sure that the Member for Araluen will carry out this role with respect and fairness. Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment.

I am equally honoured to stand here as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for Territory Labor, under the leadership of my good friend Selena Uibo and as a shadow minister for a number of key portfolios. Every day I intend to work my hardest to represent all Territorians in this Assembly by holding the CLP government to account on its commitments.

I thank the Northern Territory Electoral Commission and its teams for their hard work in carrying out mobile polling across the Daly electorate during the last election. Like other bush seats, it is a vast electorate, but making sure that every constituent has had the chance to make their voice heard is a fundamental right in our democracy.

I was heartened with the increased turnout across the Daly electorate, but, unfortunately, less than 45% of enrolled voters in the Territory's bush seats cast a vote. It is a fundamental matter of equity that people in the bush are given the same access and opportunity to have their voices heard as urban voters, be they in the Daly, Barkly, Gwoja, Mulka, Namatjira or Arnhem electorate. The people of the bush will turn up when given a reasonable amount of time and education. I look forward to working with this government and the Northern Territory Electoral Commission to improve the turnout at forthcoming elections.

I am incredibly proud to have been a part of a Labor government that delivered for the people of the Daly and the Territory. Labor's focus is on improving the quality of life for all Territorians no matter their location. The former Labor government demonstrated our commitment to this in many ways, including our record investment in infrastructure.

Infrastructure is a key enabler of economic development, underpinning our capacity to create jobs and increase productivity as well as stimulate growth. Infrastructure supports the quality of our social wellbeing, the future of our children, our cultural experiences and the services we use every day. Over eight years the Territory Labor government successfully delivered:

- Palmerston Regional Hospital, allowing greater access to health services for Palmerston residents
- a much-needed multistorey car park at Royal Darwin Hospital
- the State Square underground car park in the Darwin CBD, which paved the way for a greener and more vibrant city centre
- the Gunn Point Road upgrade, providing safe access and opportunity for the area's tourism and commercial interests
- completion of the Garramilla Boulevard and Tiger Brennan Drive duplication project—a landmark project that helped unlock the potential of the city's eastern end
- construction of a new home for rugby league at Warren Park and Darwin indoor netball courts
- a multistorey car park and 70 new staff accommodation units at the Alice Springs Hospital
- investments in remote health clinic infrastructure, including Galiwinku, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Robinson River and Umbakumba.

As the party of the bush, Territory Labor also knows that roads are the lifelines that flow through the Territory's towns and remote communities. Roads can also be cut off for extended periods during a heavy Wet Season, impacting the delivery of essential goods and access to remote communities. That is why our Labor government invested in critical transport infrastructure and improved access across the Territory.

Since 2016 we have upgraded over 2,200 kilometres of Territory roads, including the Central Arnhem Highway, Carpentaria Highway, Tanami Road, Tiwi Islands roads, Buntine Highway and Kakadu National Park road.

In the Daly electorate funding was allocated for upgrades to Dorat Road near Adelaide River; upgrades to Port Keats Road and the Saddle Rail Creek bridge, so it is passable during the Wet; shoulder widening in the Pine Creek area; sealing another section of Mermaid Circuit at Dundee Beach; upgrades to the intersection at Cox Peninsula Road and Darwin River Road; and a fully sealed Litchfield Park Road. Hundreds of Territorians have already enjoyed the new camping and swimming spots we opened in the park.

Territory Labor committed funding in the 2024–25 budget towards a number of road program upgrades, including $340m for priority industry road upgrades to the Stuart Highway between Alice Springs and Darwin, the Barkly Highway and the Victoria Highway. We call on the CLP to honour these budget commitments as we are still yet to hear whether the CLP has real plans for roads or infrastructure investments to support Territorians.

Every Territorian deserves high-quality and safe health services. Like all systems around the world, our health services are facing enormous demand. This is further complicated by rising costs, staff shortages and changing demographics.

I acknowledge NT's Health's greatest asset: its workforce. More than 7,200 staff operate across five regions, six hospitals, 74 health clinics and seven corporate offices, providing a full spectrum of essential patient-centred health services.

One of the abiding legacies of the Territory Labor government was our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and protecting Territorians during this time. The pandemic tested us in many ways. It tested our health systems and our incredible health workforce who did a remarkable job keeping Territorians safe during these years. Many people across the Daly were concerned about the risk of COVID and they were grateful for the government's clear plans to keep the community safe with strong lockdowns, border and quarantine

measures, but also the effective vaccine rollout that allowed us to open back up to the rest of the world. Again, NT health workers have our endless praise and gratitude.

Territory Labor can be proud of its record in health. Our legacy in government includes:

- the delivery of Palmerston Regional Hospital
- joint delivery of the PET scanner at Royal Darwin Hospital with the Commonwealth Government
- joint expansion of the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre, with an additional 12 chairs and expanded treatment services, with the Commonwealth Government
- delivery of CT scanners in the Gove and Katherine hospitals
- the expansion of renal units in Darwin, Alice Springs and remote communities
- progression of major fire safety system upgrades at Gove District Hospital
- investment in bush clinics.

Territory Labor also made pathways towards more community control and local decision-making for health services. We know that this leads to better health outcomes. Since 2016 we have seen the transition of government health services to community control, including to Miwatj in East Arnhem Land, Red Lily and Malal'a health services in West Arnhem and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. We hope that the CLP continues to build on our efforts to recognise and enable Aboriginal leadership and local decision-making processes, partnering with Aboriginal people to achieve cultural security in the health system.

The CLP has committed to splitting the delivery of health services in the Top End and Central Australia with little detail or costings. As the shadow minister for Health, I understand that partnerships are critical to overcoming the complex challenges that face NT Health. The Territory Labor team and I will continue to work with individuals, families, communities, stakeholder groups and Aboriginal health organisations to ensure that all Territorians can access the high-quality health services they deserve.

On this side of the Assembly we understand the important role that art and culture play in the Territory, enriching our lives and bringing the Territory's many unique stories to life. We are privileged to have a world-class history of art and culture, placing us on the national and international map. As a Territory Labor government we supported, developed and promoted our arts, culture and creative sector across the Territory and beyond.

Our notable achievements included investing up to $80m annually into arts, culture and creative industries, and delivering the Northern Territory art gallery as part of the redevelopment of the Civic and State Square Precinct, which is due to be reopened in 2025. The Territory Labor government also invested $30m through the Arts Trail Gallery Extension Program to support upgrades and gallery extensions in regional and remote locations, including the art and culture centre in Tennant Creek, the Mimi Aboriginal Art & Craft gallery, the Injalak Arts centre, the Mulka centre, the Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts centre and Maningrida art and culture across Arnhem Land.

By empowering artists, nurturing emerging talent and supporting community projects, we contribute to a dynamic and thriving arts sector that plays a pivotal role in the economic and cultural development of the Territory. I look forward to and hope that the CLP government continues these great Territory Labor investments, initiatives and strategies in the arts sector, but it has not provided any detail on how it will support the Territory arts sector—not one.

The Territory is home to beautiful, natural and largely untouched parks and reserves, which are the biggest drawcard for visitors and locals alike. It would be hard to imagine the Territory without the wonder and beauty of our parks and reserves. Territory Labor understands that these valuable assets need to be managed in a way that opens them up for public access and protects their biodiversity, natural features, spiritual and cultural significance and sacred values. That is why the Territory Labor government introduced the NT Parks Masterplan in 2023. This crafted an important strategic framework that establishes and prioritises how our parks and reserves will be cared for, developed and protected over the long term.

Our park rangers have a long and trusted relationship with traditional owners on jointly managed parks. Along with this, Aboriginal ranger groups are a crucial frontline service across the Territory. This is why the Territory

Labor government delivered the highly successful Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program which, over the past seven years, delivered $10m of capital grants to 46 ranger and Aboriginal land management organisation groups and almost $11m to 31 groups to fund land and sea management programs.

Parks and reserves are valued. They are not only a key part of our lifestyle but our biggest tourist attraction. I look forward to working with stakeholder groups to ensure that we are providing the great outdoor lifestyle to Territorians; showcasing the best of the NT and offering relevant services and activities to visitors; providing spaces and offerings for tourism and private development; and ensuring all decisions are managed in a culturally respectful way with traditional owner consent and approval.

Recreational fishing plays a significant role in the Northern Territory economy and community. The economic and social value of recreational fishing is one of the great drivers for locals and tourists alike. Since 2017 the Territory Labor government has spent $31m to enhance recreational fishing, investing in new infrastructure and improving opportunities for recreational fishing across the Territory. The CLP followed Territory Labor by committing to the banning of commercial gillnets for barramundi fishing. I look forward to constructively advocating and highlighting the positions and interests of recreational fishers and stakeholder groups across the Territory.

I stand here today because of so many people who have put their faith and trust in me. There are too many to acknowledge, but I will thank a few.

To my mother, thank you for always encouraging me to keep my head up when things get tough.

To my partner, Nikki, thank you for all your support, taking my calls and giving me sound advice at times when mine was blurred.

Thank you to my brother Birrigan for always making me laugh and ensuring that everyone who volunteered with us on the campaign felt welcomed and supported.

To my electorate office staff, Kirsty, Joao and Jill, thank you for all the hard work you do day-in and day-out. It keeps our office going and I cannot thank you enough.

Of course, thank you to all my constituents who voted for me or did not vote for me—it does not matter; I am here to represent you all.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, today I have great pride and a deep sense of responsibility to respond to the comments of the Administrator and reaffirm my commitment to the people of the Northern Territory.

It is a privilege to stand here as the Deputy Chief Minister and pledge my unwavering loyalty and support to Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro. Together we will forge a government based on strong, decisive leadership that will deliver for our Cabinet colleagues, the parliamentary wing and every Territorian.

After years of uncertainty, excuses and lack of leadership under the Labor government, the time has come to restore faith to Territorians. We will provide the stability and certainty the Territory deserves, allowing us to deliver strong and effective government where decisions are made in the best interests of all Territorians on safety, rebuilding our economy and restoring our lifestyle.

On a personal note, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the people of Nelson, from Marlow Lagoon to Robertson Barracks and the five-acre blocks at Howard Springs and Humpty Doo, it is a privilege to serve such a diverse and wonderful part of the Northern Territory. I thank you for your confidence and support. I will continue to fight for your interests in this government.

For the first time in decades the electorate of Nelson now has a voice in the government of the day. I will not let you down. Together with the rural electorates of Goyder and Nelson, we are now united under the Country Liberal banner. We have a mandate to change and together with the Member for Goyder, Andrew Mackay, we will carry forward the legacy of Barry Coulter, Chris Lugg and Terry McCarthy who laid the foundation for vital schools, roads and infrastructure in our region. We will deliver for the rural area again.

To my family—my wife, Sharon; my children, Lara, Lily, Sharia, Daniel; and Riley, Freda and Sage—thank you for your support throughout this journey. Only they know the time we spend away from our family and away from events, so again, thank you.

I acknowledge my parents, John and Betty Maley, who instilled in me a sense of community and service. They were here today supporting me, thank you. My father's leadership in the Litchfield shire and my mother's endless support have shaped who I am today. I hope to carry their legacy forward.

I thank my brother and his family for their support, as well as the extended Maley family and the Piening family. As my Aunty Kathy always says, family is everything and girls rule.

I also thank the CLP, which put its trust in me. There are many people in the CLP I want to thank. To the Wishart branch and all our members across the Northern Territory, whether they are in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek or Alice Springs, thank you for the support. We look forward to supporting you as we move forward in this new term of government.

I acknowledge my campaign team, especially Tory Mencshelyi for her wisdom and steadfastness over the years, and my electorate team, Jess, Emma, Melissa and Sam. Without them, the electoral success would not have been possible.

I thank Kris Civitarese and the new Member for Goyder; the three of us worked as a team. Unfortunately Kris did not get over the line, but he really showed his true colours. He is a true friend, and he is in the gallery; thank you. Mel, I have some advice for you: you will not see him much anymore, but he will be there for you. Give him some room; he is a good bloke.

The CLP marked a victory that not only ended the disastrous Labor government but also marked a beginning and a new era for all Territorians. Our focus as a government is clear: we will create an environment where private enterprise can thrive and where economic potential and development for the Northern Territory can be fully realised.

Growing industries like mining, gas, agriculture, tourism and Defence will enable us to invest in vital services such as healthcare, education and infrastructure. Every teacher, nurse, police officer and public servant in the Territory will be able to do their job because of the revenue raised by these industries.

As the new Minister for Mining and Energy; Agriculture and Fisheries; Corrections; Renewables; and, of course, Recreational Fishing, I commit to cutting red tape and opening up opportunities for development and growth. We will unlock the full potential of our resources sector. Unlike the Labor government of the past, we will not obstruct progress. Where there are roadblocks, we will clear them. My department will be one of action: getting mines open and getting Territorians working. We will generate the revenue we need to build a better future.

This election result was a victory for not just the CLP but all Territorians who demanded change. The people have spoken and they have asked for a government that will act, listen and deliver. The Finocchiaro-led CLP government has a clear plan and the drive to execute it. We are ready to bring about the structural change that the Territory needs and wants, and we will do so with urgency. In 48 months Territorians will not judge us on our promises; they will judge us on what we have delivered.

We stand here today with the community begging us to address one of the most fundamental needs of our society, community safety. Safe communities are the foundation upon which all other aspects of life are built. Without it, nothing works. This government recognises that the safety and security of Territorians is our first priority, and we have already taken bold steps to make the Territory a safer place.

As the new Corrections minister, I will take the mess left by Labor and reform our Corrections system to ensure it protects the public, delivers real rehabilitation and reduces offending. People who threaten our community will be held to account and given the tools they need to change their lives and make them better people.

In addition to making the Territory safe and driving economic growth, we are committed to preserving our unique lifestyle that makes the Territory such a special place. I am proud to have already taken steps to expand recreational goose hunting areas, a decision that only took four weeks compared with the years of inaction under the previous government. This is only one small example of how quickly we will act to give Territorians the freedom and the opportunities they deserve.

Over the past six weeks I have had the privilege of receiving many briefings from public servants. I have been impressed by their willingness to embrace the change that we are bringing to government. I express my gratitude to the public servants across the NT for the way they have acted and their dedication moving forward. I say to all public servants: you are not here to tread water anymore; we are moving forward together,

and the CLP will have your back. Your hard work will be lasting and will have an impact on the lives of Territorians.

As we reflect upon this peaceful transition of power, I am grateful to live in a democracy where change can happen through the will of the people. In many parts of the world people are fighting for the very freedoms we often take for granted. We are lucky to live in a place where leadership is determined by ballots, not bullets. It is our duty to honour that responsibility by delivering to the people who elected us.

Congratulations to all my new CLP colleagues and the people they represent. The speeches I heard today show that the passion and the drive is there, and we will deliver for Territorians. Together we have been entrusted with a strong mandate and we will not waste it. John Howard said, 'Leadership is not about making excuses; it is about taking responsibility.' That is what we intend to do. Under the leadership of our new Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro, we will govern with integrity, purpose and a clear vision for a better Northern Territory.

I am full of optimism and hope for the future. The road ahead will not always be easy, but with the civility and strong leadership that this government has and by working with all Territorians, together we will build a stronger, safer place and restore our lifestyle.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I thank my electorate of Mulka and all those people who have supported me from when I first walked into the parliament in 2016 and at the last two elections.

There were many Yolngu leaders who stood by me. Unfortunately some have passed away, but many more are still standing strong and fighting for our rights—for self-determination and for treaty.

There are many balanda and Yolngu people across the community whom I thank for their support over the last eight years.

My electorate covers Yolngu country. There are many people, Yolngu and balanda, who call it home and everyone is welcome. It is not empty country; it is not boundless possible. If you put on your Yolngu glasses it is like Sydney, Melbourne or even New York City. I want everyone who comes onto our country or other Aboriginal land to put on these glasses and look at what is going on through our eyes.

There are many young people who I hear from, now saying, 'I want to be a politician when I grow up'.

I walked in eight years ago to say that something is wrong and to get attention from the government and help to fix the problems we were seeing. Before that when I was a senior lecturer at CDU, I wanted to teach balanda about the breadth and depth of Yolngu *rom*, our law, language and culture and how our law is still operating today and we still live by it. I was trying to educate balanda to understand our way of life and to understand that we are sovereign people, and our systems and institutions that sustain us must be acknowledged and accepted by the balanda system. Our culture, our law, is equal to balanda law. This understanding is crucial if we want to close the gap.

I want to explain a story. You saw me walk with a dillybag, a *dhulmu-mulka bathi*. That holds the law of the land. It proves that we are a people of law on the land. I come in here to work with people on balanda law and to close the gap so that we can understand each other and work towards a bright future for our children, by clearing things up so that we all understand and respect one another.

Balanda *rom* and Yolngu *rom*—when we talk about balanda, it is a saying; it is language that came a long time ago for, like, a Hollander. Now, anyone from across the world who comes in and is a non-Indigenous person, we call balanda in our language. I say that in case people are wondering what that means.

Our culture and law is equal to balanda law. This understanding is crucial if we would like to close the gap. I taught people in Japan, Germany and the United States. I wanted to educate people about Yolngu *rom*, culture and law—online, by Skype, from country here—so that we could create two-ways solutions to fix some of the problems we were seeing.

In 2007 when the Northern Territory emergency response was rolled out, I was in Milingimbi and I saw the Army and the police coming in. We were all asking, 'What is that? What's going on now?' I stood beside the community and helped to interpret what people were saying. I realised that these balanda had just come in to take power away from our community, and we became even more disempowered.

I realised that I needed to take the fight to a higher level. I thought that this Chamber could be somewhere I could make change for my people. When I first walked in I felt like no-one listened to me. The government in power was just ignoring community voices and my voice. It did many things that I did not agree with, but I felt by the end that some things happening were good—Community Courts, law and justice groups and talk about *raypirri* camps. I want to see these things continue, but I am worried about what this government might do.

In 2016 when I first walked in the CLP had only two members, Lia and Gary. They were kind to me, even if I did not agree with them on everything. In the last Assembly this kindness continued. I hope as an Assembly that we can continue that kindness and work together and listen to elders, leaders and communities.

This morning in the Chamber I sung some *manikay* with clapsticks about *wangupini*—the drifting clouds and how they form and come together from different areas to join to become one cloud. That is one of the songlines we sing about drifting clouds. Different clan groups and different people can come together and sing about the clouds. That is why I sang this song.

The clouds that come together from all directions across the sky join and become one big cloud. That is how we should be working, with many different people coming into this Chamber to work together, listen and come to agreement, not to say, 'We know what is best for you'. That is what I want for this 15th Assembly. I wanted to share that about working together.

I would like to be with the government and the opposition, no matter who they are. I want to point out that we have issues out there, and I have been elected to stand in here as a voice for my people. Governments over the past few years said that it was all right because there were Indigenous organisations they could work with. When you go to the community the people say, 'No, we voted for our member to represent us and be a voice for us in the Chamber. That is where he is; you speak to him. He has a message for you on how we should live and work together in harmony so that we can make a better pathway for our future and live together in harmony, hopefully keeping down the crime and with funding and resourcing and stuff. We would like to live together.'

There is a feeling because of what has happened with crime here for the past few years. I am sorry but I have to say this: in some areas—in some companies, venues and shops—this is starting to feel like a racist community when it used to be a friendly community where we used to live together. I want to see something like how we used to live before when we worked together.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. I congratulate all the new members in the Chamber for the 15th Assembly of the Northern Territory parliament.

I thank profusely the people in my electorate of Namatjira for their support and their faith in me to come back to this place after four years and represent them.

I also thank the people of the Northern Territory, because they have said loudly that they want change. They were not happy with what took place over the last eight years, and it is clear from the outcome of the election that they wanted to see change and that has happened. Now it is up to us, the CLP government, to deliver on our promises and change for the people of the Northern Territory.

It is an honour and privilege to stand as a minister representing the community. I am very much aware of the responsibility and trust placed in me by virtue of that position in the portfolios of Treasury, Logistics and Infrastructure, and—one that is a bit closer to my heart, representing a part bush electorate—Housing Construction. It will ensure that we as a government are delivering for people in the bush.

We heard the people, and we have come to power with the mandate of addressing law and order, the economy and our Territory lifestyle. A strong economy needs strong law and order.

Under Territory Labor, the Territory's reputation took a beating. Sadly, the entire nation and some parts of the world saw it on their TV screens, and the Territory is still paying the price for that. Labor let the Territory's image tank. That affects where people choose to live, invest and retire.

There is no better example of that than what happened in my community of Alice Springs in the last half of 2022, when Labor pulled the Stronger Futures laws and did not put anything in its place to deal with that. I said it in the previous parliament and I will say it again: I will not forgive Territory Labor for what it did to our community.

We are not just talking about fixing it; we are making the changes and already doing the work to fix it. We are sending a clear message to Australia and the world that the Territory is open for business and investment. The Territory is open for families to come here to live, put down roots and call this home. We heard in many of today's maiden speeches about people coming to the Territory from somewhere else and making this place home. We want other people from all over the country to do the same.

Labor let safety slide. People did not feel safe in their own homes or going about their day-to-day lives. We are bringing that back. We want people to feel safe, and we are delivering. That has already started in the first seven weeks of the Finocchiaro CLP government. We have seen more active policing on our streets. Legislative changes will be brought before this House to keep the people of the Territory safe. Labor sat on its hands, but we are rolling up our sleeves and getting the Territory back on track.

As the Member for Fong Lim said, a strong economy needs a skilled workforce and population growth. We are working to deliver that with our HomeGrown and FreshStart housing grants. We promised to make the Territory the best place to live and raise a family. We will keep that promise and deliver on it.

Our HomeGrown Territory Grant is the most generous in the nation, with $50,000 for first homebuyers building new houses and $10,000 for people who want to buy an established house. With the FreshStart New Home Grant, we are giving non-first homebuyers $30,000 to build new, with no price caps or restrictions—just real support. These are ways to get people to come to the Territory, build, invest, put down roots and grow their families here.

We are not just building houses; we are building communities. We are keeping skilled workers like nurses and teachers in the Territory. Labor ignored the housing crisis, but we are tackling it head on by stimulating construction and bringing more homes into the marketplace. Although Labor let the crisis grow, we are delivering solutions to boost our population and secure the Territory's future.

A strong economy needs business-friendly policies. We are delivering that through our payroll tax reform. We all know that there is a cost-of-living crisis in the Territory, but small businesses are also being crushed by the cost to do business. For 13 years Labor let payroll tax thresholds stagnate, pushing more businesses over the limit and forcing them to pay tax just for growing their business. Hardworking locals were paying payroll tax for the first time, while Labor pocketed the extra cash and used it on pet projects.

We are raising the payroll tax-free threshold to $2.5m, the highest in the country, saving businesses up to $55,000 a year and stimulating that much-needed business growth for the Northern Territory. Apprentice and trainee wages will be exempt from payroll tax, encouraging more businesses to train more Territory talent and keep that talent here in the Territory. We need to grow our own. This will help small businesses invest in their success, and more investment means more jobs and more innovation for the Northern Territory.

Over the past few weeks it has been good to speak to our federal counterparts, and they understand the importance of the Northern Territory. Recently I spoke with the federal Treasurer, Mr Jim Chalmers, who understands the importance of the Territory into the future in not just Defence but also the resource sector. The federal Treasurer has committed to supporting the Beetaloo and Middle Arm projects.

The Infrastructure minister also understands the importance of those projects and our national road network. We need to get these projects off the ground to help the economy and ensure the Territory's future and the move towards our sustainable power delivery. Gas plays a part in that transition.

I listened to the piece put forward by the Opposition Leader. I am not sure what universe Labor is living in regarding the budget, but it is certainly not the universe that the rest of us are living in. I have seen the books, and I will have more to say on that in due course. Sadly, it seems that under every rock we turn over, there is another Labor disaster. Bungles and cover-ups were kept well hidden from the public but, rest assured, we will reveal all the ugly problems and landmines the Labor government left behind when it was just kicking the can down the road.

The budget is in structural deficit, with public sector debt set to hit $12.5bn by 2027–28. That is five times worse than it was in 2016–17. It is a ticking bomb. The level of debt that Labor was on track to reach is unsustainable. It threatens our ability to raise funds and risks skyrocketing interest rates. This is all thanks to Labor's reckless fiscal mismanagement. Every dollar of debt that Labor has saddled us with is a dollar that should have gone to the frontline services that Territorians rely on—our nurses, hospitals, teachers, schools and police. We need urgent fiscal reform to stop this debt spiral and get the budget back into balance.

We will keep all our election promises and we will fix Labor's mess. We will protect jobs and ensure a prosperous future for the Territory. We have a plan and are working towards that plan.

By restoring confidence in our finances, we will attract private investment, create more jobs and finally get the Territory back on track, which Labor failed to do. We will play to our strengths in our resources, agricultural and pastoral sectors. They are no-brainers; these are things we can do.

We will introduce the position of the Territory Coordinator to fast-track projects to get them off the ground. Sadly, it was an all-too-common theme amongst business that if you got major project status from the previous Labor government it was like a death knell; your project generally did not go anywhere. We will turn that around and make the Territory the place to do business and grow business. It will be the place for families to live and grow.

I will work tirelessly in my pursuit of the growth of the Northern Territory for the people of Central Australia and the Namatjira electorate.

I sincerely thank the people from the departments I am working with. Their work in the four weeks since I was sworn in as a minister has been phenomenal. I work with great people in DLI and Treasury. It is heartwarming to walk into those departments. I have met just about everybody in those agencies; I have a few left to visit this Friday. You can see a spring in their step; they want to do things and look forward to the opportunity of a new government delivering on some of our promises.

What more can I say about Central Australia? The powerhouse is here up the front; two ministers and the Speaker are from Alice Springs, which is great to see.

I look forward to the future of the Northern Territory under a Finocchiaro-led CLP government. The world is our oyster. We will deliver on the promises we put forward and make the Territory the great place it once was.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, *Werte, Nyuntu playa, Ngurrju mayinpa, Jala la ngun yani*. I start my speech with the greeting words from the Gwoja electorate, the languages of my communities, my families, my friends—words that have been spoken since the first sun rose across these ancient lands. These languages are still with us today in the electorate of Gwoja. They are strong, resilient and powerful.

I acknowledge that we meet on the land of the mighty Larrakia. I pay my respects to their elders past and present and the emerging generations to come. I also acknowledge the nations from Gwoja—Arrernte, Western Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara, Pintupi–Luritja, Warlpiri, Gurindji, Mudburra, Bilinarra, Ngarinyman and the Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra lands surrounding the great electorate of Gwoja.

I am a man whose spirit has come from the bush, who has been brought up to respect my community and culture and raised to stand up and fight the injustices. I stand here as the re-elected Member for Gwoja, a role that I am honoured and humbled to continue. I will ensure each day that the good people of Gwoja are represented and heard.

The ininti seeds I wear around my neck have been made by my cousin as a reminder of where I come from and who I am. I can still smell the fresh smoke from the irons that have pierced through each ininti seed, carving a story of resilience of my people. I thank my cousin Kukula McDonald for this amazing gift she gave me.

Being the Member for Gwoja is a role that I take seriously and ensures that I will stand up and be the voice for thousands of Territorians who need to be heard. Gwoja is the second-largest electorate—Barkly is the largest—but Gwoja is big, diverse and beautiful. It is a place of love, hope, strength, culture and energy. Gwoja is a place where our ancestors are honoured and our culture is continued. It is a place where stars are born.

From Uluru, the heart of this nation, to the home of the land rights movements, we are Gwoja. Amanbidji, Areyonga, Daguragu, Haasts Bluff, Hermannsburg (Ntaria), Imanpa, Kalkarindji, Kaltukatjara, Kintore, Lajamanu, Laramba, Mount Liebig, Mutitjulu, Nyirripi, Papunya (Warumpi), Wallace Rockhole, Willowra, Yarralin, Yuelamu, Yuendumu, Timber Creek and Menngen and the surrounding homelands are communities of passionate, loving and resilient people. They are communities I will always stand up for and make sure they are heard and never forgotten.

I could not stand as the proud Member for Gwoja if it was not for the kindness, generosity and encouragement of many. I am strong, connected and here because of the hundreds of people who have guided, mentored

and supported me. Without the people of Gwoja and the wider Northern Territory who share my vision for our home I would not be here today.

I thank my constituents, my kinship family of grandparents, fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, cousins and children, who inspire and encourage me every day to be proud of who I am and where I come from.

I thank every person who came out during the election campaign and helped us. The roads were long and the nights dark, but the company was always warm and empowering. The flickering flames of the night-time fires and the stories, the legends and the laughs from our families were greatly appreciated and are forever enshrined into my memory. They are stories and memories that will be handed down and shared in hope of brightening days ahead.

Elections are always met with emotions and challenges, but with them they bring change. I acknowledge the changes that this election has delivered for the people of the Northern Territory.

I wish the CLP members well and congratulate them on their victory in forming the 15th government in the Northern Territory. I extend that acknowledgement and congratulations to all Members of the Legislative Assembly—to the Northern Territory Greens and our Independent family—who have joined us in this Chamber.

I acknowledge the former members of the 14th Assembly who are no longer with us in the Chamber. I thank them for their roles, passions and energy over the 14th Assembly as we deliberated, debated and worked through important reform.

The road ahead will be challenging, testing and met with a raft of emotions; like the Territory's roads, our journeys in this place will differ. For some, like the urban members, the roads will be smooth and short. For others, like the bush members, it may be long and corrugated. However, the destination should be the same—a better, stronger Territory for everyone. As this journey starts for some, I wish them well. For others like me, I say welcome back.

We continue to fight for the things we love and believe in. I believe in our remote communities and in the Territory Labor Party. Over the next four years my journey will be focused on representing the bush and what needs to be done to deliver fairness and equity for all Territorians, no matter where they live or the colour of their skin.

My political journey has been one of great honour and privilege. I have been the Member for Namatjira, the electorate named after Albert Namatjira, the first Aboriginal Australian to be awarded Australian citizenship. I have been and continue to be the Member for Gwoja, the electorate named after Tjungurrayi Gwoja, the first Aboriginal person to be featured on an Australian stamp. He is also the gentleman on the Australian $2 coin.

I have been the Deputy Speaker, the Speaker and the Chair of Committees. I went on to become a minister, the Attorney-General, the Leader of Government Business and a loyal Deputy Chief Minister to Eva Lawler. I have had enormous opportunities, and for that I say thank you.

These are opportunities that the Territory affords every person. I am thankful to call the Territory home.

Elections deliver change, and from that change we must learn. As we transition into opposition, I am mindful and respectful of the election result. I thank the many hundreds of public servants whom I have had the opportunity to work with over my time as the Speaker, as a minister and as the Attorney-General.

As I look over the last eight years that Labor was in government, I am reminded of many things. There are things that I have not been proud of or have apprehensively supported. There are other things that I am eternally proud and grateful for having had the opportunity to be a part of, because I know that many lives have been empowered, enriched and improved because of a number of our reforms.

I am proud to have delivered reform. I am proud to have been the Northern Territory Attorney-General who raised the age of criminal responsibility because it was the right thing to do. Children who cannot see above courtroom docks belong on country and not in courtrooms. I was proud to repeal mandatory sentencing because we know it was not deterring anyone and jailing is failing. I am proud to have returned discretion to the judiciary.

I am proud as an Aboriginal gay man to have led the Northern Territory's anti-discrimination reform to ensure that people are protected at every stage of their life, regardless of their colour, race, sexuality, occupation or

gender. I am proud to have delivered the Territory's anti-discrimination reforms so that Aboriginal people living in remote communities are not turned away from their school if it is a faith-based school or if they are an adult who wants to teach in that school.

I am proud of the reform to bring in law and justice groups and Community Courts in the Northern Territory.

Reforming the Northern Territory's domestic, family and sexual violence laws to ensure greater protections for women and children was an extremely proud moment for me. Domestic violence is real. It is a pandemic that is destroying lives, dividing communities and holding back a better and brighter future for all. We heard that this is something that everyone who has spoken today is passionate about.

This parliament has heard that another woman has joined the long list of women whose lives have been taken due to domestic violence. This woman was a constituent. She is my kinship family, and she has joined that list. When will it stop?

Needs-based funding is needed now. We cannot be told that the Commonwealth does not have the money or does not want to upset another jurisdiction. I will do whatever it takes. I will jump on a plane with the Chief Minister as an act of bipartisanship to call on the Commonwealth to fund us what we need to overcome this. I will push for this parliament to come together, whether we need to petition or do motions, or even remonstrance if I must. This is one of the biggest issues that is destroying the Northern Territory.

We owe it to our families, communities and children who in these instances lose a parent. We must continue to come together on this as a parliament to call it out. I mean every word, Chief Minister, when I say that I am heartened you have honoured the commitment for additional funding in the Northern Territory for the prevention of domestic and family violence. This is money that needs to go to the front line.

I acknowledge our amazing domestic and family violence sector in the Northern Territory, including the services of the women's shelters, such as WoSSCA in Alice Springs, Dawn House in Darwin and all the safe houses across the Northern Territory's remote and regional areas. The way we tackle domestic and family violence is as we have heard—by working together and funding the front line.

I am also proud that as a Housing minister working alongside Minister Uibo, now the Opposition Leader, we could deliver more houses in one year than any other government in the history of the Northern Territory. We sealed more roads than ever before. This is a timely reminder that housing is a social determinant of health, education and tackling and resolving the issues that we face in the Northern Territory.

These are some of the life-changing reforms that I was fortunate enough to have been involved in delivering. I thank the people, organisations, community groups and families who shared their stories and were involved in the important work of reforming these areas. There is still so much to do in this great Territory we call home. I will continue to work across communities and sectors to hear about their issues, concerns and ideas that drive real and meaningful change.

As I reflect on the 2024 election result I know that we parted ways with many people who had been with us for many years, people who might not have been able to bring themselves to vote for the CLP but equally did not feel empowered or able to vote for the great Australian Labor Party. For that, I am sorry. I am sorry that you felt you could not stay with us. I am sorry that we parted ways with you, but there is opportunity and growth. We will come back and work together.

The days, weeks and months following our defeat have been hazy, and as the dust settles we begin our work to refocus, regroup and rebuild. Territory Labor has been sent a clear message and we need to hear it and act on it. On those important issues like the environment, water and the economy, we have heard that we need to be stronger and do more. That is what we will do; we will do more.

Economic development is important, but so is our environment. There are no jobs on a dead planet, and time is running out to act and respond. Our Territory is home to some of the world's most sacred and spiritual places. It is home to breathtaking natural wonders that have flourished for thousands of years because our natural environment has been uninterrupted. We have been known and celebrated around the world for these natural treasures—nature's Territory. We must do all we can to preserve that for future generations.

Climate change is real. We are already seeing the impacts of a changing climate. All parties, even my own, must do more to fight climate change and transition to renewable green energy.

Most people know that I am a progressive person; I am not ashamed of that. This election has shown us that progressive politics is very much alive and well in the Northern Territory. If Territory Labor wants to stand a fighting chance in 2028 we must realign back to our position. We must learn from this election and let it be a guide to enable us to transform.

As the great Gough Whitlam once said, the Labor Party is the party of reform and without it we are nothing. For me, this quote is still true and relevant. Our party will always deliver or support reform when it improves, empowers and transforms the lives of many. As our work begins, so does our reform. With that in mind, I will always consider legislation or reform that is put before this Assembly. When we feel it improves conditions and helps lift up people, we will support it.

I may not be standing in this Chamber as a Territory minister, but I stand here as the fierce Member for Gwoja, a Member of the Legislative Assembly and the shadow minister for Corrections; Racing; Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Lands, Planning and Environment; Education and Training; Early Education; Public Service; Children and Families; Child Protection; Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence; and as the shadow Attorney-General. I look forward to continuing to connect with the community, stakeholders and my fellow parliamentarians to ensure that we hold this government to account on all its election commitments and promises.

I am a proud Territorian and I will never talk down the Territory. I will never talk down the bush. I will never talk down Central Australia. Central Australia, for those who have just joined the Legislative Assembly and not yet had the opportunity to get there, is a land of enchantment. It is a land of magic and opportunity. It is the land my family have called home for thousands of years.

I conclude my time by repeating words from my maiden speech in 2016:

> *It is a dream of mine that on my last day, during my last speech ever in this Chamber, I will be able to stand proud and talk about the positive difference I have made for the people of Namatjira …*

Now Gwoja:

> *… and the greater Territory. By then my wish will be simple and my job will be done. Until then, I remain committed to the people of … the Northern Territory …*

And to the people of the bush:

> *… to ensure the voices of all Territorians are recognised and heard, and treated with dignity and respect …*

I am honoured and happy to be the fierce Member for Gwoja, a passionate and vocal advocate for our remote communities and for progressive policy that takes the Territory forward. I will always remind this Chamber that my communities, electorate and constituents will always be strong, blak and deadly.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, my heartfelt congratulations go to you for becoming the Speaker. Not only have you served in this House the longest, but you are also of high character. I sat next to you in the last Assembly and can vouch for you on that.

It is a tribute to our new Chief Minister that she put in an Independent Speaker for the 15th Assembly. Not only that, I heard from the Leader of Government Business that the scrutiny committees will be coming back. This was something genuinely missing from the last parliament, as legislation was rammed through left, right and centre without having been taken to an election.

I thought it was courageous of the Chief Minister and the new CLP government that petitions will now have double the length of time for debate. I am sure you will remember, Madam Speaker, that we did not get to debate many petitions in the last Legislative Assembly. I think there were two or three in total. One, of course, was the petition of Samara Laverty, which we will talk about later this week.

The Labor Party has had a tough time over the last seven weeks since the election. It was pretty much wiped out in Darwin and Palmerston, but I give credit where credit is due. The Labor members have come into parliament—obviously there have been conversations between the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition—and agreed that things will be different in this Legislative Assembly.

The fact that we did not debate who would be the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker in our first sittings—as we did last time and several times after a change in the ministry—is a testament to you, Opposition Leader. I thank you for working together with the government. That is a real difference compared with the last sittings. To you and your team, I trust that this is the beginning of a respectful parliament and that we can have serious and robust conversations but be respectful to one another. I very much look forward to that.

What an emotional and heartwarming day it has been so far. I know we have not yet heard from everybody during the Address in Reply, but I am incredibly proud of every person I have heard today, especially our newest CLP MLAs and ministers. It took me back to the first moment I met all of you. I have had tears through a few speeches today—Oly Carlson, thanks; I had to go straight to the bathroom after yours. It took me back to the times we have had together that we shared throughout this journey.

I may get in trouble for this, but I will say their names. Jinson, Oly and Khoda, all those multicultural events that we went to every weekend, you were always there, up on stage supporting the groups that organised these amazing events. You taught me how to fall in love with these events; they are such fun with so much vibrancy. You were there every step of the way, and it was a joy to be there with you.

Not only that, but the doorknocking times with all of you was fantastic. I feel this connection because of those 'in the trenches' times we had. Clinton and Matt—of course Lia, our wonderful Chief Minister, is in this too—I remember those times standing at the Palmerston Markets for years on end.

Listening to you talk today about that journey—Matt, yours started in 1885; I thought we were in for a real treat, but you wrapped it up nicely—I must say that I am so proud of you, Matt; I really am. You tested me to no end sometimes, but I am very proud. I know the hard work you are already putting into Blain. You will turn around that community. The people there have had a rough time.

Clinton, it is the same with you. You unseated the Chief Minister. I knew from day one that you had it, but you excel in every way.

I am sure there is something that I could say about each of you, but I have probably just taken up too much time. I am sure that other people want to speak.

Thank you to the people in Brennan who re-elected me. I was first elected in 2020. I must say that you do not know what you do not know, so you put your all into it and go hell for leather to work hard to show the members of your community that you will be the best representative for them. You do that for a number of months leading up to an election for the first time. Many of my colleagues have been through that recently. When you start to represent them in parliament officially, they come to you and have this level of trust that you will be able to help them on their journey, whatever it might be. So many things happen in people's lives which they come to you to talk about. It has been a real honour to be the person who is there to just listen or take serious action or bring the things to parliament that matter to them.

I thank all those people who voted for me not only once but twice, plus all the new people who voted for me; obviously, I had a very good result. I hope that shows other people who are interested in representing the community that it is about putting front and centre in their minds that you are the one who can help them if they need it. I thank them. They trusted me and shared things with me that they probably have never shared with anyone. I have never broken that trust and spoken about someone to anyone else unless I have their permission.

My mum was here most of today. I think she waited until the last new member, Tanzil, spoke before she left. She was here from the start. She has been a rock for me. The last couple of years have been tricky.

Halfway through the last term my father passed away suddenly during sittings. I was having a debrief with the then Opposition Leader—she was not the Chief Minister then—to prepare for media I was about to do when I got the dreaded phone call that something bad happened. I raced out of here at a rate of knots. Thank goodness Lia said it was okay for me to go, of course. It did not end well; I was at the hospital to say goodbye. That is really tough on a member of parliament or anyone. Many of us have gone through these things.

I made him proud. He was here four years ago, bawling his eyes out as I gave my maiden speech. He was proud, and I was able to do that for him. I will remember that forever. Even though he is not with me now as I am a minister in a new government, I know he is looking down on me. I am glad my mum was there today.

I thank the volunteers who helped throughout the campaign, including those from the CLP Calder branch. They put in a mountain of work, and I am forever grateful. There were a few here this morning. They know

who they are, so I will not name them. I give a shout-out—not necessarily to name them—to the volunteers who came out of the woodwork over the last four years. We had lots of new volunteers help me and our new members in Palmerston. They campaigned and letterboxed for us. They were people I had met during the journey, so I felt like it was a testament to the work I put in.

The biggest lesson I learned from this campaign and the election result is that we were listening to Territorians for a long time, so we only ever spoke about what Territorians spoke to us about. Nothing else was going on in our minds; we would come to parliament and put forward motions to discuss things that were important to them. Unfortunately that was not happening on the government side of the Chamber, and those members ultimately lost.

During the election we heard loud and clear that Territorians' number one concern was community safety. That is why this week we will pass a heap of legislation which points to making our community safe and ensures offenders are held to account with consequences, and there is prevention. The commitment to rebuilding our economy is incredibly important. Crime fits in with that because if you cannot reduce crime, you cannot rebuild the economy. My colleague the Treasurer spoke about a lot of things we are working on in that space.

I will touch on some of our policies, even though they may not affect me directly in the ministry. I am proud that we brought back the portfolio of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, which is with Minister Cahill. That is huge. In my maiden speech I spoke about the Territory being the gateway to Asia, so I am proud that we now have that ministry. I was pushing that with our team to ensure it was a commitment to Territorians because it was raised with me at events with community members and business leaders.

In my maiden speech I also mentioned tourism. At the time I did not know I would be the Tourism minister, so it is uncanny that has happened. I am proud to be the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. I am excited that we will be talking about our military tourism plan and how we want to showcase Darwin as Australia's own battlefield. We will promote the products because we know people will come from all over the world to look at our military heritage.

Another exciting part of being the Tourism minister and the Minister for Major Events is that I released the million-dollar fish. The Million Dollar Fish initiative has been running for 10 seasons. It was a CLP initiative back in the day, long before I was in this Chamber. As of today, 10 tagged fish have been caught. They are all $10,000 fish, and the people who have caught them are very happy. The 10th one, which was announced today, was the one that I released at Dinah Beach, so it was pretty special to hear that. They are calling it the minister's million-dollar fish, which is pretty funny. I am proud of that because it was a CLP initiative. I thank the Labor government for all those years of continuing with it because it was a good policy. It is fantastic that it is continuing now.

I am proud of the fight we took to the election about payroll tax and reducing that burden on businesses. As a former business owner and the shadow minister for Business for all those years, I am proud of that one. It will make a huge difference in rebuilding our economy, and the Treasurer is looking to implement that as soon as possible. There are so many businesses out there that could grow their businesses if they had a bit of a break and could start to put on some apprentices and trainees. Even if only a handful of them grow, our Territory economy will be doing so much better. I am excited about that.

As a new minister I am going through all the things I need to understand about how ministries and the departments work. People are coming to talk to me from outside of government as well, all the stakeholders who are interested in the portfolios I look after. It will be a big job. A lot of problems have been created over a long time. I feel like everyone comes to me with problems and needing money, but it is difficult to work out exactly what to do. That is why we are looking at our priorities first.

I am proud of the priorities we are bringing forward to these first sittings with our law reforms. Even though it is hard and there is a lot of work to be done, we are steadfast in our commitment to what we took to the election, which was to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. As we heard from our Chief Minister, that started on day one after winning the election when she sat down with the Police Commissioner and immediately set a course of change for the Territory.

It is change that we needed. We took 'It is time for change' and 'It is time for courage' to the election, and it is now time. I am excited to be part of this government that is on this journey to change the Territory for the better. I am proud to be the Attorney-General and working with a team to reduce crime and look after our victims, which actually includes the children.

I heard the shadow Attorney-General say that all we want to do is lock up kids. That could not be further from the truth. There are reasons why we will make the minimum age of responsibility 10 years old. We need to intervene in these children's lives. Their lives are not better off after a long time; they are worse now than they ever have been. We cannot afford for our children not to be given the right to be cared for, be loved, be fed, have a safe place to live and go to school. We will do whatever it takes to make sure our children are safe, fed, loved and out of prison, because we want them to have a life beyond what is happening now and we want them to be our future.

I am proud to be part of a CLP government led by Lia Finocchiaro. She has been relentless in the pursuit of taking the Territory to new highs. It will take some time, and it will take hard work. I know that there is a lot to be done, but we are so optimistic about the future. With this team of incredible Territorians around me I am full of hope and optimism. My community in Brennan is full of hope and optimism. To be honest, everywhere I go it is the same. I was in your home town of Alice Springs over the weekend, Madam Speaker, and there are still lots of challenges there. I am still hearing about that, of course, but the one message I got was that there is hope and optimism.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional owners of the Darwin region, the Larrakia people.

With great pride I speak at the opening of the 15th Legislative Assembly as the re-elected Member for Arafura. I thank the people of Arafura for putting their faith in me again. Although I will not be in government in this time but in opposition, do not be disheartened; I will fight every day to ensure that our mob gets a good deal.

I congratulate all members on their election victory, both the re-elected members and the new members. I look forward to working with you, and I want you to know that my door is open if you need any advice on my region or any community issues.

Obviously many promises were made during the election. Our intention as the opposition is to be positive and constructive, but also hold the government to those promises. That is what Territorians expect.

I acknowledge those members who are not returning to this Assembly, whether by retirement or the electorate choosing another representative. I wish them all well.

When I put up my hand it was unexpected. I took the place of Mr Lawrence Costa. A few weeks before he passed away, I had a chat to him about the 2024 election. I asked, 'Uncle, will you run?' He said that he would let me know. Unexpectedly, I came in 18 months ago. He said that it was a privilege and a great responsibility to represent the people. He had a different technique. He said that engagement was not done in offices and at boardroom meetings; engagement in the bush would be under a tree sharing bush tucker. That is probably a bit like a sausage sizzle in the suburbs of Darwin. Every day I strive to finish the journey started by Uncle Costa and deliver for my communities.

Before I discuss my shadow portfolios, I will go through some of the things that Labor achieved in my region. We take pride in the huge investment to make our lives in the remote regions much better and much easier. One of those is Paru Road in the Tiwi Islands.

There was the Pirlangimpi Renal Ready Room. The renal services issue is a big one because one person with a renal issue tends to bring a whole tribe into the community. We will talk about that later.

We gave funding to Jirnani creche, Tiwi rangers and Tarntipi Homelands, which has a family-based program about mental health and wellbeing, taking kids out camping and stuff. It is a good initiative.

There was funding for Bima Wear, which employs more than 20 Indigenous women who put their designs on dresses. It is a beautiful place; you must go there if you visit Wurrumiyanga.

In my home of Maningrida we funded a wheelchair lift for those who find it hard to get on planes at the airport. There has been funding to Djelk rangers and BAC—Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation.

The other main thing that we did was transition from NTG Health to community-controlled health providers, where the decision is back with the community, which is the best mob to know how to deal with their people. We saw the expansion of the NDIS program, which is a federal government initiative.

We secured $1m Arts Trail Gallery Extension Program funding for Injalak Arts in Gunbalanya. There was investment in the Jabiru oval, the Adjumarllarl rangers and the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation.

We invested in solar energy in remote communities and expanded phone coverage for Cahills Crossing. I do not know whether you have watched YouTube recently, but Cahills Crossing has become a hotspot for silly drivers.

We expanded the Families as First Teachers program. A new clinic at Jabiru opened in September, and we are proud of that.

There is still work to do. I call on the new government to continue this investment in the bush because the truth is that if we were to improve conditions for people in the bush, they would not end up in towns in public housing and in the long grass, and you would not be stepping over them on the pathway. They would be back home and comfortable in their houses.

Projects like the Maningrida cyclone shelter and the new health clinic and morgue are examples of good investments that we have made.

I call on the new government to deliver and look at these remote communities. We believe that when people are uncomfortable in their home town they tend to spread into the major urban centres. When they get in trouble with the police, the issue is already too far gone. If you keep building the houses, fixing the roads and improving the services, they will stay in their communities.

I return to the Chamber today as a shadow minister, and I will now discuss some of my portfolios. I am proud of the previous government's record in Agriculture and Fisheries; we supported industry and helped it to grow. We delivered land and funding for agriculture development, including the Berrimah Farm.

In the Fisheries portfolio we supported sustainable fish farming and the Aboriginal Sea Company, which is an Indigenous organisation trying to create business with traditional owners out on their country. We committed to phasing out gillnets which will preserve the NT barra fisheries for fishos, which means more fish for everyday fishermen and community mob.

As shadow minister for Water Resources, I am enormously proud of our legacy regarding water. As an Aboriginal Territorian it is important, both economically and traditionally, for those living remotely. Yes, we need development, but we also need to care for our beautiful country. Water is vital for tourism and agriculture and has a deep meaning for Indigenous tribes across the Top End.

The Labor government introduced checks and balances for water allocations. In 2016 we inherited a system from the Giles government which saw licences being handed over to mates without scientific or environmental approvals. We took action to protect the environment and water and took measures that balanced the environment. These changes provided a robust and transparent set of rules. We will watch carefully to ensure that there is no watering down of that or a return to the good old days.

I am also proud of the investments that went into making drinking water available to the people living in remote areas. Communities like the one I live in have a huge problem with underground pipes that leak and waste water. That has now been federally funded and we hope to have clearer water.

I look to the current government which has made some commitments in this space and call on it to continue with those. The CLP said that it will prioritise water infrastructure. I hope it does because without water, we cannot live. The investment must continue.

I am immensely proud of the strides we made in government to bolster housing construction. We took over the reins of a system that had managed to build only two houses in the bush. From this starting point, Labor built a remote housing program that enhanced living conditions and increased housing stock. From 2016 to 2024 the Labor government worked with Canberra to deliver a $2.1bn remote housing investment package, which saw, as of July this year, 1,440 new homes built. Not only that, with the help of federal Labor we locked in a further $4bn over the next 10 years for remote housing, which will build 270 houses per year. The Member for Barkly has been a big supporter and hopefully houses are being built in his region as well.

Our Labor government also invested in homelands—not communities but outstations. Our homelands program delivered $100m federal government funding for housing essential infrastructure. Additionally, we fought for and received a further three years funding for homelands of $40m per annum from the NT Government and $40m from the Australian Government for repairs and maintenance. As the opposition, we will fight to ensure that these agreements are honoured.

I will touch on major events. The last government grew music and major events, moving BASSINTHEGRASS to a larger venue and transforming it into an international festival. Under our watch we also saw events like the Laksa and Street Art Festivals grow from small Darwin-based events to Territory-wide phenomena. The new government has not said much about it, but hopefully it will continue that. We will be watching.

I am deeply honoured to be appointed the shadow minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The previous government will be remembered particularly for its commitment to the Aboriginal Affairs space. I am happy that the Member for Barkly is the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, being from a remote region.

Local decision-making agreements empower local communities and transfer decisions about services to the local level. In government, we signed 27 LDMs and developed nine long-term LDMs. An example is in Maningrida where the LDM created a cultural group called Nja-marleya. All the members of Nja-marleya have had training in the courts. They will be sitting in when kids get in trouble and have a cultural say with the judge. Given the lack of Aboriginal Affairs policy announced by the CLP, the communities and organisations which signed these agreements need clarity. I will be watching.

Another area of interest for me is the future of the First Circles program. Under the Labor government, this program saw the significant growth of Indigenous leaders in our communities who went on to work in government agencies, with more graduates each year. I am eager to hear from the government about what will happen with that.

As shadow minister for Workforce Development, I will talk about our work in government to improve the workforce. I am proud of our record in skills development training. In government we signed the five-year National Skills Agreement between the Territory and Commonwealth, which put an extra $9.4m into skills training for Territorians.

We also worked with Canberra on the General Skilled Migration allocation for 2024–25, resulting in an increase of 950 nominations from last year.

The Labor government implemented the Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement. The initiative supports fee-free TAFE placements for priority groups, including Aboriginal Territorians, young people, people out of work who are receiving support, unpaid carers, women facing economic insecurity, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, people with disability and certain categories of visa holders. As the opposition we continue to advocate for support and further integration of training programs.

I have seen firsthand in Maningrida how training pathways can set up young people for a better path in the workforce, so we must continue these programs to empower them and get them out of their comfort zone and into the workforce.

The last government had an excellent record of funding sports and cultural infrastructure, such as Richardson Park, which is a $25m rugby league stadium; $19.8m for a netball stadium; $10m for the motorsports facility; and $50m for recreational fishing infrastructure.

The new government has made small commitments in sport such as the $1m pledge to install lights at Norbuilt Oval; $500,000 per year for Aboriginal female participation in cricket; and the Alice Springs sporting complex.

I want to see a commitment to sport out bush. Growing up on the Tiwi Islands, I know how vital sport is for young people growing up. It gives them the opportunity to get out of their communities to see other towns and what the other communities are doing. I invite the government to look at how it will expand sports infrastructure in the bush.

Similarly, I am disappointed that the CLP scheme of universal access for free swimming lessons in all primary schools will not benefit remote kids. I want the CLP to take another look at this and see how it can make it easier for Aboriginal and remote students to access these lessons.

Seniors are at the heart of our communities, whether it is our elders in the bush or seniors who volunteer at our many charities. Seniors contribute to Territory life, and I am beyond excited to have a role in shouting their praise from opposition.

The opposition is concerned about the direction of the new government regarding women's policy. For the first time in a long time, we have not seen a minister for women as part of the NT Government Cabinet. I think this is a backwards step, and I hope it does not signal a change in what we, the opposition, understand is a unity ticket on things like closing the gender pay gap.

I will talk about our young people and the future of youth policy. Too often we hear young people in the Territory being talked down. Yes, there are problems, but nobody is born bad; what we do to foster the next generation and ensure they are on the right path makes an enormous difference in how things pan out for them. We support programs like the Youth Round Table, youth grants and, importantly, youth hubs.

I point to the previous government's investment in youth hubs as an example, with youth hubs across the Territory, in Alice Springs, Palmerston and Tennant Creek. Youth hubs provide safe places for young people to hang out and are a key tool in keeping kids off the streets and engaged.

The MLAs from Palmerston know about the Palmerston youth centre's fantastic work. It was an initiative under the previous government and the YMCA is funded $1.4m annually until 2025.

Colleagues, you would agree that no place in the Territory needs a youth centre facility more than Alice Springs. As a government we fought for young people in Alice Springs to access youth services. Alice Springs MLAs know that The Gap Youth & Community Centre and the Brown Street youth drop-in centre have good programs for keeping kids off the street, but obviously we need more.

The Member for Barkly, now a minister, will tell you how valuable the Tennant Creek-based youth links drop-in centre is for young people.

I hope that the new government sees the importance of funding these programs and continues the work established under the last government.

The opposition is concerned about the Darwin northern suburbs youth hub in Casuarina that is under threat. The hub is jointly funded by the Northern Territory and Australian Governments and will be set up next year. It will fulfil a similar role to the other youth hubs, providing a range of programs, activities and support services.

Its positioning near the Casuarina shopping centre on the former fire station site is close to public transport. Importantly, it will offer safer transport home. The youth community hub will help create a safer community by keeping young people off the streets and offering a supervised environment. More than 457 stakeholders, including 220 young people, 40 service providers and 67 community members were consulted in deciding this location. The Member for Brennan came into this place with a petition calling for the youth hub to be moved. Hopefully, she will reconsider that, as the location is central.

The next four years will be exciting and challenging. I give a shout-out to Ms Ebony Costa, who was my campaign manager. She worked hard for me on my campaign and travelled for long hours. Thank you for being there.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be part of the 15th Assembly. I congratulate all 17 of our CLP colleagues for being elected. They all did an incredible job to be here today. Thank you for all the work you have done.

Madam Speaker, congratulations on becoming the Speaker of the 15th Assembly; it is great to see you in the Chair. All your experience and hard work over a number of years have put you in that Chair. Thank you for everything you have done.

I thank all Territorians. We have 17 seats across the Northern Territory, and it is Territorians who have put us there. I thank everyone across the Northern Territory for putting their faith in a CLP government to move the Territory forward.

It is important to me that the CLP team has the real-world and government experience to rebuild the Territory. We have the team that will make the immediate changes to tackle crime, and that will commence tomorrow. We will restore transparency and integrity to government and put a stop to Labor's wasteful spending and unnecessary projects. We will bring back accountability to ensure that taxpayers' funds are spent on priority projects, not shadeless structures in Cavenagh Street but projects that will make a difference to the Northern Territory. Departments, programs and organisations receiving government money will be held accountable for what they spend and for delivering outcomes.

Territorians have sent a clear message to the CLP, and we have listened. We are ready to move forward. Our plan is about reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. I will come back to that later.

Barkly is the biggest electorate in the Northern Territory, from the Stuart Highway at Larrimah down to Aileron and out to the border of Queensland. It has Borroloola, Robinson River, Corella Creek, Elliott, Alpurrurulam, Canteen Creek and Epenarra. Tennant Creek is in the centre and it is the main service centre of the Barkly where 3,000 people live. It has Ampilatwatja, Murray Downs, Ali Curung and Ti Tree. There is a number of outstations in the electorate as well.

I thank all the constituents in the Barkly for putting their faith in me and returning me to this parliament for a second term. Winning the election was not an easy task. Winning elections requires hard work, commitment and a team effort. I thank the team that was out there helping me on the booths during the campaign, handing out how-to-vote cards, doing the long-distance travel and getting out and talking to people on the ground about what the CLP has to offer Territorians.

I will not name the campaign volunteers individually. They were in Borroloola and Tennant Creek and in teams out bush. I thank all those volunteers for the work they did to support me during the campaign.

Thank you to my wife, Nicci, and my three children who were out helping, Aimee, Sarah and Jacob. They spent many hours out bush travelling the electorate, doing the hard work, staying out overnight, travelling those disastrous unsealed roads that had been left behind by the out-of-touch Labor government.

I thank my electorate staff. Aimee has worked for four years in my electorate office. She is back in my office for another four years and I thank her for the work she has done. It is great to have her back.

To my liaison officers, thank you for all the work you have done. I make special mention of one liaison officer who sadly passed away nearly two years ago, Mr Ronald Plummer. There were many things he taught me. One thing that sticks in my mind was he said, 'Whenever you go out bush, always remember the three Ls.' I asked him what he meant by the three Ls. He said—this has stuck in my mind and I practise it every time I am out bush—'The three Ls: you have to be looking, listening and learning.' I use that approach everywhere I go in the Barkly.

In talking about my portfolios I will come back to looking, listening and learning. I am proud to be part of the Finocchiaro-led government and to have been given the portfolios of Health; Mental Health; Alcohol Policy; Aboriginal Affairs; Housing, Local Government and Community Development; and Essential Services.

In applying those three Ls—looking, listening and learning—I must say that talking to people in the departments, the CEOs and people in the non-government sector has been incredible so far. I have been to places in Darwin and Alice Springs and back in Tennant Creek. I have not been everywhere, I need to admit that, and I will not be able to get everywhere for some time.

There are some incredible people out there. So far I have learned that we have a committed workforce doing incredible work in the health sector, mental health, Aboriginal Affairs and across Housing, Local Government and Community Development. I thank them for the work they are doing at the coalface. I have been out with the public housing safety officers and spoken to them on the ground. I have met health staff and have been hearing and seeing the work they are doing on a daily basis. It is incredible. Thank you for your ongoing commitment in delivering and providing that service to Territorians every day of the week.

I will talk about election commitments. There are many things to deliver. Our election commitments in the health portfolio are that we want to stop the endless code yellows by relieving the pressure on hospital emergency departments; tackle alcohol-related harm that is increasingly arising in emergency wards with stronger laws and rehabilitation; and work with the federal government to increase aged-care facilities to help free up hospital beds, as this will improve wait times for Territorians' much-needed surgeries.

Just the other day we announced that the free meningococcal B vaccine for babies under two and for young people aged between 15 and 19 will commence on 1 January. I was proud to be with the Chief Minister announcing that commitment last week.

The CLP has committed $20m to deliver a new health clinic in Borroloola. We are proud to be delivering that, which Labor had eight long years to deliver. I can tell you that when it comes to delivering health services, we had endless code yellows and no health clinic delivered in the Barkly. This is why Labor is in opposition. The former government promised to build a BRADAAG facility in 2018 to focus on alcohol treatment, rehabilitation and education, but like the Borroloola health clinic, not one shovel has hit the ground. It has been failure after failure. The CLP government is in power because of Labor's ongoing failures to deliver.

Under our plan there will be expanded pharmacy services across the Territory. The NT Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice program will offer additional health services to patients for up to 21 conditions, including urinary tract infection, school sores, wound management and vaccines amongst others. This will be a game changer for patients, saving time and money. It will supplement, not replace, existing primary healthcare services, giving greater choice for patients to access the healthcare they need.

Our government is focused on delivering alcohol plans in communities. You only have to go back to the Riley report that the Labor government accepted in October 2017 to see what Labor failed to deliver. It accepted all the recommendations in that report, many of which focused on planning for the cessation of Stronger Futures on 16 July 2022.

Labor did not plan to do what it should have done, based on the Riley review, which was to consult with people across the Northern Territory, including people in the Alice Springs town camps, to develop alcohol management plans to prepare for the cessation of Stronger Futures. What did the former government do? Nothing. It let the legislation lapse, and all we saw was chaos and mayhem across the Northern Territory and in Alice Springs where women were being bashed, presentations to hospitals escalated and crime continued to rise. Crime continues to rise to this day because the Territory still has not recovered from that episode the Labor government delivered to Territorians.

The Prime Minister had to come to Alice Springs to instruct the Labor government to put back in place laws that would protect the women in Alice Springs and other Territorians from being bashed, robbed, having cars stolen and houses broken into. Fancy that! A Labor government waiting for its Prime Minister to come to Alice Springs to instruct it on how to run the Northern Territory. What a disgrace. As the Alcohol Policy minister, I will be looking at alcohol management plans across the Northern Territory.

I have spoken about BRADAAG. Our policy is to introduce mandatory rehabilitation. I already mentioned that in 2018 the then government, the opposition now, promised $5m to build a new rehabilitation facility in Tennant Creek, but not one shovel has hit the ground.

To top it off, in regard to my new portfolio of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, I heard opposition members saying how well they did in delivering houses when they were in government. Let me give you one example of where they did not deliver—Tennant Creek. They had the opportunity to deliver 51 houses over the last six years in Tennant Creek.

Under the Barkly Regional Deal an initiative was signed off by the Labor government on 13 April 2019 to deliver 20 social and affordable houses in Tennant Creek. They have not been delivered. In 2020 there was federal government money in place to deliver 12 new staff units for health staff in Tennant Creek, but not one shovel has hit the ground.

I talk about the failure to deliver the rehabilitation facility in Tennant Creek. When those opposite were in government, they told us in July 2018 that when they built that facility it would free up 19 public houses. Of course, not one shovel has hit the ground and the people of Tennant Creek have missed out on receiving those 19 homes, the 12 new units for staff and the 20 social and affordable houses that were promised under the Barkly Regional Deal. We have seen failure after failure.

Mr Maley: A 10-year waiting list.

Mr EDGINGTON: You are right, Member for Nelson; the public housing waitlist is eight to 10 years across the Northern Territory. We heard the opposition tell us what a great job it did with housing, but in Tennant Creek alone the Labor government failed to deliver 51 houses. These are the problems we are facing. The CLP government has been left with a mess by the former Labor government.

When it comes to looking, listening and learning, I will talk about what the people in the bush have been telling us for many years. We have been listening to Aboriginal Territorians who have been telling me that they want to have a voice, so the CLP government will give those people in the bush a voice. The CLP is committed to restoring control of communities to Aboriginal people, something that was taken away by the Labor government on 1 July 2008 …

Ms Uibo: As the Aboriginal Affairs minister, you should be embarrassed by your party's position on that.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, please stop interjecting.

Mr EDGINGTON: You can always tell when there are interjections because the Labor opposition does not like the truth.

On 1 July 2008 the Labor government of the day scrapped every community government council in the Northern Territory and amalgamated them into shire councils. What that took away …

Members interjecting.

Mr EDGINGTON: Have a listen to this.

It was not only the scrapping of councils; it scrapped every leadership structure in those communities. The Labor government disempowered those communities, scrapped the leadership structures and now we are left with a mess and need to rebuild.

The CLP will be working with Aboriginal people to empower communities that want a greater say, fostering self-determination. This will enable them to have a more active role in community development and decision-making processes. This will not be a one-size-fits-all approach, and we will not make changes without community engagement and consultation. We will be getting out and talking to the people on the ground because that is what we do. That is where the Labor Party failed. It lost touch with the people on the ground and that is why it is in opposition. The CLP will reform and support communities with infrastructure and management of local assets. This will foster skills development and create job opportunities.

There is plenty of work to be done by the CLP government. We are aiming high and intend to deliver on our promises. When it comes to essential services, health and alcohol policy, a mess has been left behind by the Labor government. The road will not be easy, but we are determined to deliver the change that Territorians elected us to do. Territorians have been asking for change for a long time now.

I am proud of the team that we have here; we will work together and are a strong team. We have a diverse group of people working for Territorians.

I want the Territory to be the best place in Australia to live, work, visit and invest in. The CLP is committed to doing that.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment. The respect you have in this place is clear from the contributions across this Chamber today.

I recently found the first speech I wrote when seeking preselection for the CLP. It was a short speech that acknowledged the 27 years of sustained CLP government before 2001, the strong foundations that had been laid before us and a need to build upon these. It spoke of an aspiration to see the CLP back in government. That speech was written in 2018. It has been an incredible journey since then. I thank everyone for their support throughout my journey and for seeing something in that 28-year-old sparky who came before you and now stands in this parliament.

Fast-forward some six years later and to be standing here as a minister in the Finocchiaro government really does feel surreal. Like many members have mentioned in their contributions, my journey into politics started when I believed I had something to offer my community and wanted to contribute to the future of the Northern Territory.

I had assisted my community through coaching, barbecues and generally supporting others, but being elected to the Legislative Assembly in 2020 truly changed my life. I had been an electrician and worked remotely for some four years. I had less time to assist the community, but did what I could on weekends. Since becoming the Member for Braitling I have made it my goal to support individuals and organisations in their goals to raise funds, climb mountains or make it to a sporting event.

In my office there is a whiteboard and written on it are the names of the people we have helped. I do not often give advice in this Chamber, but here is some for the new Members of the Legislative Assembly. This role is at times a lonely one, I do not care what anyone says. At the end of the day, it is upon you to get up every day and support your community whilst dealing with the everyday challenges everyone else deals with in their daily lives. You must assist others to overcome their challenges. There will be hard days. On those hard days I have found much solace in the ability to go into that room with the whiteboard and gaze upon the names of the people we have helped in the community.

There is everything from assisting a woman and her children into housing when escaping a violent partner to ensuring an elderly couple had a dangerous tree removed from their front yard. What I have learned from my time in this place is that the issues of others, no matter how big or small, are important to those people. Assisting others to overcome these challenges drives me every day.

Today I am proud to be a part of the Finocchiaro government. I thank the Chief Minister for putting her faith in me to be the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment; Water Resources; and Corporate and Digital Development. It is a huge responsibility and one I will work every day to live up to, ensuring that the decisions I make benefit Territorians across this wonderful place we all call home.

Since coming into this place, the now Chief Minister has supported every member of what we have come to call the 2020 crew. She supported us all through the highs and lows of public life. I personally thank her for her support of not only me but also my family who, as the Chief Minister said on many occasions, bear the brunt of the many challenges faced by elected members along the way.

To the new members of the CLP team, I look forward to working with you. No-one knows what you are going through more than those who are sitting beside you. We will all need to lean on one another at times, and I look forward to being there when you go through your highs and lows in this place.

Thank you to the people of Braitling and, moreover, the entire community of Alice Springs. Since I was born in Alice Springs Hospital in 1989, my family and I have been supported through the incredible community spirit that exists in our town. It is that community spirit that holds Alice Springs together. It is seen during some of our darkest moments and when great things occur in our community.

Many have spoken of how things need to be done differently and how plans put forward by the Country Liberal Party will not work. I say loudly and clearly that the people of the Northern Territory have spoken. They voted for this Finocchiaro government to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our Territory lifestyle, and that is our focus.

I will never forget a gentleman who came up to me on election day in August just gone and, through tearful eyes with his wife and children standing beside him, urged me to ensure we got on with the job and improved community safety. This is not about election cycles. This is about improving the lives of those who have built our community so that they do not feel, at the end of the day, that the only way to improve their own life is to move, to leave something they love so much.

I am glad that I am now in a position to improve the lives of my community for the better. For far too long the community in Alice Springs has been overlooked. I am glad to see things improving for the better in my community, even if up until these sittings of parliament, they have been small things. Anzac Oval being saved has been by far one of the biggest achievements for our community in our short seven weeks in government. I am not overexaggerating; it was the first question people were stopping me in the street to ask when the election result was clear after election night.

The leadership of the Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro, on this issue cannot be understated. People will never know how close we came to losing our much-loved sporting ground, and I again thank everyone involved for finding a suitable path through to ensure that the majority of our community could be heard and a pathway forward found.

To my beautiful wife, Lisa-Marie, you are without a doubt a constant in my life. Watching you with our girls and enjoying the moments we share together—no matter how infrequent they may be—is why I do what I do now. It is not an understatement to say that it keeps me going.

The Territory we are fighting for will be the one we hand to our children, and I take that responsibility extremely seriously. The road ahead will not be an easy one, but together as a team we will ensure the future is a bright one.

I was somewhat inspired by Minister Cahill's speech and simply could not end today without a quote from someone who has assisted me with my journey. Former Northern Territory Senator Nigel Scullion—I note people are nervous about me quoting the former senator—once told me, 'Never take yourself too seriously, but take what you do seriously'. This place and what we do in here is serious, and the decisions we make in here are important.

I will never take for granted the trust put in me by the good people of Braitling. I will work every day to live up to the expectations you have put on me.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, congratulations on a well-deserved appointment by the Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro.

I reiterate the sentiment from the Member for Brennan towards our parliamentary colleagues. Congratulations to all of you. You have all worked hard. Whether you are an Independent or on our CLP team, you have all put in the hard yards and are deservedly here in the new parliament. You are representing your communities, and that is a proud moment indeed. It may seem daunting, but as the days go on it does get a whole lot easier.

I pick up on comments made by the Member for Arafura; it was disappointing. Some of the opposition members commented that they wanted to start afresh, would not talk down the Territory and would be different. The Member for Arafura continued to peddle the Labor lies, saying that it was the Finocchiaro CLP government that dropped the portfolio of Minister for Women when, in fact, Lauren Moss was the last Minister for Women. In its many reshuffles the previous Labor government decided that it was not a portfolio for it. Therefore, it was not us, Member for Arafura; it was your own previous government.

The Member for Arafura commented that the swimming lessons are not for all students, when as the Minister for Education and Training—and a proud minister at that—I know that the swimming lessons are for every student in the Territory. If anyone has anything to complain about the swimming lessons, it would be me—the Education minister—because in Katherine we do not have a pool at the moment. We are working towards how we will deliver the swimming lessons for my community.

I wanted to correct that on the record; they are Labor lies being peddled on our first day of parliament.

Whilst our pool gets upgraded in Katherine, we will look for another venue where swimming lessons can be held.

Another comment from the Member for Arafura was about the youth hub in Casuarina, espousing its virtues and hoping that we will continue with it, yet there was no money in the budget for it. I will leave that there and Territorians can make up their minds about our opposition members. Clearly, there is a reason why they are now the opposition.

I put on the record my thanks and gratitude to the community of Katherine—my centre of the universe—for putting their faith in me again for another term of representing them all in parliament.

I thank my family—my mum, my dad, my sisters and brother—who I know are extremely proud of the hard work and dedication I have put into representing my community and being here in government to make important decisions to make the Territory a better place.

I thank the volunteers who never once faltered in their belief in me and my strength to bring the community of Katherine to the attention of the parliament and make our community even better.

I thank my campaign manager, Stephen Charles, who did not have to manage me too much, as I am extremely self-motivated and strive to excel to the best of my ability. I left nothing in the tank when it came to election day. It was then in the lap of the gods.

I greatly thank my electorate staff over the last four years—Belinda, Jacquie, Lis, Jane, Annabelle, Jen and Lisa who filled in for a short period—and the countless volunteers, either friends or party members. I could not have done this without you.

I thank Brian and Stephanie Hill; Tanya Lambert; Roy Tyler; Patty Buntine; Steve Fleming; Deb Aloisi; Bernadette Burke; Felicity Fulcher; John Neagle; Ann Reed; Carmel Whalley; Ben Trattles and Allen Garfin; Jodi and Colin Abbott; Simone, Stuart and Angus Cameron; Jessica Groves; Chris Eiremann; my father-in-law, Ron Hersey, and his group of seniors who gather on a Saturday morning who I know always have my back and unwavering support; Mark and Sandy Paterson; and TLC Freight's Andrew and Lyn who brought freight to Katherine for me at the drop of a hat.

I thank my husband, who never says no to the task he was asked to do, for signage from his business, Katherine Sign Management. Thanks also to his business partner, Mark Parker.

My two sons, James and William, had to watch their Ps and Qs whilst in the midst of their teens and late twenties and have their adventurous spirit reined in slightly. I thank you for not stepping out of the box and bringing your mother into disrepute. I say this in jest. Those of you who have teenagers will totally understand.

Boys, hold onto your hats. I have said that in parliament before, but they are both adventurous. As their teachers would say, they are spirited children. I choose other words sometimes.

To my daughter, Hannah, I cannot thank you enough for always being there, going above and beyond and never wavering in your support. There is nothing you did not do, from letterboxing and community barbecues to spending plenty of time on the polling booth and much more.

Our president, Shane Stone, was a fierce supporter who managed to do an amazing job with fundraising efforts. To the staff in the very small election campaign, headed by Alyson Hannam, Brett Hannam, Michael Leighton, Nigel Blunden and Will Gati, your efforts did not go unnoticed and you were always there for support. You led an amazing campaign that was disciplined and strong with a clear message that we took to the election.

What a resounding victory it was. We are here with a mandate for reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. I cannot quite believe even now that we are sitting in government, representing the good people of the Territory who voted overwhelmingly for the CLP. I thank every one of them. I am heartened to be here with my colleagues, led by our small but mighty leader, Lia Finocchiaro, who leads by example as a fierce, strong woman in what was once a male-dominated role—the first female Chief Minister of the Country Liberal Party. We have come a long way, and I am extremely proud and honoured to be a minister in this government.

As the Minister for Education and Training; Early Education; and Public Service, my passion to make education a better place for our kids who are our future, will not falter. The Finocchiaro CLP government will continue to work with the federal government and is committed to delivering the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. There has been no change to the funding model on this agreement, which was signed in July by the previous government. There will be ongoing reviews to ensure its effectiveness as with any program, but the agreement remains firm. I reiterate that for the Opposition Leader.

I look forward to working with the new CE of Education, Susan Bowden, in making education a better place for our children and expanding the school-based policing program. To all the staff across the sector, thank you for your hard work. It is these staff members who will help deliver the change in education. We will bring back truancy officers who will work with the families of kids who regularly skip school. Our school-based constables will keep our students and teaching staff safe by being present in the school environment to intervene and stop crime.

Equally, we will expand school counselling. These crucial counsellors will be working in schools so that when a student needs to talk to a counsellor, they are there behind a door instead of the student needing to make an appointment and wait a few days, which for some students may be too long. I know firsthand—I have spoken about this before—because a school counsellor helped my younger son through his last two years of schooling. I cannot thank that counsellor enough.

Under the previous Labor government school attendance continually went backwards. We will work hard on getting kids to school. We will not be afraid of holding parents to account for depriving their child of access to education because we need to make sure that every child is not deprived of this opportunity. I will not falter from making sure this is something that I will work towards every day.

I look forward to Territory kids leaving school and getting jobs in the future. For this we need to improve their literacy and numeracy by getting back to basics in education. Each child must have that opportunity no matter where they live in the vast land of the Territory.

We need to be competitive with our teachers, who are now the best paid in the country with the latest agreement. We must move them off short-term contracts and into permanency. We must appreciate and acknowledge the hard work they do each day in a world where parents increasingly want them to do more and more in a bogged-down curriculum.

Every school needs investment as we honour the agreement from the federal government, but we must make sure that this is equitable for all students.

I again thank everyone who helped me get back here for a second term. Thank you to all those in my community who popped a corflute on their fence and showed their support. I look forward to serving you all over the next four years.

I am passionate about my hairdressing career. You will probably all laugh at the next thing. Member for Barkly, you are not getting a haircut; sorry about that. I am one of those fortunate people to have had only two real jobs in my life—hairdressing and now as the Member for Katherine. It is to the prior career and to those select few in my community who have been fortunate enough to have stayed on as a client, it is here that we say goodbye. Sorry; I am an emotional wreck at the best of times. My workload is such and my new role is such that this close relationship we have had with some of you for almost 30 years will now need to move down the line.

My daughter is an extremely competent hairdresser who got a good start at the age of eight in my hairdressing salon. She has followed in my footsteps and forged her own career as a highly capable hairdresser.

Thank you for your ongoing support and loyalty. You know who you are, and I look forward to seeing you out and about in the community. I will miss our catch-ups in what I call 'keeping it real' conversations that keep me grounded.

On that note, I am pleased with the optimism in the air across the Territory when I am out talking to people. We are in safe, strong hands to rebuild this great place.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank every member in this House who spoke to the Address in Reply.

We started this morning with the Administrator returning the writ to the Assembly and the commencement of the 15th Assembly of the Northern Territory, 50 years from the first time that this Assembly met. We have installed a new Speaker in the Member for Araluen and a Deputy Speaker in the Member for Karama. We have changed the rules of the parliament to make it more open, transparent and accountable by doubling the time for petitions and making sure that there is a Legislative Scrutiny Committee. Here we start what will be a four-year journey of reform and change for the Territory for the better.

We are and proud to have the opportunity to govern for the people of the Northern Territory and deliver on our election commitments to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. That work will start when we pass a range of laws that will be brought into the Chamber tomorrow.

I thank the Opposition Leader for supporting my decision to have the Independent Member for Araluen as the Speaker and for recognising that the CLP has a mandate. Labor has an important role in this Chamber as does the crossbench, which is holding us to account. We, in our deep respect for the parliamentary process and our system of government, know that a good government is a government that is being scrutinised appropriately by the opposition and crossbench members. As your team rebuilds we look forward to the scrutiny that you will apply to us. We are welcoming of and open to that.

To the new Members for Johnston and Nightcliff, congratulations on all your hard work to get to this point. I very much enjoyed hearing your maiden speeches. It is a symbolic and special time for new members of parliament.

Member for Johnston, I heard your passion for scrutiny committees. We look forward to having the opportunity to debate your motion next Wednesday. We have already instituted that work, which I am sure you will be pleased about. I hope you can negotiate a way to become a member on that committee.

Member for Nightcliff, you talked a lot about a future for our kids, and I think that is why we are all here. Although we have different ways of achieving objectives, I know that all of us are here to make sure there is a better future for our children and their children and that the Territory is left a better place after we have given our service to it.

To the colleagues on my team who made their maiden speeches today, thank you for sharing, in such a raw way, your journey to get to parliament and what drives you—your 'why'—and for being a part of this team. The courage it took to put up your hand to run for parliament cannot be underestimated. All your hard work, support and belief in our team and the ability of the CLP to govern is why we have landed on the government benches. Many of you talked about our accountability to each other—Member for Karama—and our accountability to the community to deliver on what we promised.

Member for Port Darwin, I do not think anyone doubts your tenacity and determination; we heard that in your speech. You will be a formidable member for that electorate. I am proud to have you as a part of our Cabinet.

Member for Sanderson, thank you for sharing your journey as a migrant, health professional and father. The way you spoke about your faith and upbringing of respect gave great insight into the man that you are and the contributor you will be to the Cabinet, our team, the parliament and the people of Sanderson.

Member for Blain, you spoke passionately about the fact that you are a generational Territory family. That history and legacy of contribution to the Territory gives you a profound and deep sense of connection to this place. One of the members also said that it does not matter how long you have been here for you to love this place, so I certainly do not mean to delineate that. My only point is that it gives you a richness and connection to see the Territory from a different perspective. With your background and being from Batchelor, you understand the cattle industry and other rural components of Territory living and industry, which are important to our future.

Member for Casuarina, I loved how you shared your adventure in life. Your story is so compelling; you endured such hardship at a young age after your father passed away, then migrated to Cyprus and learned to speak Greek as a second language, followed by migrating to Australia and learning a third language. Your story is the typical Aussie battler story, if I could put it that way. I must say that your son, Krishna, is the spitting image of you. His energy is you in a tiny toddler body, and you can be proud of that. I look forward to your contribution from all of your life story to this parliament and the people of Casuarina.

Member for Drysdale, as a former Member for Drysdale I am proud to see that community is in good hands. You spoke with conviction and with the sense of service you have. No-one questions your determination and your commitment to that community. I know you will serve them well and people understand that you are in their corner. Your message about the time for courage was something you ran with from day one. That is a credit to you. What people see in you is a courageous leader who is willing to fight for the community, which is what those people desperately need. They now have that in you.

Member for Goyder, your rural upbringing and love of agriculture fits perfectly with our vision for a stronger Territory. Not only is lifestyle a key pillar of our three-point plan, but your expertise in agriculture gives you a different way of engaging with us as a team and provides nuanced insights into what is required for that industry. The local component, however, is that I now have two of you out there in the rural area—one of you has a ‘true local’ badge and the other has a ‘100% rural’ badge—so I have no doubt that between you, you are covering the field. Congratulations, Member for Goyder, if you are the youngest member in this parliament. You might not believe it, but I too, once upon a time, was the youngest member of parliament. Now I am definitely not. Time creeps up on you, so enjoy the ride.

Member for Karama, you spoke about your grandmother instilling three important words in your family, which was passed down to you by your father. You spoke of love, compassion and tolerance. I have previously heard you speak passionately about those three words because they are so much more than words to you and your family and the way in which you live your life. People understand that and that is why you are sitting in this Chamber. The people in Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon saw in you something they had not seen in a representative in decades. To have them put their faith in you speaks volumes of your commitment to that community. From having worked with you throughout the campaign, I know that we could not extract you from that electorate. You were bedded in, and those people know that. I know you will do them proud.

Member for Fannie Bay, your collaborative nature gives you a different perspective on how to achieve outcomes for our community. You spoke passionately and proudly about the nuances to the Fannie Bay electorate, pointing out what might be seen as typical attributes but then getting to the heart and core of that community. It shows how hard you worked in understanding the heartbeat of the people in that electorate. To have won that seat after 29 years in the wilderness is a credit to you. Your commitment to that community will continue to grow in strength as you work with the people of Fannie Bay.

Member for Wanguri, congratulations on the cultural ceremony you had this morning. Everyone was holding back tears at how special it was. Clearly, it was a moving opportunity for you to connect to your family’s story of migration. It is something that triggers emotion in all of us, because everyone has a shared story or connection when it comes to family. You won your seat after 35 years of the CLP not holding the seat of Wanguri. It is an entire lifetime, longer than the Member for Goyder has been alive. It is a credit to you. You are a no-nonsense person. People know where they stand with you, but you have this nature that people instantly warm to, and I watched that evolution over the campaign. In the short seven weeks you have been the member, incredible feedback has come out of that electorate. You will continue to serve them proud.

Member for Fong Lim, you have this strong sense of what is right and what delivers outcomes. You have spoken passionately a number of times about when a government delivers strong public services amazing outcomes happen. You talk about your story in a way that is inspiring for other people. Being the kid from

Karama, living in the public housing home, going to the local community schools and having the ability to go all the way through and travel overseas and study at the most prestigious universities in the world, becoming a doctor and ending up back here in Darwin to try to support the very place that allowed you to have every opportunity in life reinforces so much of getting back to basics. As a team we talk about getting back to basics a lot and some of that is getting the fundamentals right. If the fundamentals are broken it does not matter what other policies you have, they will not work. Congratulations to you.

I thank the Member for Mulka for expressing what he called kindness. In opposition we worked collaboratively and collegiately with the entire crossbench, of which the Member for Mulka has been a part. He is one of the elder statesmen of our parliament. It is our commitment to continue that relationship. The scrutiny committee might be something that the Member for Mulka wants to be a part of. We are always here to listen to the concerns of his community.

I thank the Country Liberal Party and all its members, the people who tirelessly chipped away at the many and various campaigning activities that are required to get you over the line. To Shane Stone, our president, and Alyson Hannam, our campaign director, thank you for everything you did to support a strong campaign and particularly our candidates, including those who did not make it over the line. We were clear in the lead-up to the election and since that it was the collective 25 of us that gave Territorians a change of government. Although they did not all make it into this parliament with us, their contribution is what has delivered a change of government alongside us.

To my family, who have sacrificed a lot over many years, thank you so much. Sam is an absolute tower of strength and doing a great job looking after literally everything at the moment, as we forge ahead to deliver on our election commitments to Territorians. To my entire family, who provide so much love and support, particularly with the kids, it is tough. My kids were born into this parliamentary life. We have new members joining who are bringing their kids into it. Everyone is at different stages, but one thing is for sure, which came out of everyone's speech today: family is important; it is everything; it is what gives us our reason to get out of bed every day to fight for a better Territory for tomorrow.

I thank the Administrator for returning the writ today and expressing in his contribution the objectives of our government.

I reinforce the fact that we are committed to delivering on all the commitments we have made, of which we have already ticked off so many. I look forward to reporting back to Territorians in due course on the completion of those election commitments, a raft of which will be delivered over the next two weeks.

Thank you to the Territorians who put their faith in the Country Liberal Party. A change of government is a huge decision for the community, but we heard them clearly; the quiet Territorian who wants to be safe and know that they have a good job and opportunity and so will their kids; that when they ring 000, police will come; that if they need an ambulance, it will arrive; and that if they need a hospital bed, there will be one. These are the fundamental basics, going back to the point I made about the Member for Fong Lim's speech. We are here to restore the Territory back to delivering on the fundamentals people need to have a good life here and grow the Territory into the future so that we can once again be proud and be the powerhouse that we know the Territory can be.

Motion agreed to.

PAPER TABLED
Correspondence from the Auditor-General

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table correspondence from the Auditor-General of the Northern Territory relating to matters referred to the Auditor-General pursuant to section 6 of the *Public Information Act 2010.*

ADJOURNMENT

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.