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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CODE OF CONDUCT AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL
Serial 54

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Local Government Legislation Amendment (Code of Conduct and Other Matters) Bill 2026, Serial 54, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the local government legislation which comprises the *Local Government Act 2019*, the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021 and the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021. The amendments also make consequential amendments to these regulations.

The amendments in this Bill are the second tranche of reforms in a series of ongoing review and consideration of the Territory's local government legislation. The first tranche tackled some of the most pressing issues. Those amendments laid the groundwork for some of the more comprehensive changes which are found within this Bill. It is anticipated that further reforms will continue to be developed for implementation in future stages.

The proposed changes in this Bill are designed to continue aligning local government systems with best practice nationwide. This ensures the local government sector can be more responsive and better suited to the needs of our communities. The changes in this tranche of reform will focus on provisions related to clarification of rates exemptions; election notice requirements; superannuation equivalent payments for elected members; mandatory training of elected members; clarification of council delegations; and introduction of a governance controller, governance advisor and the much-anticipated code of conduct framework.

Before outlining the proposed amendments to the code of conduct framework, let me provide some brief context on its history and why change is needed. The current conduct provisions in the Act were developed as part of amendments to the now repealed *Local Government Act 2008*. The intent of amendments passed in 2019 was to recognise the local government sector as an independent sphere of government answerable to the electorate.

Those amendments placed responsibility with councils to manage code-of-conduct issues in the first instance, and to ensure that punitive penalties were not weaponised in personal disputes between councillors. However, since the 2019 amendments commenced in 2021 the existing framework has lacked in operational effectiveness and has failed to meet the sector's needs. We have heard the sector's advocacy that they are not happy with the current framework, which has seen two councils placed under official management during the last local government term. There has also been a significant increase in the number of complaints referred to the prescribed body who deals with the complaints.

We have spoken to and listened to the local government sector and heard their frustrations. We have been informed by extensive consultation over the course of almost two years.

We now bring forward this Bill which address the issues identified within the code of conduct framework. In 2024 the department engaged a third party to consult with the sector and inform the development of an improved framework. This year the department engaged in additional sector consultation, publishing a series of three discussion papers, travelling across the Territory to participate in face-to-face consultations and receiving and considering written submissions prepared by interested stakeholders.

The Bill has responded to sector consultation by repealing the existing framework. The amendments introduce a completely new tiered approach. This tiered approach includes early-stage support through the introduction of a governance advisor position. It then provides for escalation for councils to utilise third-party resolution mechanisms, such as mediation. Significantly, this Bill introduces two independent functions within the framework: the independent assessor and the code of conduct panel.

Further, we have listened to the sector and reintroduced sanctions. This will assist in protecting public trust in the local government sector and deterring poor conduct by elected members.

In response to Local Government Association of the NT's (LGANT) clear position that it does not wish to assume responsibility for the independent assessor or the code of conduct panel, this Bill removes LGANT

from the process entirely. Importantly, LGANT remains the prescribed corporation for other mechanisms and processes under the Act. The new provisions establish a standalone code of conduct panel, as well as independent assessors who, as the name suggests, will be completely independent from the local government sector.

The new framework aligns with best practice nationwide by enabling the suspension or dismissal of one or more elected members on recommendation of the new code of conduct panel. We have approached this in a way that upholds the principles of fairness and democratic process.

Under the new framework, the power to suspend or disqualify an elected member for up to 12 months rests solely with an independent code of conduct panel. For any suspension or disqualification beyond 12 months, the decision will only be made by the minister, and only after receiving a formal recommendation from that same independent panel. This approach helps avoid placing an entire council under official management—and the risk of dismissing all elected members—when the real issue is confined to just one or a few councillors. It ensures accountability falls where it truly belongs.

The principle here is that councils retain responsibility for managing code-of-conduct complaints, unless escalation is necessary. Under a tiered approach, lower-level complaints will remain with each council to resolve, in line with the framework, as tier 1 and tier 2 matters. These complaints are intended to be handled in a way that is proportionate, collaborative and focused on building relationships within the council. Sanctions at this level include public apologies, mediation, behavioural plans, training and counselling. Maintaining this responsibility within council is critical for capacity building and good governance.

The distinction between tier 1 and tier 2 is that at tier 2 councils may seek early preventive assistance, such as the newly established governance advisor or a third-party mediator. The governance advisor can be requested by a council to provide guidance and best-practice advice to strengthen governance and processes.

To strengthen the sector's call for independent escalation tiers, the Bill introduces two new mechanisms: an independent assessor and an independent code of conduct panel. These mechanisms will handle tier 3 and tier 4 complaints respectively, with the costs associated with their engagement to be met by councils.

The independent assessor's role is to gather the information needed to determine whether a breach of the code of conduct has occurred and what penalties or sanctions may apply. They will triage complaints, screen out unsupported or vexatious claims, resolve lingering low-level matters, determine tier 3 complaints and refer serious or gross misconduct to the code of conduct panel. At tier 3 sanctions will include the power to issue directions, impose monetary penalties of up to 20 penalty units and escalate more serious cases to the panel.

I now turn to the establishment of the code of conduct panel. This panel will consist of three members. The pool of panel members will be appointed by me and assigned by the department. Its functions include hearing allegations of serious or gross misconduct referred by the independent assessor, reviewing decisions of the assessor on process and procedural matters and addressing cases of noncompliance with the assessor's sanctions.

Escalation to tier 4 is reserved for the most serious complaints, such as repeated or sustained breaches or conduct that undermines public confidence in council. At this level sanctions will include issuing directions, public reprimands, disqualification from leadership roles for up to 12 months, monetary penalties of up to 50 penalty units, suspension from office for up to 12 months and withholding allowances until compliance. The panel will also recommend to the minister suspensions exceeding 12 months and disqualification for up to eight years.

The revised code of conduct framework is designed to maintain strong council relationships, uphold integrity and reduce the likelihood of vexatious complaints. It focuses on prevention and early intervention, supported by a clear escalation pathway. This includes stronger sanctions for repeated, serious or gross misconduct, while ensuring councils retain the ability to resolve lower-level complaints themselves.

Building on this framework the Bill also introduces a key support mechanism—the governance advisor role. This will be a suitably qualified and experienced person appointed by the agency CEO to assist councils in resolving issues early, before they escalate. The governance advisor's purpose is to proactively support good governance practices and help address problems at an early stage. This may include assisting with interpersonal challenges, recommending improvements to governance processes or providing advice on financial management and human resources matters.

Turning now to financial matters, the Bill addresses a longstanding ambiguity regarding rates payable by public charities and benevolent institutions for social and affordable housing.

Currently, section 222(1)(g) exempts land used for non-commercial purposes by a public benevolent institution or charity from paying rates. However, its application to social and affordable housing providers has been unclear, leading to inconsistent council decisions and, at times, litigation.

The Bill removes this uncertainty by creating a clear and consistent framework. It explicitly states that land used for the provision of social and affordable housing is not included in the general exemption. Instead, it establishes a new concessional rating category under Part 11.8 of the Act. This reform strikes a fair balance. It recognises that local government councils need a sustainable revenue base from which they can deliver essential services. Unchanged in Part 11.8 of the Act, councils will continue to have full control over whether any concessions are granted. It also acknowledges the critical role community housing providers play in delivering housing for Territorians who need it most.

Importantly, this change does not remove concessions on rates payments; rather, it provides a structured and transparent process for councils and providers to agree on a concessional rate amount that reflect local circumstances. This approach promotes certainty for both sectors and reduces the risk of costly disputes. The intent is that concessional arrangements for certain ratepayers will reflect the community benefit these providers deliver. This includes the number of social and affordable dwellings they manage within a local government area, the services they provide to tenants and their broader social and economic contributions to the community. While these principles will not be prescribed in legislation, they will guide implementation to ensure concessions are fair, consistent and aligned with the public interest for both social and affordable housing providers and the councils where these homes are located.

In response to sector advocacy to encourage a more diverse range of community members to nominate for election to local government council, the Bill introduces new provisions that enable councils to pay elected members an amount equivalent to a superannuation contribution. This amount is in addition to the current allowances and enables councils to provide an additional payment by passing a unanimous resolution. Individual elected members may then opt in to receive the new superannuation payment by providing their nominated superannuation account. Individual elected members will have the choice to opt out—for example, if they are retired and have already accessed their superannuation. In those circumstances, they simply do not provide their nominated superannuation account, as that is the only account into which this additional payment can be made.

This Bill includes several miscellaneous amendments to modernise electoral processes and improve governance clarity.

The Bill introduces amendments regarding publishing requirements for election notices. This modernises communication practices and finalises the publishing amendments initiated in tranche 1. This shift enables the returning officer to determine the most appropriate publication method for each council area.

The Bill also updates the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations for mandatory postal vote elections. When candidate statements are provided, the returning officer must promptly share accepted statements with the relevant council. These statements must then be published on both the Electoral Commission's and the council's websites.

The Bill also makes a further amendment to regulation 65 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations. In June changes were introduced to modernise provisions for postal vote applications and electronic signatures. This Bill now includes a small drafting correction that was omitted from those earlier amendments.

I now turn to the changes in mandatory training for elected members. Currently, section 45 of the Act simply requires members to complete approved training within 12 months of a general election. However, advocacy from the sector has shown the need for elected members to possess stronger baseline governance knowledge.

This Bill addresses that need by requiring the agency CEO to publish a determination on the agency's website outlining mandatory training requirements, and elected members must comply. Failure to complete the training will now constitute a breach of the code of conduct and may result in sanctions. The determination will set out general training for all elected members, as well as specialised courses for principal and deputy principal members. Importantly, recognising the unique challenges of living in the Territory, the CEO will have discretion to grant exemptions or extensions—for example, where flooding prevents a member from completing training through no fault of their own.

Following on from amendments made earlier this year this Bill introduces the governance controller, a new oversight mechanism designed to provide targeted and effective support in circumstances arising under section 19C of the Act in relation to creation of new councils, mergers and acquisitions.

Appointed by the agency CEO, the governance controller may also be the same person as a financial controller. When appointed they will review, monitor and evaluate the council's governance procedures and practices—ensuring compliance with applicable laws, advising the council on its governance responsibilities and the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, including any recommended improvements—and give directions in relation to the council's governance procedures, practices and the performance of its governance responsibilities. The governance controller will report to the agency CEO in cases where serious deficiencies are identified or where a council fails to comply with directions.

The amendments contained within this Bill recognise the importance of being able to delegate certain abilities to the council's chief executive officer. The amendments aid in streamlining the process, whilst balancing the need for transparency and accountability to the council. It does this by amending the categories of delegations under section 40 of the Act.

The Bill also includes consequential amendments to the Local Government (General) Regulations, clarifying that the information that must be presented to council to maintain this balance will be determined by the council. These measures will help councils meet their statutory obligations while providing the necessary checks and balances for good governance.

Lastly, this Bill makes a minor amendment to section 73(1)(c) to clarify that the offence applies to staff members of a local government subsidiary, not elected members.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

COMMERCIAL PASSENGER (ROAD) TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LICENSING) BILL
Serial 53

Mr YAN (Logistics and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Legislation Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2026, Serial 53, and table the explanatory statement.

I move that the Bill be read a first time.

The intent of the Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Legislation Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2026—the Bill—is to amend the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act 1991* to increase and standardise licence terms for initial applications and renewals and providing options for commercial passenger vehicle operators.

A number of commercial passenger vehicle licence types currently have a licence period of between three and 12 months. This Bill will provide licence holders with the option to hold or renew their licence for 12, 24 or 36 months. Extending the commercial passenger vehicle licence period for commercial passenger vehicle licences will reduce the regulatory burden on operators, improve efficiency, reduce costs and provide greater flexibility for industry.

These changes were identified by the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce which was established in November 2024 to provide expert advice on easing the burden of red tape on business and industry and cutting timeframes for approval processes. The Saying 'Yes' to Business Report was released by the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce in May 2025. This was one of the recommendations of the taskforce to reduce unnecessary touchpoints with government.

This Bill extends the term of commercial passenger vehicle licences to three years, allowing industry to select the licence term appropriate to their business and reducing regulatory burden.

This is another example of reducing red tape, reducing costs and improving efficiency.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr YAN (Logistics and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 5 March 2026.

Motion agreed to.

BAIL AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 52

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Bail Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 52, and table the explanatory statement.

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

Today's Bill builds on the work we have already undertaken to ensure our laws are fit for purpose and keep the community safe. The Bail Amendment Bill 2026 makes a small but important change to the *Bail Act*. It will remove any uncertainty about how the *Bail Act* applies to young people and the Youth Justice Court. It makes it very clear to the judges and the entire justice system that if you are an adult or youth, or in the Local Court, Supreme Court or Youth Justice Court, the *Bail Act* will apply.

The need for this important change became clear after a recent Youth Justice Court case where the Director of Public Prosecutions applied to stay a bail decision under the *Bail Act*. Normally, that would mean the young person stays in detention while the Supreme Court reviews the decision. In this case the Youth Justice Court found the law did not apply to the case and refused the stay of bail, so the young person was released.

The Supreme Court later confirmed that the *Bail Act* does apply to the Youth Justice Court and applied our government's strengthened bail laws and refused bail. The young person was then returned to detention. This shows the review process worked, but it also highlighted the need to make the law clearer, and this Bill does just that; it clarifies the position beyond doubt.

With that, I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I move the suspension of so much of standing and sessional orders which would prevent me from moving a motion to refer the Bail Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 52, to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

As we are talking about bail—it is an important matter across the Northern Territory—we should provide the opportunity for Territorians, particularly those in the legal profession, to have their say.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, I think you have jumped the gun here.

Minister, could you proceed.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 5 March 2026.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, we will leave your motion to suspend standing orders.

Mr PAECH: I am happy to withdraw that. It seems the government has found a backbone.

Motion agreed to.

TRADE, BUSINESS AND ASIAN RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (STREAMLINING LICENSING SCHEMES AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL
Serial 47

Continued from 27 November 2025.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, this Bill makes minor technical and largely uncontroversial amendments across a small number of Acts. It does not introduce new policy, stimulate growth or meaningfully alter any economic settings. For that reason the Labor opposition has no issue with this Bill. However, support for this Bill should not be mistaken for endorsement of the government's economic performance.

At the election the CLP made one message crystal clear: it would fix the economy. Territorians were promised urgency, competence and a clear economic plan. More than 12 months on, this Bill is the government's most substantive economic contribution in the parliament. That fact alone should concern every Territorian. A government confident in its economic management does not lead with minor housekeeping legislation at the beginning of the calendar year. This Bill is not a reform agenda; it is evidence of a government without one. The CLP is not driving the economy forward; it is biding its time.

The minister for Trade and Business has failed to demonstrate leadership in her portfolio. Beyond junket overseas trips and cocktail functions, there is little evidence of outcomes for the Northern Territory. Where is the strategy to grow exports? Where is the advocacy for Territory businesses? Where is the plan, dare I ask, to expand trade, attract investment or open new markets in the Northern Territory?

Remarkably, the minister for Trade and Business is doing less on the economy than the Treasurer. That is saying something, given that the Treasurer has effectively gone fishing since the election.

The minister's title promises influence, but the reality unfortunately tells a different story. The minister has no meaningful say in Cabinet on economic policy. We hoped she would in that portfolio, but unfortunately we have not seen anything substantial to date. After more than 12 months this minor Bill appears to be the full extent of any economic legacy in the portfolio. It is clear that the minister—who we believe should be the next Chief Minister—has been relegated to the kids' table in Cabinet.

The CLP's approach seems to be cutting ribbons on projects that were started by the former Labor government. Although photo opportunities may be good for politicians, they are not good for the Territory's economic plan. You cannot run an economy on borrowed achievements. The CLP was handed the economy ready to grow, so we would expect hard work to have been done in the last 18 months. Instead of building on that momentum the CLP has fallen asleep at the economic wheel.

The centrepiece of the CLP's economic agenda, the Territory Coordinator, has proven to be a dud. The CLP members have no vision, ideas or initiatives of their own for projects to grow the economy. They put all their money on the table and bet on one saving grace, the Territory Coordinator. In the 15 months since that position was created—the person was hand-picked; there was no recruitment process—more than $20m has been spent on that office's operations and it was only on Monday that we saw an area declared under the Territory Coordinator's powers. Is that a good use of taxpayers' money? We do not think so. The Territory Coordinator has not delivered certainty for the economy, confidence for businesses or any outcomes.

The CLP criticised the federal government while benefiting from record Commonwealth investment in the Northern Territory. At the same time, it penny-pinched locally and cut essential projects from the Territory's pipeline.

The CLP's underinvestment in local government will inevitably drive up council rates, which we know will hit Territorians' hip pockets and family budgets. The CLP has no credible plan to address the cost-of-living pressures that all our constituents are experiencing. Its only response has been to belittle the police officers and public servants who fought for fair wages and conditions, which they all deserve. That is not leadership; that is contempt. The government is deliberately underinvesting in hospitals and public housing. There is now more money, thanks to the federal Labor government, but we still have no plan and do not know what the CLP will do to better our healthcare. The funding of vanity projects include a failed Territory Coordinator model and a truancy program that is seeing fewer children attending school, not more.

The CLP is starting to run out of steam; it is already out of ideas only 18 months into its four-year term. We hoped that there would be more for the economy—particularly in the Chief Minister's Year Ahead speech about the kind of projects that will have grants sunk into them and the CLP's vision for the economy—but unfortunately the reality is bleak, and we do not see a bright future for the Territory under the CLP government.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I pick up on the points the Opposition Leader made, stating that this Bill has no benefit to the economy. Upon coming into government the CLP made a firm commitment that we would make it easier to do business and ensure that businesses could navigate regulation and the various pathways they must follow far more easily, clearly and simply. That

is what this Bill does. We have cut red tape and added to that cutting of red tape across a number of areas with the introduction of this Bill.

This legislation represents a pivotal step in the government's commitment to rebuilding the Territory economy by dismantling unnecessary regulatory and administrative barriers that have historically hindered local businesses and community organisations. We have modernised outdated provisions. The Bill establishes a practical and proportionate regulatory framework that enables Territorians to focus on what they do best—running businesses, practising their trades and supporting their communities.

A key reform ensures that licence holders can continue their essential work while renewal applications are being assessed. When a renewal is lodged before expiry, the licence or registration will remain in force until a decision is made. This removes the risk of unintended interruptions to lawful business activity and provides certainty for operators, employees and customers.

The benefits of this legislation extend deeply to the community sector. For the first time since 2004 this sadly neglected area of legislation has had a review.

The Bill updates the financial tier thresholds for incorporated associations to reflect contemporary economic conditions and inflation. Tier 1 increases from $25,000 to $150,000 in gross receipts and from $50,000 to $300,000 in gross assets. Tier 2 will increase to $500,000 in gross receipts and $1m in gross assets. Tier 3 is reset to apply only to larger associations above $500,000 in gross receipts and $1m in gross assets. As a result 74% of associations will now fall within tier 1, making it much easier for not-for-profits in the sector to navigate the financial requirements in this space, significantly reducing compliance burdens for those community-based organisations.

This Bill also cuts red tape for the real estate sector by introducing flexible one, three and five-year registration options for agents' representatives. This reform reduces unnecessary annual administration and supports long-term workforce stability. To further support productivity and affordability, a 10% fee discount will apply to three and five-year registrations for new applications and renewals.

Together, these reforms deliver a smarter regulatory system that supports economic growth, strengthens community organisations and allows Territorians to get on with their work with confidence and certainty in our year of growth, certainty and security.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

STATUTE LAW REVISION AND REPEALS BILL
Serial 40

Continued from 16 October 2025.

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

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I thank the Attorney-General for bringing this Bill to the Assembly. The purpose of the Statute Law Revision and Repeals Bill is to make minor technical amendments to various parts of Northern Territory law, including correcting grammatical and typographical errors, rectifying omissions, updating superseded sections and generally tidying up ambiguities and inconsistencies.

The amendments proposed in this Bill do not raise any substantive changes to the law or to government policy.

Proposed amendments have been raised through the Attorney-General's Department, the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and individual agencies through consultation with the Attorney-General's Department.

The Labor opposition believes that updating the NT statute book is routine practice. Statute law revision is necessary to stay up to date and keep improvements flowing.

I place on the record the opposition's thanks to the Attorney-General's Department staff who work hard. We have a hardworking public service, regardless of the government of the day, which does the incredible work of making sure that we modernise legislation and keep it up to date.

The opposition will support the Bill.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General)(in reply): Madam Speaker, the Statute Law Revision and Repeals Bill 2025 makes a range of minor and technical updates to several pieces of Northern Territory legislation. The changes are not large enough to require a separate Bill on their own, but they are needed to keep the law accurate and up to date.

The Bill makes small corrections such as fixing spelling, grammatical and typing errors; filling in missing sections or information; updating parts of the law that have been replaced or are out of date; correcting references that are wrong or outdated; and clearing up ambiguities and inconsistencies.

The Bill also repeals a number of outdated or unnecessary laws, including more than 230 amending Acts from 1990 to 1999 that are no longer needed because they have already done their job.

None of the changes in this Bill make substantive changes to the law or government policy or programs.

Once the Bill is passed, the amendments will take effect on the day the Bill commences and the spent or obsolete Acts will be removed from the statute book.

I acknowledge the Attorney-General's Department and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel for their work in preparing this Bill. It is long and arduous, but they do a great job in pulling it all together.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 55

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I oppose the CLP's proposed amendments to the *Housing Act 1982*. Territory Labor makes it clear that we oppose this amendment Bill's substance on principle.

The Bill seeks to remove any obligation on the minister to afford procedural fairness to remote housing tenants when making rent determinations. This is not a minor amendment. It is not just a technical clarification, as we were told; it is a significant and deliberate shift in how government makes decisions for some of the most vulnerable Territorians.

The CLP claims that this amendment is necessary in response to the High Court decision. That claim does not withstand scrutiny. The only proposal from the CLP to address remote rental tenancy issues is to remove people's right to be heard. The High Court did not rule that parliament should strip tenants of their right to be heard. The court did not instruct the government to abandon procedural fairness. The court did not say that tenants should be silenced. In fact, the ruling was the exact opposite of this. It was a ruling that tenants had not been properly heard, as required by law. Rather than address what was effectively a breach of law, the CLP government has chosen to strip procedural fairness out of the legislation.

This government proves, time and again, that it has no interest in listening to Territorians, hearing them and acting with integrity on issues that concern some of the most vulnerable members of society.

The High Court decision handed down on 3 December 2025 ruled that the rights of remote housing tenants had been adversely affected by the lack of procedural fairness. Rather than fixing the procedural fairness shortfalls identified by the High Court, this government has chosen the most extreme response available—legislating to silence tenants altogether. The proposed amendment explicitly states that the minister is not

required to give affected persons an opportunity to be heard. That is not reform; that is avoidance and a deliberate rejection of fairness.

Procedural fairness exists for a reason. It ensures that decisions affecting people's lives are made transparently, rationally and with accountability. It requires decision-makers to listen before they act, particularly when those decisions involve people's homes, finances and stability. This Bill does the opposite.

The government sought to justify this amendment by pointing to urgency. That argument does not hold. The suggestion that procedural fairness prevents timely decision-making is simply not supported by the legislation as it stands.

The CLP had every opportunity and power to consult with remote housing tenants about what the framework, and what framework, works best for them. The CLP could have taken the time to hear from remote housing tenants about individualised and tailored rent models without rushing through changes on urgency. Urgency does not require silence, and good governance does not require making decisions without hearing the concerns of Territory stakeholders. Good governance should not come at the expense of excluding the very constituents the government is meant to represent.

I put on record those stakeholders' concerns. I seek leave to table a document.

Leave granted.

Mr PAECH: The document has been issued by Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory. The peak body released a statement strongly raising its opposition to this hasty law reform. AHNT said that it:

> *… reasserts its unequivocal rejection of any untested remote rent model that unfairly and disproportionately affects remote Aboriginal tenants across the Territory.*

It called for the CLP to meet with AHNT, the four land councils, legal and remote housing experts and other important stakeholders to work through the significant issues attributed to the previous remote rent framework and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

The CLP is not taking this opportunity to learn from mistakes; it is repeating them. The previous Labor government acknowledged that mistakes were made in how the remote rent framework was implemented. Those decisions were taken with the intention of creating consistency and sustainability, but the process failed tenants. Acknowledging that failure matters. It is not acceptable to respond to that failure by permanently removing the safeguard the High Court identified as essential.

This amendment contradicts self-determination principles. The CLP has not considered all the options to respond well to the High Court decision. Not only does this amendment not reflect the High Court decision at its core; it is also a significant legislative change that prevents future obligations to consult with remote renters. This is a huge shift, yet here we are.

There has been no meaningful conversation with the housing sector, no engagement with legal experts and no attempt to hear from tenants. At best, this government's idea of consultation is a single letter to remote renters advising them that their rent will continue as is.

This decision will keep rents at the same unaffordable levels as the previous model. It will only push more families into financial distress. Across the Territory we see increasing poverty levels and some of the highest costs of living nationally, high numbers of rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness. Removing the obligation to consult with the people this legislation affects is condemning remote Territorians, some of our most vulnerable, to untenable disadvantage.

If the government's stated intent is to address remote housing, consultation is not optional; it is essential. It is through consultation that we understand what is fair and what fair rent setting looks like in remote contexts. It is through listening that we can take account of hardship, cultural obligations, overcrowding and income insecurity. It is precisely those perspectives that the High Court identified as missing. Instead of addressing that failure, the CLP has chosen to entrench it in legislation. The correct response is to fix the process, not to legislate around it.

This amendment gives the minister the power to make rate determinations without notice, consultation, explanation or accountability. This strips rights from remote tenants. It strips their right to have a voice. That should concern every member of this Assembly. This legislation flies in the face of international law.

Remote public housing tenants are overwhelmingly Aboriginal Territorians. The CLP has repeatedly shown a dismissive and punitive approach to public housing tenants, particularly in remote communities. Removing procedural fairness empowers a government that has already shown its willingness to punch down on Aboriginal Territorians. Procedural fairness exists not for convenience but to hear Territorians and respect them.

What does the Territory get with a CLP government? Less transparency in rent setting, no opportunity to explain hardship or personal circumstances and no protection against blunt one-size-fits-all determinations. These are not abstract risks; they are foreseeable and real. Procedural fairness is not a technical inconvenience; it is a cornerstone of administrative law and democratic governance.

When governments lose in court, the answer is not to remove the rule they failed to follow. The answer is to do better.

Territory Labor will not support legislation that entrenches unfairness, concentrates power and silences the most vulnerable people. This legislation silences those most affected by government decisions. For those reasons we will not support this Bill.

Instead of fixing the mistakes, accepting a different interpretation and giving tenants basic procedural fairness, the CLP is changing the law to get around it. The Housing minister wants the power to approve rent hikes without tenants being heard. Rather than admitting that the government and the department need to change the processes, the CLP is deleting procedural fairness so that it does not have to follow it.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, we are fixing a Labor mistake. We are fixing an issue made by the previous Labor government—in fact, by the Leader of the Opposition. This is Labor's mistake, and we are fixing it.

The Member for Gwoja said …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mr MALEY: … that NT people are not properly heard, there is a lack of procedural fairness and the CLP had every opportunity to hear from tenants. He did not say that the previous Labor government took this to three levels of court. Labor took this to NTCAT, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal.

Mr Mackay: Shame!

Mr MALEY: The Member for Gwoja said that people are not properly heard, but Labor members had the opportunity to fix it. What did they do? They took it to court. Labor had the opportunity to speak to people, but it did not; it took this to court. How shameful is that! It is unbelievable.

Mr Mackay: Why didn't you listen?

Mr MALEY: The Member for Gwoja rants from the moral high ground about how these people have not been heard and the lack of procedural fairness, but Labor had every opportunity and took them to court.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; I am genuinely interested in hearing what the Deputy Chief Minister has to say. The Member for Goyder keeps interjecting. I think he will have an aneurysm if he keeps going.

Madam SPEAKER: Any member who tries to disrupt another member's speech through a point of order which is not a point of order will be warned.

Mr MALEY: To go back a step, this started in 2023 under the previous Labor government; when it made a determination, Labor did not follow the rules. Labor did not give the remote framework procedural fairness.

The Member for Gwoja is on the moral high ground about not being heard properly and how we could have done things, but I make it clear that Labor had the opportunity to do it when it was in power, but it did not. The previous Labor government went to NTCAT, the Supreme Court and then the NT Court of Appeal. The Member for Gwoja rants and raves, saying that we should acknowledge the failure, but when those opposite had the opportunity to do so, they did not; instead, they took it to court.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mr MALEY: It is hypocritical for the Member for Gwoja to rant and rave about this because the truth is, when we dig down and go through the timeline, we see that the previous Labor government had the opportunity to do what he just spoke about—talk, listen and give procedural fairness. Guess what Labor did? It took this to NTCAT, the Supreme Court and then the Court of Appeal.

This amendment will clearly fix a Labor mistake. I agree with the Member for Gwoja that mistakes were made by Labor. They are his words; he acknowledged that failure. One thing I agree with him is that this was a mistake made by Labor. In 2023 the previous Labor government had the opportunity to fix it, but it did not. Labor members did not follow procedural fairness. They knew this was on foot. How can I prove that? They took it to court. They started proceedings in NTCAT, the Supreme Court and then in the Court of Appeal.

The Member for Gwoja said that this is a heavy-handed approach and we have not taken every opportunity to hear from tenants, but he was not truthful because he has not laid out the timeline of all this.

We are fixing a Labor mistake. We are trying to mitigate any damage and fix the mistake. Then we can look at this and work out how we can get the Territory in the best place moving forward.

This is about fixing the mistake made by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has not spoken yet. This is an opportunity for her to explain to Territorians why she made the mistake and took this to court, not on one occasion but three. Then it was off to the High Court, where Labor lost that case. We are dealing with the ramifications, fixing the mistake made by Labor members, who had the opportunity to go out and ensure tenants were properly heard—I use the Member for Gwoja's words—but did not do that.

I will be clear for the Territorians listening: we are fixing the mistake. The Member for Gwoja acknowledged that mistakes were made by Labor. Labor had the opportunity to fix the process and the legislation around it when it was in power, so it astounds me that the Member for Gwoja can talk about that and not collapse on the ground. He should be so embarrassed by those words because he had the opportunity, but Labor took it to court on three occasions. I would hate to see the legal fees for those three occasions. It was another waste of taxpayer money, thanks to the previous Labor government, the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Gwoja, who would have been the Attorney-General at the time. It is embarrassing for them.

We are laying out the timeline, fixing Labor's mistakes and doing so in the best interests of all Territorians.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Mr PAECH: Madam Speaker, I wanted to respect your ruling and not interject on the Deputy Chief Minister, but I ask that standing order …

Madam SPEAKER: Just pause there. If you do not have a point of order …

Mr PAECH: It is Standing Order 31.

Madam SPEAKER: You have already spoken in this debate. You do not get a second jump.

Mr PAECH: Standing Order 1 then, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: No, sit down. This is not a …

Mr PAECH: No, I want him to retract that.

Madam SPEAKER: Sit down. This is not a supermarket; you do not come to parliament with a point of order that might suit the occasion as the seconds roll by. We do not interrupt debate; you do not get a second bite at the cherry.

Mr Paech: He called me a liar. Will you let him call me a liar?

Madam SPEAKER: If you keep this up, you will be invited to leave the Chamber very soon.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Can I just say at this point that everyone who speaks in this debate will be heard in silence. No interjections—like you were doing earlier when the Deputy Chief Minister was speaking. Let us be respectful and use the points of order and the rules of this Chamber appropriately.

Please continue, Opposition Leader.

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, mine was Standing Order 31. I believe the Member for Gwoja was raising something offensive from the Member for Nelson, who called him a liar, and wanted to ask him to withdraw that. He wanted to respect your ruling not to interrupt debate, because we are not allowed to raise points of order.

Madam SPEAKER: The Deputy Chief Minister did not call the Member for Gwoja a liar. It was phrased differently, which I accept.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that the government is in a situation whereby it says that it must respond quickly to the High Court ruling that makes the current housing rental framework unlawful. I also acknowledge that this problem was not created by this government, but it is the government that must fix the problem. The solution it has brought to the Chamber goes too far.

I believe there must have been many options before the government, and this is not the right option to fix the problem. One option would have been to enact procedural fairness in relation to the 2023 changes to the rent by going to remote communities and meeting with tenants at community meetings and hearing from them about problems with the rental framework. Another option would have been to return to the previous system.

I believe that someone in the department and in government made a serious error, and people should be called to account for these errors. When the 2023 changes were announced there was opposition to them, and many people experienced significant rent increases that may not have been manageable. The High Court made its ruling because the department failed to do proper consultation on this change.

Yesterday in the Chamber I said that we must be involved in the decision-making that affects our lives. I am pleased that the minister is stating that there will be a new framework and there is intention to consult, but the safeguard of procedural fairness should not be removed from the legislation.

What must happen is procedural fairness, not its removal. The department said that procedural fairness was never meant to be part of the Act, but, as I understand, the principle of procedural fairness always applies to government decisions because it is a safeguard that protects Territorians and the way in which decisions are made about our lives. It is unusual to specifically remove procedural fairness in this way.

I will talk a bit about housing because there are concerns in my communities about many aspects that require shared decision-making on the ground. We are concerned about the design of houses, the new subdivisions for houses and where houses are being built. We are not being included so that we can properly make a decision about housing.

When we talk about $4bn for houses, we want to make sure that we are creating the best possible outcomes and not more problems. If the government keeps building housing in the hub towns, we will see more problems. If we continue to build new suburbs and mix clans within a new suburb instead of having camps where members of one clan can all live in one location, we will see more problems. If we continue to build hot Besser block houses with poor designs, we will see more problems.

If the government wants to use the funding in the best possible way, it must talk to each community and create a housing design based on shared decision-making. We know what is right for our communities, and governments are failing us.

Everything must be based on this principle of procedural fairness. Whether it is housing design or setting a new rental framework, the government must do the job working with the people.

This is poor and lazy legislation, and I do not believe this is what the High Court intended for the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I remind the Assembly that we are debating this legislation because the former Labor government got it wrong. It failed to do the necessary work to consult with people in the bush about the rental framework. We raised these issues when we were in opposition debating this legislation in 2023. We now have to fix Labor's mess.

It is ironic and rich that Labor members oppose these amendments because they got it wrong and did not do the work that they were supposed to. Those opposite said that the CLP could have taken the time to listen. Where were Labor members when they introduced this? Did they take the time to listen? Obviously not; otherwise, as the Deputy Chief Minister said, we would not have ended up going through three courts and be in this position today. As I said, I find it rich for the opposition to come out in the way it has.

I will clear up a few things about this legislation. I appreciate the input from the Member for Mulka, and I will talk about that later.

The tabled Aboriginal Housing NT document said that the rent is too high and the framework disadvantages Aboriginal people in communities. Labor did this; we did not do it, and we are fixing the mess. That document condemns the Territory Labor Party for the legislation it introduced in 2023. We are trying to fix the mess that was left behind.

Ever since we got into government it seems that we have been running around—I certainly am—trying to fix messes left by the previous government. It is like opening a door—you see it in the movies—and all of sudden this garbage falls out from behind the door and you are left there to clean up the mess. Every time I open the door that seems to be what I find. This legislation is a prime example of that, and today we are fixing it.

The previous government put us in this position of being on strict timelines and deadlines in order to fix this legislation because—as the Member for Mulka rightly pointed out—under the appeals court decision the remote rent framework is unlawful. It is unlawful because the previous government did not get it right and did not do the work. The appeals court effectively stated that. That has put us in this position with a timeline that requires us to do the work to make that legislation lawful. We have to do that. The previous government put us in this position.

The opposition put forward the argument that we are pushing families into financial distress. We did not cause the financial distress; Labor pushed them into financial distress.

If those on the other side were serious about the remote rent framework and the people in the bush—the four members over there represent bush electorates—where were they at the time if they think this framework is so miserable, like they are saying today? Why did they not oppose it at the time? Why were they not in their Cabinet room or lobbying their members? Some of them were ministers at the time, and one of them was the minister responsible for this. Why did they not oppose it? If this is such a rubbish framework, as has been stated today, why did they not oppose it?

Suddenly it is the CLP's fault—the big, bad CLP. We are putting families in distress for legislation and a framework that was introduced by the previous Labor government.

I notice the grins and smirks over there. You can grin and smirk all you like, but the reality is that this is your framework. You introduced it. Everything you are saying, trying to blame the CLP, was of your doing. I cannot believe those opposite are condemning the CLP for their decision, the rental framework that they introduced.

Fixing an immediate legal matter from the High Court because it was ruled unlawful has specific timelines that we must meet because it has been deemed unlawful. There are a lot of things we would love to do. The Member for Mulka was quite right and raised valid points about the framework and that consultation, doing a review and everything else. The sad part about this is that these are all things that we would love to do, but because of the timelines pushed on us due to the previous Labor government's failure with this framework, we cannot do those things. We have an issue we need to rectify now. If we do not rectify it, we will fall afoul of the appeals court.

What will we do? We will make sure that we get it right, unlike the previous Labor government which seems to have been unable to do that. We have to fix the immediate problem because of the decision that makes the remote rent framework unlawful. We did not make it unlawful; the previous government did. We are here fixing it.

We will do the right thing. We will review the remote rent framework. We cannot do that straightaway, before we have to amend this legislation to make the remote rent framework lawful; otherwise, as I said, we will fall afoul of the court. We have to get these amendments in straightaway.

We will amend the legislation to make the remote rent framework lawful again, because the previous Labor government brought in legislation with a framework that has been deemed unlawful. We will do the hard work and look at the remote rent framework to make sure that it is fit for purpose and we are not disadvantaging

people in the bush. That is the work we will do in the future. We give the commitment that we will do it because Labor obviously did not do the work in the first instance.

Labor had the opportunity and all the time in the world to do that work, but it put in a framework which has been clearly shown by the courts to be unlawful, yet Labor members still have the gall to stand in this Chamber and blame the CLP for their framework and failures. It is as though history is a foreign place to them. The things that happened two years ago—'No, no, do not worry about that; that did not really happen'—is a foreign place, and Labor members will not admit their mistakes.

I would love to hear the members of the opposition say, 'Yes, we got it wrong. We should have fought harder for people in the bush because we do not think this framework is right.' I would love to hear them say that, because it would show the people they represent that they had their best interests in mind, rather than sling mud at the CLP because we have to fix their problem.

As I said, we will do the work. That is the right thing to do. We will review that framework and make sure it is fit for purpose.

Member for Mulka, I listened to your contribution. I have always said that a lot of wisdom comes from the Member for Mulka. All the points he raised were considered. We would have dearly liked to do them, but, unfortunately, the timeframes and constraints put on us by the court do not allow us to do those things. It would take too long to make some of the changes the Member for Mulka raised. Although they sound simple, they would take a little time and that would probably make us fall afoul of the court's decision.

I look forward to possible contributions from those opposite. I would love to hear them take responsibility for the errors they have made and apologise to those people who have been disadvantaged by their framework. Remember that this is not our framework; we are fixing the mess left behind by Labor—it was Labor's framework.

We have to make these amendments. We will make the framework lawful for the period going forward and then we will do the necessary work to make sure that we get the framework right. Unlike those in the opposition, we will do the work properly and make sure that people in our remote communities have a rent framework that works for them and that they are not disadvantaged or, as the opposition members said, put in a place where they are in financial distress. They were put in financial distress by Labor members.

I welcome the opportunity to speak about this matter and correct the record. I have put on the record actual facts rather than try to rewrite history and deny that someone had any part in a process which has been deemed unlawful by the court.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Allegations of Lying

Madam SPEAKER: I will provide clarification on this old chestnut that comes up fairly regularly in parliament about allegations of lying. It happened yesterday and it has happened again today.

It is not in order to accuse another member of lying or to call them a liar. It is not in order to impute deliberate dishonesty, even in passing by interjection.

Yesterday we heard one member question whether someone had misled parliament. I allowed that. Today another member questioned whether a member had lied. This is shaky ground, particularly when you use the words 'liar' or 'lying'. I allowed that comment earlier to go through to the keeper because it was not an allegation; it was a question similar to yesterday: is the member misleading parliament? Is the member lying? It is much preferable that the word 'liar' or 'lying' is not used. If someone is actually accused of being a liar, that is absolutely unacceptable.

I warn both sides of this Chamber that this is not parliamentary. If you want to accuse someone of misleading parliament formally, or lying formally, you do it through a substantive motion.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, we are told that the Housing Amendment Bill 2026 is a matter of urgency, and I note it this is the 12th Bill brought on urgency in this parliamentary term.

I have said many times in this Chamber that emergency powers are for use during extraordinary, unpredictable and urgent crises such as wars, natural disasters, pandemics, terrorism and civil unrest. Today, once again, urgency is being used to push through a law, avoid scrutiny and stop us doing our jobs properly.

What is the emergency? The Bill is a reaction to a High Court decision, as we have heard, from December 2025, a challenge which has been working its way through the courts since 2022. The government has had a long time to develop an appropriate response to consult with tenants. Instead we are presented with a last-minute fix that seeks to bypass the very concept of fairness.

Government members, moving a Bill on urgency stops your fellow elected representatives from properly analysing a Bill, seeking legal and policy advice, consulting our communities, experts and peak bodies and proposing amendments. It prevents us from making the Bill better and participating in the lawmaking process. It undermines democracy.

As the Member for Mulka said, this is not a problem created by this government. I agree it is a problem that needs fixing. When we asked in our 20-minute briefing what options had been considered to fix this problem, we were not given an answer. When we asked who was consulted in the development of this Bill, we were told no-one.

This Bill makes one change; it inserts new subsection (3A):

> *In making a determination under this section, the Minister is not required to afford any person, who would be affected by the determination, an opportunity to be heard in relation to the determination.*

To fix the issue, the response has been to deny procedural fairness for public housing tenants. Rather than amend the legislation to require that the minister consult with affected persons, the CLP government has chosen to remove the right of affected persons to challenge a decision by the minister to determine rent.

The Northern Territory's four land councils—Anindilyakwa Land Council, Central Land Council, Northern Land Council and Tiwi Land Council—have united with NAAJA and Aboriginal Housing NT against what they describe as the government's latest attack on Territorians' basic rights. In a joint statement these six organisations remind us:

> *… that procedural fairness is a safeguard that protects every Territorian. It is about making sure government decisions that affect people's lives are made properly and fairly … It is a legal protection built into Government decision-making, to make sure that there is a minimum level of fairness in government decisions.*

By removing these requirements, the government is making a startling admission. As NAAJA Chief Executive Ben Grimes stated, this is an admission of failure. It suggests the government does not believe it is capable of making decisions in a fair way, so it is introducing legislation to allow it to make decisions in a way it knows will be unfair.

The government claims this amendment is required by the High Court decision, but this is a false excuse. Legally and practically, this amendment is not required. All that is required is that the government speaks with tenants on decisions which directly affect them. Instead, the government is using the decision as an excuse to abolish procedural fairness, a move described by stakeholders as dangerous and a slippery slope.

We must be honest about who this affects. We heard from the Member for Mulka earlier that this legislation almost exclusively affects Aboriginal Territorians, particularly those in remote communities.

Northern Land Council Chairperson Matthew Ryan was clear when he said:

> *This is racist legislation. Our people should have the same rights as all Territorians.*

This Bill also undermines our Closing the Gap commitments to shared decision-making, which this Chamber passed a motion to support yesterday.

Leeanne Caton, CEO of Aboriginal Housing NT, noted that despite being the peak body for Aboriginal community housing, the organisation has:

> *… not been consulted in any way in relation to the amendment of the Housing Act …*

This is despite being a member of the joint steering committee, where it is supposed to be a genuine and equal partner.

For reform to be meaningful, the government must work with tenants to address systemic issues, implementing income-based rent, reducing overcrowding and addressing the rising cost of living. Instead, we are rushing through a law that risks further litigation at a significant cost to the taxpayer. This process either reflects an inability by government to plan for predictable legal outcomes or is another excuse to avoid democratic accountability.

I cannot support a Bill that views the fundamental right to be heard as an administrative inconvenience. I cannot support a Bill that replaces fundamental justice with legislated unfairness.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, the technical aspects have been covered well by our ministers, so I want to bring a bit of history to this matter.

The relevant determination was made on 23 December 2021 by the then Member for Sanderson, Kate Worden, who was the Minister for Territory Families and Urban Housing. At that time the Member for Gwoja was the minister for Remote Housing. He had a great contribution this morning, but we did not hear how the Member for Gwoja stood up for his constituents, the Indigenous people in remote areas who live in remote housing. He said the rent was put up. The High Court found issues with that determination that has impacted our ability to appropriately levy rent. What did the Member for Gwoja do to represent his people?

Unfortunately, this is another example of this government having to clean up a mess left by the previous Labor government. The list goes on.

I have spoken previously in this House about the calamitous state that our power industry was left in. The current Opposition Leader, who was the Minister for Essential Services and Renewables and Energy at the time, spruiked to the media how great Labor's plan for 50% renewables by 2030 was, but when journalists requested that report by freedom of information, all but two pages were blacked out. The front cover and the back cover were unredacted; every page in between was blacked out. That was consultation under the former Labor government. That was its view of keeping Territorians informed on the true state of affairs.

The current Opposition Leader was a member of Cabinet at the time. What contribution did she have for her remote constituents when that determination was being made? How did she stand up for her constituents when rent was being put up?

We are constantly forced to do the best we can in the bad situation that we inherited from the previous Labor government.

In my time I have lived in share houses and I have rented. I never had a chance to tell the landlord what rent I wanted; the rent was the rent. That was the market. The landlord made a determination. They would say, 'The house is $400 or $500 a week. Your share is $80 a week.' That was it.

The *Housing Act* is clear. The minister can make determinations from time to time to set the rent. I am going through a process with my constituents and the community housing providers in my electorate, reviewing their rents. It is based on a formula, and there is no negotiation in that process. The rent is the rent. They get notice and then prepare, but they cannot go back to the community housing provider and say, 'Sorry, I do not like that rent. I do not want to pay it.' That is just what they have to pay.

Like so many other things—the 50% renewable target by 2030. I could go on and on about all the messes we have to clean up, and this is yet another one that we have to fix.

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank the Members for Gwoja, Mulka, Namatjira, Johnston and Blain for their contributions.

It is important to understand how we got to this point. In looking at the history of this matter it is clear that we are debating this legislation today because of decisions that Labor made during its term of government.

This Bill amends the *Housing Act* to ensure it can operate in the future as intended and will allow for the government to effectively set rent for public housing. We are responding to a High Court decision. These amendments do nothing more than ensure that the remote rent framework operates in the way that was always intended.

The former government made a mess of the remote rent framework. The Opposition Leader and the Member for Gwoja were a part of that government.

I have asked the department to undertake a complete review and redesign of the rent framework once this legislation is passed. All this legislation does is confirm the current remote rent framework so that we can move forward, engage, consult and work with Aboriginal people, including members of the joint steering committee—Aboriginal Housing NT and the land councils—so that we can get a framework in place that will be suitable for Aboriginal people living in remote areas.

Labor made a mess of this. No provisions in the framework required the government to consult with more than 5,000 remote tenants on an individual basis. The High Court decision found that in the absence of express words making clear that a condition to afford procedural fairness was not required, it would be implied—contrary to the original design and implementation.

When the former government designed and implemented the remote rent framework, it did not intend to consult on an individual basis with any person. Let us make that clear. The former Labor government expressed that intention by putting in place determinations regarding the remote rent framework without engaging with Aboriginal people. The Member for Gwoja put forward a case that all these things should or should not have happened, but it was clearly not the case.

This Bill focuses on the regulatory operation of the determination of rents payable within the remote public housing sector of the Northern Territory. These amendments are intended to address deficiencies identified through the litigation proceedings and the decision of the High Court of Australia in *Badari v Minister for Territory Families and Urban Housing [2025] HCA 47*.

The Bill will improve regulation and administration of public housing in the Northern Territory through the following amendment. After section 23(3) a new subsection (3A) is being inserted which provides:

> *In making a determination under this section, the Minister is not required to afford any person, who would be affected by the determination, an opportunity to be heard in relation to the determination.*

This change is important and necessary to ensure the setting of remote rents into the future.

Procedural fairness was never in the Act. I heard some members suggest that we are removing procedural fairness, but we are not because it was not written into the legislation. Let us be clear on that.

Tenants will not be adversely affected; their rent will remain as is. This legislation is confirming the current arrangements so that we are in a position to move forward and engage with Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory. There are no changes to the hardship provisions, and the safety net remains.

Essentially, we are sorting out the mess left to us by the former Labor government. I think it was the Member for Nelson who pointed out that every step along the way the former government challenged court proceedings. The High Court made its decision last year, and today, acting on urgency, we are setting the current rent framework in place.

There has been a long history of lack of engagement with Aboriginal people in setting the remote rent framework. When Labor talked about the remote rent framework years ago, there were complaints. In fact, in my electorate a number of complaints were raised with me that there was insufficient consultation with Aboriginal people living in remote areas. This is the rent framework that the Labor government put together which has impacted on Aboriginal people. I make it clear that once the legislation is passed, our job is to engage and work with Aboriginal people to ensure that we have a suitable framework.

Labor members do not want to talk about these issues because they know why we are here. Yes, they can send messages that, apparently somewhere along the line, the CLP has done this or not done that or had time to do this and did it wrong. There are no ifs, buts or maybes of how we got here today: we have to try to fix Labor's mess and confirm the rent framework so that there is a continuity of rent being paid. Nobody is being affected by this decision; all this does is confirm the current rent framework.

In light of the High Court's decision the department will also run a process to calculate the rent that tenants were liable to pay since the implementation of the remote rent framework, and will repay amounts it has collected which exceed that liability. We are putting those two processes in place. Once this legislation has passed, we will ensure that we repay any amounts collected that exceeded the rent that should have been collected.

Nothing changes for the remote rent framework; all this Bill does is confirm where we are today.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail

Clauses 1 and 2, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 3:

J DAVIS: What solutions other than new subsection (3A) were considered?

Mr EDGINGTON: We considered a number of options. One was to try to revert to the previous system. Another option was to try to implement a zero rent framework decision by the minister. However, there were a number of issues. The High Court decision made last year required us to act quickly. All those options would take a substantial amount of time and resources to implement. This is the most effective way to deal with the High Court decision as it stands.

J DAVIS: Who was consulted in identifying that this was the most effective way?

Mr EDGINGTON: The legal advice regarding the High Court decision is that we need to act quickly to implement the decision. Our intention has always been to go out and engage with Aboriginal people, Aboriginal Housing NT and the land councils to ensure the rent framework meets the needs of all players. This legislation is to make an urgent decision based on the High Court decision so that we can move forward.

J DAVIS: Under new subsection (3A), could the department of Housing decide to change the rent framework again without consulting tenants?

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 155; relevance. The Member for Johnston is talking about things that may be hypothetical. This time should be confined to how the clause works; that is not relevant.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will let the minister make a judgement as to whether they think it is acceptable.

Mr EDGINGTON: These amendments will effectively allow me as the minister to make a legal determination so that we can confirm the rent framework. The importance of that is having the continuity of paying rent with the intention that we set a new rent framework, which will require substantial engagement and consultation. The aim of this Bill is to confirm the current arrangements so that we can move forward and engage with Aboriginal people to establish a new framework.

J DAVIS: Under this clause, could a policy change to how rental debts are collected under the Act be made without consultation with tenants?

Mr EDGINGTON: They are matters of policy. They are not reflective of this clause.

J DAVIS: Similarly—it may be the same answer—under this clause, could the department of Housing raise rents to unpayable levels to effectively force the eviction of tenants without any consultation?

Mr EDGINGTON: As previous ministers have done, it will allow the minister to make a determination and set the rents that are payable. In doing that we want to ensure those rents are consistent with what they have previously been.

J DAVIS: Could those decisions be made without consultation with tenants? Do I understand this correctly?

Mr EDGINGTON: Those decisions have been made for a substantial period.

J DAVIS: I understand.

Ms UIBO: Will this amendment apply to all public housing tenants?

Mr EDGINGTON: Yes; this applies to all rents in public housing.

Ms UIBO: Does that mean, under the amended Act, the minister could declare any type of Housing determination for any public housing tenant across the Northern Territory without consultation?

Mr EDGINGTON: That has always been the case; yes.

Ms UIBO: It has not always been the case, but it will be now.

Beyond setting rent, are there ministerial determinations that this amendment would apply to outside the rent framework?

Mr EDGINGTON: This just applies to rent setting under the Act.

Ms UIBO: To be clear, and I appreciate your response, we had legal concerns that any ministerial determinations which are not rent related could also be made for public housing tenants across the Northern Territory without consultation. I wanted to be clear about the criteria for tenancy guidelines or documents so that people who rent public housing are aware that they may not be consulted first about any changes that affect them. Is that correct?

Mr EDGINGTON: This amendment inserts new subsection (3A) in section 23, which relates to rent.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Remainder of the Bill, by leave, taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 17	Noes 7
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Guyula
Mrs Carlson	K McNamara
Mr Charls	Mr Paech
Mr Edgington	Ms Uibo
Mrs Finocchiaro	My Young
Mrs Hersey	
Mr Howe	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	
Mr Maley	
Mr O'Gallagher	
Mr Patel	
Dr Rahman	
Mr Yan	
Mrs Zio	

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

The Assembly suspended.

NOTICES

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that the Northern Territory Government acknowledges that when considering building the next new hospital in the NT, at the very top of the list is a new Alice Springs Hospital and that no other NT town or region needs and deserves a modern, new hospital more than Alice Springs and Central Australia.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that this Assembly:

1. acknowledges that the Aboriginal Justice Agreement is a cornerstone framework for improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians through partnership, shared responsibility and community-led solutions

2. acknowledges that long-term justice reform requires genuine partnership with Aboriginal people, stable and predictable funding and a commitment to prevention, diversion and community-based responses

3. calls on the government to publicly recommit to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement beyond 2027 and guarantee full funding for the agreement for four years.

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

1. notes the Northern Territory's commitment to implement recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

2. recognises the need to legislate and operationalise child safety standards with an effective oversight mechanism to operationalise enforcement

3. affirms the need to undertake further work to build awareness and capacity within the community and organisations to comply with standards to ensure organisations engage children to create a safe culture, adopt strategies and take action to improve child wellbeing and prevent harm.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that this Assembly recognises housing as a fundamental human right and calls on the government to fully enact the Better Deal for Renters policy while urgently increasing investment in social and affordable housing and adopting a housing-first approach to ensure secure housing for all Territorians.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that this Assembly:

1. recognises the warnings from recent research, including the federal government's National Climate Risk Assessment that parts of the Northern Territory could become unliveable within decades

2. calls on the government to commit to emissions reduction targets consistent with keeping global warming to 1.5 degrees, noting that opening huge new fossil fuel reserves such as the Beetaloo basin is incompatible with a safe, liveable future for the Northern Territory.

QUESTION TIME

Administrator Appointment – Vetting Process

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

On radio this morning you said that you had nothing to do with the vetting process for the incoming Administrator. Will you answer once and for all, on behalf of Territorians, in this Chamber to put on the official record, hand on heart, that you, your team and your department had nothing to do with the vetting process of your captain's pick of the NT Administrator?

Madam SPEAKER: Hold on. Can I ask you to withdraw 'captain's pick'?

Ms UIBO: Absolutely.

Chief Minister, will you stand in this Chamber, hand on heart, to put on the record once and for all that you, your team and your department had nothing to do with the vetting process of the NT Administrator?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am excited that the Opposition Leader spends her time listening to me on radio because she might learn a thing or two about what it is to be a government that reduces crime, rebuilds the economy and restores our beautiful lifestyle.

Boy, have we been kicking goals on that, which is why they are dragging out this debate. They have nothing better to talk about. The hallmark of Opposition Leader Selena Uibo will be character assassination. That is what you spend all your time doing, Opposition Leader, and it reflects much more poorly on you than it does on me.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; the imputations the Chief Minister is making. I asked about the vetting process and whether she had a hand in it or is pretending that she did not?

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. You are pretty evenly matched.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The hypocrisy is writ large by the Opposition Leader who does not like the imputation but is happy to impugn negativity about anybody else she likes, in this Chamber and in the media.

If she was listening to me on the radio this morning, she actually would have learned something. I note that in the gallery is the media person I was on radio with, and she could back me up to say that is not what I said.

Your question is based on an incorrect premise in the first place. If you listen to me on radio from now on, take better notes and perhaps learn a thing or two about what a government focused on the future and delivering for Territorians is about. In less than one year we reduced crime by nearly 10%, took our economy from the bottom of the barrel, where it had been for a decade, and lifted it halfway there …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, I think this might be your last point of order, but please proceed.

Ms UIBO: Standing Order 110; my question, as you know, was specifically about the vetting process.

Madam SPEAKER: She is halfway. Please proceed, minister; you will not be interrupted again.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I have answered this question in every format and forum that you can imagine. I have been clear there was an initial assessment and about the nomination to the federal government. I was clear that the federal government does the extensive vetting and that it is the minister for Territories who signs it off. Then the Governor-General officially signs it and appoints the official—I cannot think of the name now. It is the common seal. There is an official …

Ms Uibo: Because you do not know the process; shame job.

Mr Paech: You do not even know.

Madam SPEAKER: Let us keep it down. You have asked the question, and you can listen to the answer.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: You are such a disrespectful human being.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Withdraw that and continue your answer, please, Chief Minister.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I withdraw, but at the end of the day it is not okay to impugn other people and then have a glass jaw. Can I just say that, Madam Speaker?

For *Hansard*, the Opposition Leader was heckling and diminishing me for not remembering the name of a technical form that the Governor-General signs in appointing the Administrator. This is the level we have gotten to. I have clearly outlined the process many times.

His Honour the Honourable David Connolly is the 24th Administrator of the Northern Territory. He will be sworn in, in Darwin, by the Governor-General on 27 February. We are looking forward to working with someone who has as much fire in his belly about the future of the Territory as we do.

Banned Drinker Orders – Reform

Mr HOWE to CHIEF MINISTER

My question will be relevant to the people of the Territory, and I will ask the Chief Minister something the people of Drysdale actually want to hear about.

On Monday the people of Drysdale and I were pleased to hear that reducing crime remains the number one priority for this government, which is the number one reason I was put in this Chamber. The Finocchiaro CLP government has delivered a range of reforms aimed at tackling the root causes of crime, including strengthening public drinking laws. One reform delivered last year was extending banned drinker orders from seven days to 28 days. Can you update the Assembly on how this reform is supporting frontline services, improving community safety and delivering growth, certainty and security for Territorians?

Opposition, that is how you ask a question on behalf of the people of the Territory.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Drysdale knows why he was elected to parliament, what he stands for and who he is fighting for—that is, the people of the Northern Territory. They elected him to be their voice here. It is a timely moment to reflect on how hard he works in the seat of Drysdale in Palmerston and to recommit to the fact that reducing crime is our number one priority.

It was our number one priority when we came to government in August 2024. It was our number one priority in the first sittings of parliament when we passed our reducing-crime package in full on urgency. We have since consistently continued with our law and order reform, which has had tremendous results, and there is much more work to do.

The 9.3% reduction in the number of victims represents 2,223 fewer people who are victims of crime under a CLP government compared with a Labor government that every one of the opposition members was a part of and had a hand in. Two of them served as Attorney-General.

We acted swiftly to give police better powers and more support. We graduated 201 police through the college last year. Our police public safety officers will start later this month, plus there will be three constable courses this year. We are focused and committed in 2026 to stay the course on reducing crime because people in the Member for Drysdale's community and my community and the people of the Northern Territory want to know that in 2026 reducing crime will remain our number one focus. We commit to them that it will be.

Late last year we passed reform, which was fantastic. It came from the front line. Police in Katherine, under the leadership of Terry Zhang, had been doing an incredible job issuing banned drinker orders, the seven-day orders for people not to drink. We saw that data and had the Banned Drinker Register review, so the recommendation to increase those orders to 28 days was a no-brainer for us.

From 15 December to 2 February—hold on to your hat, Member for Drysdale—police issued 2,532 banned drinker orders. That is a small window of time. If you break it down just for Operation Ludlow in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, police in Alice Springs issued 407; Tennant Creek, 27; and Katherine, 167. That leaves nearly 2,000 Territory-wide.

It has been another tool in the toolbox for our police to support them to do their job with the powers they need to keep people safe.

I take my hat off to our police. They do an incredible job.

Thank you, Member for Drysdale, for being such a strong voice for the people of Drysdale.

Administrator Appointment

Mr GUYULA to CHIEF MINISTER

As leaders of the Northern Territory, we are supposed to work to eradicate racism and discrimination in our community. You chose to appoint someone who has a history of offensive comments.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Mulka, please pause. You are going down the wrong track here.

Mr GUYULA: No, I am not.

Madam SPEAKER: What you have said is in breach of Standing Order 30. You either change the wording of your question or take your seat.

Mr GUYULA: I am a leader of my people. I am a sovereign nation leader.

Madam SPEAKER: But you are breaching Standing Order 30 …

Mr GUYULA: You can kick me out. I am a sovereign nation leader. I stand along with this department …

Madam SPEAKER: … by inferring disrespectfully. Please take your seat, Member for Mulka.

Mr GUYULA: This government does not respect my eldership and leadership of my people.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Mulka, either take your seat or leave the Chamber.

Mr Guyula: I can do whatever you like. There is no justice here.

Mr Young: Shameful!

K McNamara: He said those things.

Madam SPEAKER: Next question. The next person to interject in disrespect of me can leave the Chamber too.

Agriculture Sector – Growth

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Unlike the Labor opposition, this side of the Chamber is solely focused on delivering things that matter for Territorians.

Agriculture is a major economic driver for the Northern Territory and a vital source of jobs and investment in our regional communities. Recent reports show that live export volumes reached their highest level in a decade, with NT cattle exports at their strongest since 2014. Can you update the Assembly on how the Finocchiaro government is supporting the growth of the agriculture sector and diversifying markets? How are those record export results strengthening our regional economies?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is an important question because we need to make sure that our economy continues to drive forward. In the last eight years it went backwards, but under the leadership of Lia Finocchiaro we have now reached fourth in the overall ranking in relation to our economy.

I acknowledge the former Member for Goyder, my brother Peter Maley, who is in the gallery.

Agriculture is a major economic driver in the Northern Territory, along with gas, tourism, Defence and mining. These are the pillars that make sure our economy moves forward. Live exports through Darwin Port have reached their highest level in a decade. This is driving confidence and delivering jobs in the Northern Territory. We are backing agricultural developments and live export because we know how important they are to the Territory economy and in driving local jobs. Whether in Katherine, Tennant Creek—the land of opportunity—or around Alice Springs, this is an important industry. We are working hard.

Just under 450,000 head of cattle passed through the port last year. That is an 18% increase over the previous year. Of that, 313,000 were Territory cattle. That is Territory born-and-bred cattle and Territory jobs, with Territorians working in the stockyard, mustering those cattle. I know how hard that work is because I have been there and done that.

Water buffalo numbers climbed to 7,200. That is a 57% increase in export out of the Northern Territory. This means local jobs and a local boost to the economy.

Indonesia continues to be our number one live export market, receiving more than 90% of the cattle shipped through the Port of Darwin. The minister for Trade is going overseas and doing a great job to develop those markets and make sure that people are willing to buy and invest in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory continues to play a vital role in the Australian cattle industry, with 40% of the nation's live export going through the Port of Darwin. That drives local jobs—the people managing the fuel, truck drivers, mechanics and even the hairdressers, who work to look after people driving trucks. The port cemented its position as a live export gateway because it had a 23% increase in trade in the last financial year.

This industry creates jobs and grows the economy. This government supports it 100%.

Administrator Appointment

K McNAMARA to CHIEF MINISTER

I have been inundated with emails, calls and messages from people wanting to speak since the news broke of your recent appointee. I do not believe it is acceptable for your government to hide behind a standing order to avoid accountability to the people we represent.

That being said, I have questions from two constituents. They say:

'As an Aboriginal person and as someone else who is a survivor of domestic violence, how are we supposed to feel respected and welcomed by a man who has said, "Aboriginal people have done nothing good for this country", and "I was supposed to go home and commit domestic violence …

Madam SPEAKER: Pause, please! Member for Nightcliff, you know this standing order. You understand what I sent out to you all: a message on Monday morning advising that you are not to be disrespectful to the head of state, the new Administrator, whether you like it or not.

K McNamara: Those are his words. She does not have the guts to stand up and back her own Administrator's words. That is your prerogative. She does not have the guts to stand up …

Madam SPEAKER: Would you like to cease your interjections or leave the Chamber?

K McNamara: I have no more questions. If she does not want to answer it …

Madam SPEAKER: No. I am telling you that you cannot ask that question. We have rules. We are a part of the Westminster parliamentary system. We all have to comply with this rule whether we like it or not. We have to respect the head of state and not be disrespectful to the Northern Territory Administrator.

International Sports Events

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for PEOPLE, SPORT and CULTURE

Territorians are proud of our sporting events, sporting culture and the role that major events play in inspiring young people, strengthening community pride and showcasing the Territory positively to the rest of the world. Can you update the Assembly on how the Finocchiaro CLP government is securing high-profile international sporting events for the Territory and what this means for local communities, grassroots sport and the Territory's reputation as a destination for world-class sport and culture?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fong Lim enjoys watching cricket.

I am proud to inform the Assembly that international test cricket will return to the Northern Territory for the first time in 23 years. The Minister for Major Events worked hard to get the deal over the line, so I pay tribute to her efforts as well.

In August 2026 Australia will take on Bangladesh in a full international test match at Marrara Stadium, supported by a broad agreement that includes two T20 International matches in 2027. This is a major achievement and a clear vote of confidence in the Territory's sporting infrastructure, event hosting capability and future.

Test cricket is the pinnacle of the game. It represents endurance, skill and character, and its return to Darwin will inspire young Territorians to dream big and pursue excellence in sport. For our local cricket community this is an incredibly exciting opportunity to see the best players compete here at home. We know the impact of the elevation of local Jake Weatherald to the Australian test team for the Ashes. There is no doubt that we will see direct links to his selection and a new wave of budding cricketers in a few years' time.

This event is also deeply meaningful for our multicultural community. With Bangladesh coming to Darwin, many Territorians will see their heritage and love of cricket reflected on the world stage, reinforcing sport's unique power to bring people together.

Last year's T20 Internationals generated more than $4m in economy activity, delivered packed stadiums and demonstrated that the Territory can host major international events with confidence. The return of test cricket is not just about one match; it is about legacy-boosting participation, strengthening clubs, inspiring the next generation and positioning the Territory as a destination for world-class sports and culture.

Those opposite presided over a collapse in confidence. This is what strong leadership delivers: confidence; opportunity; and pride for Territorians.

Tourism – Recreational Hunting

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for PARKS and WILDLIFE

The *New York Times* ranked the Northern Territory as one of the world's top travel destinations. This international recognition reflects the things that Territorians value most: our outdoor lifestyle; exploring nature; and the freedom to enjoy seasonal activities such as recreational hunting. Can you outline what this recognition on the international stage means and how the government is providing certainty and backing traditional Territory activities that matter to locals?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we all know how great our Territory lifestyle is, but when somebody else from far away tells us how great it is by putting the Top End at number one in Australia for the places to visit in 2026 that is a very good accolade—fantastic. In fact, I think we are number 14 out of 52 in the whole wide world of places to go to in 2026.

You mentioned hunting, Member for Goyder, and I know that you love your hunting. You are out and about all the time. Many Territorians love their hunting.

Mr Maley: Honk, honk!

Ms BOOTHBY: That is right, Member for Nelson.

This hunting season showed that Territorians love hunting, with more than 1,000 waterfowl permits issued. There were only 786 the year before, so hunting is becoming more popular in the Northern Territory thanks to our government. That is because we delivered 18 additional days for the hunting season, which was fantastic news for hunters. We did not open the season midweek like Labor used to do—trying to tuck it in the back corner and hoping no-one would notice—we opened it on a Saturday and made a big deal about it because we know that Territorians love hunting. You know who else loves hunting? Tourists, so of course we welcome them as well.

Bart Irwin, a hunting enthusiast, sings the praises of our government because he knows we back hunters and that it brings dollars to the Northern Territory to grow our economy. What better way to do that in our year of growth, certainty and security?

We cannot forget that we locked in bag limits for the next five seasons, including 2029, which is amazing.

I will share a quick story. The keen hunter, the Deputy Chief Minister, took his daughter to McKinlay River Station not that long ago because she too loves hunting. It resonated strongly with Territorians because they understood this family and our tradition—the thing that you do on the weekend as a Territorian. The photo of you and your daughter, Deputy Chief Minister, on social media received more than 2,000 reactions, which is fantastic. It went out to the world. That was a viral post.

That is backed by the fact that more than 12 months ago one of the first things we did when we came to government was expand Harrison Dam. That is a popular hunting place just down the highway. You would know all about that, Member for Goyder.

That *New York Times* recognition did not happen by accident; it was because of the hard work of our government to put the Territory on the map. We are proud of that, and we continue that good work into 2026.

Administrator Appointment

J DAVIS to CHIEF MINISTER

You have reminded us about our job in this Chamber—to represent and work for all the people of the Northern Territory—so this question is for the many people in my community who have contacted me saying that it has still not been answered.

Does your government's process for recommending a person for appointment as Administrator include reviewing publicly available material, including social media, before making a recommendation—yes or no?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, again those opposite want to spend their time talking about this instead of the issues that really matter to the Territory …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We have just evacuated 450 people from Daly River whose homes might flood this weekend, but those opposite do not want to ask about that. We have created the first Territory development area under the powers of the *Territory Coordinator Act*, but I have not received any questions about that. It goes on and on.

For those of you who clearly listen to me when I am on radio, I was on radio yesterday when I said that even if I had the chance to make that decision again, I would give him a chance to prove himself. On 27 February His Honour the Honourable David …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister, under Standing Order 30 we will not refer to the new Administrator in any context. Please continue.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Then I have answered the question.

Territory Wildlife Park's Trains Donated to Katherine

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Christmas came early for the wonderful citizens of Katherine with the Finocchiaro CLP government gifting a special present—the old trains from the Territory Wildlife Park. Although I only connected digitally to the unveiling of the trains—through the Member for Katherine—it did not lessen the feeling of pride I experienced knowing that our government is once again delivering for our remote towns. Can you update the Assembly on this charitable act and what it signifies for the people of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we all know what a beautiful town Alice Springs is. Closely following behind Alice Springs is the town of Katherine. It is a beautiful town and a must-see destination, with Nitmiluk Gorge, Katherine Hot Springs and Cutta Cutta Caves on its doorstep.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Let us calm down.

Mr BURGOYNE: I can tell that we have lots of proud representatives in this Chamber today.

Katherine is also home now to the much-loved iconic trains that have operated at the Territory Wildlife Park since it first opened in 1989. For more than 35 years, hundreds of thousands of people hopped off and on the trains on the four-kilometre loop around one of the Territory's most outstanding wildlife parks. From one renowned location to another, these people movers are an amazing part of the Territory's history. It was a CLP government that opened the Territory Wildlife Park, and I am proud to be a minister under the current CLP government that is responsible for gifting this piece of history to the regional town of Katherine.

Christmas is a time when the Territory shines. If there is one place that knows how to celebrate Christmas, it is Katherine. Therefore, it is only fitting that these trains were gifted to Katherine through the Community Projects Association so that the people of Katherine could enjoy the K-Town Express Christmas Lights Tour.

The trains got straight to work and right into the spirit of Christmas. They were decorated in bright lights, and they brought joy to many families as they made their way through Katherine. One house that stood out amongst all the others had some 80,000 lights. By all accounts, it truly did shine. It was an incredible effort which took three week to complete and one week to take down.

The people movers were so popular that on 13, 20 and 24 December, several hundred people climbed aboard each night. You could not keep the smiles off people's faces. My good friend and fellow minister the Member for Katherine donated 300 icy poles each night and ended up having to cut them in half to keep up with popular demand. There were even interstate visitors from Sydney and Brisbane who were thrilled to join in the festivities, stating that they did not have anything like this in their home town.

I think we can all agree the heat has been turned up here in the Chamber, but it is wonderful to remember that across the Territory our government is getting on and delivering for Territorians. Although these trains might seem insignificant to some, they have brought joy to the people of Katherine.

Mr YOUNG: Madam Speaker, I am shocked that only 18 months ago this CLP came in here on accountability and transparency, yet its members fail to answer questions that the public deserve to know. We have asked many questions about this appointment, and you continue to shut us down. You come in here and take Territorians for fools. What is the point of even being here?

EXCLUSION OF MEMBER
Member for Daly

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly! Take your seat. It is me who decides what is asked and what is not asked. You can leave the Chamber now.

Mr Howe: What an act! An act for the press gallery.

K McNamara: Because you appointed a racist, bigoted Administrator.

Members interjecting.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The Member for Nightcliff just called the Member for Drysdale racist and bigoted.

A member: No, no. She called the Administrator …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Karama, take your seat. We will have a few seconds' silence.

Mr Howe: It was me—said it to me.

Mr O'Gallagher: Said it to the Member for Drysdale.

Madam SPEAKER: We will have a few seconds' silence. Are there any more questions?

Small Business – Territory Lifestyle

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

The Northern Territory is widely recognised as spectacular, unique and world class, and Territorians take pride in a lifestyle built on strong communities, local character and opportunity. That lifestyle is created and sustained by the small businesses operating across our towns and regions. As a former Deputy CEO of the Chamber of Commerce I remain a strong champion for our local business sector. Small businesses make up 96% of all Territory businesses and are woven into everyday life, from cafes and tourism operators to tradies, retailers and family enterprises. They create local jobs, support essential services and strengthen community connections that define Territory living.

Can you update the Assembly on how small businesses and the Territory lifestyle go hand in hand, and how this government is backing them?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is incredibly disappointing that those on the other side are not here to hear what an amazing job is happening with our small businesses in the community and the passion with which the Member for Karama fights for his small businesses. His experience in the past is no small tribute to the work being done by our government.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, we will not refer to who is and who is not in the Chamber at the moment.

Ms CAHILL: Okay.

The Territory has a lifestyle that is second to none. It is one of our greatest strengths. It is defined by close-knit communities, local character and a freedom that comes with living and working in a place like no other. Every person who has been to the Territory knows how special this place is.

Small businesses make up 96% of all Territory businesses, so they are the heart, soul and backbone of who we are. They are the cafes, the corner stores, the tradies, the retailers, the tourism operators and the family enterprises that Territorians rely on every day. They employ locals, sponsor sporting teams, train apprentices and, most importantly, keep the money circulating in our community. That is why backing small business is a priority for the Finocchiaro CLP government. We understand that when small business is strong, communities are stronger and the Territory lifestyle is protected.

Our focus is on creating the right conditions for small business to succeed. That means reducing red tape, improving regulatory certainty and making it easier to start, run and grow a business in the Territory. It also means listening to small business owners and working with them to address the real challenges they face.

In our year of growth, certainty and security we are seeing the results of that approach. Small businesses are expanding, investing and creating jobs across urban centres and, most critically, our regional communities. This growth supports population stability, keeps our services local and helps families build a future in the Territory. It is why procurement reform done late last year said that we must focus on our local businesses and ensure that they are supported in every possible space. From our regional towns to our suburbs, small businesses are shaping places where people want to live, work and visit. They underpin our tourism offerings, support local supply chains and continue to contribute to our vibrant main streets and strong regional economies.

The message from this government is clear: we value small businesses; we understand their role in sustaining the Territory and its lifestyle; and we are 100%—actually 200%—committed to backing them so that they can continue to deliver on opportunities, jobs and strong communities. This commitment ensures the Territory's lifestyle continues to grow, thrive and remain accessible for current and future Territorians. It will encourage many more people to come and join us in this beautiful space we call home.

Bombing of Darwin Commemoration

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for VETERANS

In two weeks' time we will be commemorating the Bombing of Darwin, the largest and most devastating wartime attack on Australian soil. Can you update the Assembly as to how this significant event will

commemorate the anniversary on 19 February and how, through events such as these, this government is ensuring that veterans in the Northern Territory are being recognised, acknowledged and supported?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Wanguri, along with the Member for Drysdale, takes a keen interest in veterans' affairs. As we all know, the Member for Wanguri's dad was on a ship that was torpedoed by the Japanese Navy in World War II.

I can tell all members of this House that our veterans, serving and ex-serving members in the Northern Territory are truly valued and appreciated.

The Bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 was totally transformative. It shattered the belief that Australia was untouchable. The Bombing of Darwin left deep impacts on the Territory and still shapes Darwin's identity and military presence today.

As Minister for Veterans it will be an honour to attend the City of Darwin's commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin and the re-enactment which includes the 8th/12th Regiment's firing of anti-aircraft guns.

Following the commemoration service, Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro will host a reception at Parliament House to welcome Defence personnel, veterans, community members, survivors and family members. It is one way that this CLP government can demonstrate its respect for those who have previously served and those who continue to serve and defend our country.

Indeed, the next generation of the Defence community will also be the focal point this weekend when the annual Welcome to the Top End event is hosted by Defence members and family support. This fantastic event welcomes Australian Defence Force personnel to our beautiful Northern Territory, a place where our great lifestyle is being restored. My department's veterans engagement and support team will join many stallholders at the Convention Centre. Our team will speak directly with members of the veterans community, providing useful information and promoting activities. The initiative is funded under Operation Thrive. This is an opportunity for people to connect to the community, discover support and advocacy services, network and understand the lay of the land. Providing opportunities for community building and social connection is the foundation of supporting our veterans community and restoring our lifestyle.

We are delivering for our veterans. We acknowledge them. We are committed to ensuring that the Northern Territory is a place for all veterans and serving Defence members to live, work and transition.

Mr HOWE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Now that it is rather calm in here, I draw your attention to Standing Order 50 for the Member for Nightcliff, who could not handle the situation and has abandoned her chair. She stood over and pointed, saying 'racist' and 'bigot' towards me. I ask you to rule on Standing Order 50.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Drysdale, after Question Time I will be reflecting on what happened in the Chamber. I will consider what you have asked, and I will come back with a response at a later point this evening.

VISITORS
Australian Defence Force

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome in the gallery this afternoon the presence of the Australian Defence Force members on deployment in Darwin as part of Operation Resolute. Welcome to Parliament House. It is lovely to see you here.

Members: Hear, hear!

Living Water Smart Initiative

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for ESSENTIAL SERVICES

I acknowledge in the gallery my electorate officer, Luke, and my daughter Ella. Thank you for coming today.

The CLP is committed to helping Territorians lower the cost of living. This government doubled the solar feed-in tariff in peak times, lowering Territorians' energy bills. We doubled the battery bonus to $12,000 so

that Territorians can store the energy their solar panels produce. Many members of the Fannie Bay electorate have taken up that bonus. We gave Territorians free licences for a year and froze car registration fees. We helped Territorians safe time spent at the MVR by providing the ability to renew trailer registration for three years. We also have the most generous home builder program in the country.

Can you highlight how the CLP government is continuing to help reduce the cost of living for Territorians by helping them, like residents in the Fannie Bay electorate, to reduce their water bills?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the CLP is delivering practical cost-of-living relief for Territorians by expanding Power and Water's Living Water Smart program across the Northern Territory. Power and Water's Living Water Smart initiative was established in 2014 to help households and businesses reduce water use through practical education, waterwise tools and simple actions to cut waste and reduce leaks.

Originally delivered only in Darwin and Alice Springs, the program has been expanded for regional communities with advice tailored to Territory landscapes, climates and water demand now available on the Living Water Smart website. The expansion will help Territorians take control of their water use, lowering bills while protecting the Territory's water supply. Living Water Smart can help Territorians save water whether they are in Tennant Creek, on the Tiwi Islands, in the heart of Central Australia or in Katherine. Lower water usage means lower water bills for Territorians wherever they live. It also strengthens security for our future water supply.

Water is an important part of the Territory lifestyle. Territorians love to swim in backyard pools and spend time outdoors in backyards and gardens, so learning to conserve water and reduce leaks is vital.

The Living Water Smart Program has been revamped with new location-specific information, including a personalised water-saving calculator that provides simple tips to help Territorians save water and money. Territorians can also access a water smart plant finder to help keep gardens healthy year-round, along with a new irrigation guide and practical advice on how to be waterwise while still enjoying the outdoors.

As part of the expansion the water smart program has installed data loggers to support leak detection in major and regional centres, with Power and Water teams completing consultations and providing education to businesses across the Territory.

We are continuing to look at ways we can help Territorians to save money and protect our Territory lifestyle.

Daly Region – Evacuation

Mr PATEL to CHIEF MINISTER

If the opposition and the local Member for Daly will not ask about this, I will. There have been 450 people evacuated from the Daly region in preparation for expected flooding. Can you update the Assembly on how the evacuation has progressed and the role our emergency services have played in ensuring the safety of Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Casuarina for asking this important question.

For a number of days we have been watching, with the significant rainfall that the Top End has experienced, the flooding and ongoing impact of all that rain. The Emergency Operations Centre was stood up to do the planning. Yesterday the Bureau of Meteorology moved the flood warning to moderate, which meant we kicked into action.

I gave an update in parliament yesterday during Question Time, expressing that we were hopeful to have some people evacuated yesterday afternoon with the remainder to be evacuated today. I am pleased to give another update because we were so prepared we could mobilise all the buses and evacuate the entire community yesterday. That was a good result because the water level has risen. That preparedness is important, particularly in Daly River where each end of the runway becomes engulfed by water, limiting transportation options. If the river level is too high, the road floods. The last thing we ever want is to be in the desperate situation of helicoptering people off roofs. We can do it if we have to, but it is not the best-case scenario.

The EOC has been fantastic, and I acknowledge the Defence personnel in the gallery. Thank you for your service. Defence personnel are embedded in our EOC to make sure that if we need them, we have them by our side.

I am pleased to say that about 215 people were on the buses yesterday afternoon. I visited Foskey Pavilion, which was stood up in a matter of hours. It was an incredible result. Children and Families took the lead. I met with and thanked all the staff. A number of people from other agencies put up their hands as well. I met a lady who works in Education. There were dozens of prisoners who had worked all afternoon, unloading the shipping containers with the beds and blankets. I can assure Territorians that everyone is being well looked after. There are baby supplies and cots set up. As I was there last night, Red Cross came in. All the other NGOs, providers and supporters are there delivering support on the ground.

Many people chose to self-evacuate. There are 38 people who are medically vulnerable whom we are properly supporting and caring for in different situations. We are setting up pop-up schools. We are even looking after the pets with a set-up at Five Mile, out of the flood zone, to look after the animals.

It has been an incredible result. I thank the emergency services and police teams working around the clock. Everyone has done an excellent job.

Telstra Tower – Alice Springs

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Alice Springs has received strong support from the CLP since we came to government in the 2024 Northern Territory general election. From free entry at the Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre during the 2025 summer school holidays to a new Telstra tower providing better connectivity for Alice Springs citizens, I think we can all agree that your home town has flourished from your advocacy under the Finocchiaro CLP government. Can you update the Assembly on your involvement with the Telstra tower and how you could deliver this important piece of infrastructure for Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I love Alice Springs and I am deeply invested in its success, which is why it was wonderful to fix an issue that had been raised for quite some time.

In October 2025 the Alice Springs Golf Club wrote to the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment requesting to vary its special purpose lease 562. The club requested consent to sublease an area to Amplitel, which is part of the Telstra Group of companies. The purpose of this sublease was for the installation and operation of a telecommunications tower. That is something we all take for granted here; we just turn on our phone and can call anyone. That is not always the case in some areas of Alice Springs.

In accordance with sections 17, 43 and 51 of the *Interpretation Act 1979* the power to amend the special purpose lease sits with me as Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment. After conducting a thorough review I agreed to their request.

Prior to the amendment the special purpose lease 562 was for the golf course and associated building and ancillary purposes. I amended the sublease to add ‘and for the installation of a telecommunications tower for the purposes to provide telecommunications services to Alice Springs’, to ensure this tower could go ahead. It was quite technical, but I am glad it could all happen.

I recently visited the Alice Springs Golf Club and met with General Manager Justin. We had a chat about this new tower and what it would mean for the Alice Springs Golf Club and the surrounding area. He told me that one of the club’s biggest challenges was the service dropping out while on the phone. This tower will change that.

The Northern Territory Government has a long history of working with Telstra on numerous projects to improve connectivity across the Territory. I am incredibly proud to enable delivery of another significant project under the Lands, Planning and Environment portfolio.

It is because of the hard work this government did to sort out the complexities of this matter that Alice Springs now benefits from a new telecommunications tower, and it will not just impact those on the golf course. I have been speaking to Mr Nic Danks from Telstra and by having this new Telstra tower in town, the towers on the Gap will actually be able to turn and help some of the people in my good friend the Member for Namatjira’s

electorate and the rural area, boosting telecommunications across Alice Springs. To recap, the department received the letter and we got on and we delivered for Alice Springs.

Whilst the Member for Barkly is looking at me wondering when his next tower will be delivered in the Barkly, I update the Chamber that King Ash Bay is next on the list to receive a tower. I look forward to heading out there with the Member for Barkly to commission it, hopefully sometime later this year.

The Year Ahead – 2026

Mr KERLE to CHIEF MINISTER

On Monday you outlined your plan for the CLP government's second year focused on growth, certainty and security, building on the strong foundations from our first year. People in my community are already seeing safer streets, more job opportunities and renewed confidence in living and investing in the Northern Territory.

How will our government keep delivering these results in our second year so that Territorians can continue to see and feel the progress towards a safer, stronger and more liveable Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we had a big week launching the year ahead, and I know the member's community looked forward to him reporting back on what that will look like on the ground. It is safe to say that those people will be happy when he tells them that reducing crime will continue to be our number one priority in 2026, building on the work that we did to reduce crime last year, with a near 10% reduction in the number of victims, stronger powers for police and all the work we did to address the root causes of crime. All that continues in earnest in 2026.

It has been important to us over the last two years to bring the community with us on this journey. The Territory we inherited was in a crime crisis, economic crisis and identity crisis. People were leaving in droves. Almost every day you knew someone who was talking about leaving. Long-term generational families had given up on the place. People were demoralised and did not think that things could be any better.

Last year—our year of action, certainty and security—was important; it was a pivotal moment for the Territory. It was our opportunity to say to every Territorian, 'This place can and will be better, and we will show you that in just 12 months we can make it better'. On behalf of the team, I am proud that we delivered that for every community across the Territory.

While crime is going down, the economy is going up. What we are doing is working. We must work harder than ever to continue to drive change for the better, which Territorians so desperately wanted when Labor abandoned them.

This year exciting things are coming forward. There will be tranche 2 of the *Youth Justice Act*, and police public safety officers will amalgamate some of the police auxiliary, public safety housing officer and transit safety officer functions. They will start the first recruit course this month. It is exciting. They are focused on the front line. They will be seen in police uniform at public housing, on public transport and in public places. It will be a significant reform for antisocial behaviour.

We are also excited about the first Territory development area under the Territory Coordinator legislation. This is bringing together the Northern Marine Complex, a significant piece of infrastructure we need to develop to make sure it is ready for market and grow our maritime industry to be what it deserves to be. We are perfectly located for success.

This will be a big year. I thank the member's community for its support. We are staying the course in 2026.

Economic Growth

Mr O'GALLAGHER to TREASURER

After years of economic mismanagement that left the Territory going backwards, the CLP committed to rebuild the Territory's economy. Through targeted reforms, partnership with industry and a clear focus on reducing the cost of doing business, the CLP has laid strong foundations for long-term growth. A key part of that plan was modernising the Territory's payroll tax system and lifting the tax-free threshold to support

business confidence, investment and jobs. Can you update the Assembly on how these payroll tax reforms are continuing to deliver for Territorians now and into the future?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know of the links that the Member for Karama has with local businesses through his role with the Chamber of Commerce.

Territorians know that economic strength means job security, better services and opportunity for Territory families. They were sick of the eight years under the previous Labor government when businesses were run into the ground by anti-business policies. We had to act fast. We answered the call from Territorians to be responsible economic managers who supported businesses and would drive their growth. That is why we introduced the highest payroll tax-free threshold in Australia.

I will let the payroll numbers do the talking on just how successful this reform has been for Territory business. Let us start with registered businesses in the NT, which are growing because we are growing the economy. There has been an increase of 107 payroll tax-registered employers with wages below $1.5m. These small mum-and-dad businesses are being established because of new economic demand and a tax system that is incentivising growth, not stopping it.

Small businesses are the canary in the economic coalmine. In further good news, since we have increased the tax-free threshold from $1.5m to $2.5m from 1 July 2025, more than 200 businesses have seen their bottom line improve by an average of $22,000, enabling them to reinvest in their own growth and the growth of the Territory.

There are 100 businesses collectively saving nearly $1m in payroll tax savings by employing apprentices and trainees who will drive our investment future.

Here is the kicker. Even with these exemptions, there has been a big increase in payroll tax revenue driven by economic growth. We cut the tax, business is growing, and we are receiving more revenue into the Territory coffers.

This means that wages for employees are increasing. The number of employees small businesses are employing is growing as well. December 2025 payroll tax collections grew by $24m, exceeding the year-to-date forecast growth by 14%, led by growth in wages and jobs in the mining, real estate, transport and healthcare sectors.

The growing economy proves that what we are doing is working. We have been responsible fiscal managers. We are driving the Territory economy forward and will continue to see it grow into the future.

Reef Fish Stocks

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Territorians love their fishing. In fact, NT recreational fishing contributed $270m to the Territory's economy in 2019 and supported 2,500 full-time jobs, making it a key industry for the Territory. The former failed Labor government ignored red flags about sustainability and our reef fish stocks, which has seen vulnerable species in the Darwin Harbour decline to unsustainable levels. We are at a stage where we need urgent action to manage the sustainability of the reef in the greater Darwin region or face a Territory fish stock decline for future generations. Can you tell the Assembly what your department is doing to regenerate those vulnerable species?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Wanguri was educated at Taminmin High School and knows how important fishing is to our Territory lifestyle.

Over the last 12 months our government has taken action to build and deliver a more sustainable future for Territory fishos, because fishing is part of our lifestyle and community values in the Northern Territory. We have moved beyond talk; we are focused on delivery. Growing recreational fishing and protecting our lifestyle is a number one priority of this CLP government.

We are dealing with crime and accept that there is a lot more work to do, and we will continue to work hard. However, lifestyle is one of our three key pillars, and we will work hard to make sure that we restore our Territory lifestyle.

Our golden snapper stocks have dropped to less than 20% of their original population. Fisheries is developing a robust plan, which includes the development of artificial reefs, stocking snapper throughout the Darwin Harbour region, fish-attracting devices and an education program.

I give a big shout-out to the people who work in Fisheries on the ground doing the hard yards, working day-in and day-out on something that they believe is important to the Territory. I have met them. Their passion is undeniable. I thank them for the work they are doing.

We have more than 60 brood stock golden snapper at DAF. I have been out to look at the little buggers. They are swimming around and having a good time. We will use the brood stock to continue work on our stocking program in the harbour.

The department is working on a recovery plan, part of which is our stocking program. We have gone out to the sector. We have spoken to and are working with the industry on this plan, which is in draft form.

The department has done the hard yards. The brood stocking is planned to continue until 2029. This will be part of that lifestyle that we all love and enjoy here.

We also cannot forget the barramundi industry. Barramundi is an iconic fish, and the people at Humpty Doo Barra do a great job. They are innovative and work hard to make sure that the farm is growing great guns. A big shout-out goes to the rural area.

We know how important fishing is to our lifestyle and economic drivers in growing Territory businesses, employing people here and having jobs in the Northern Territory.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Member for Nightcliff – Disorderly Comment

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I had time to reflect on a point of order raised by the Member for Drysdale. It has been supported by another member that the Member for Nightcliff called him a racist and a bigot. I am asking that the Member for Nightcliff withdraw those comments before the commencement of adjournment speeches tonight. I will elaborate further on other things that happened, but that is on that point of order.

MOTION
Note Statement – The Year Ahead 2026

Continued from 4 February 2026.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, the Northern Territory needs a vision and a plan, and that is what this government is delivering.

I talked about the low-security camp in Katherine. This will be a great initiative in Corrections to provide rehabilitation to ensure that people who have made a mistake and done the wrong thing have an opportunity to access skills and a structured day to reintegrate into the community and break the cycle of reoffending.

That is what this government is focused on this year: breaking the cycle of reoffending. This means there will be less crime. Work has already started on reducing crime. The results are there, but more work needs to be done, and we will make sure that people who are in Corrections are held to account and have jobs, coming out a better person on the other side.

As part of our young offender program, we have youth diversion and boot camps to make sure that young people have an opportunity to structure their lives. The family unit does not begin when they end up in the back of a paddy wagon. We need to work together. Families and the community all need to take responsibility for these young offenders to make sure they have a chance to make better decisions as they move forward.

These programs are giving young people real opportunities, with a 94% participation rate in education, skills and programs. I have been to the youth justice facility and seen these young offenders go to school. For whatever reason that I cannot work out, their families and communities do not send them to school, but when they are in detention they go to school and work on their education. Sometimes their education is so low that they need help, and that is what the Corrections system is doing with these facilities, wrapping around support for their wellbeing and education to make better decisions.

This year is about building momentum. We are growing our economy, securing our energy future, supporting industry and protecting our lifestyle. We are building safer communities and delivering practical outcomes to Territorians that matter. This year ahead is one of growth, certainty and security, focused on opportunity, responsibility and delivery. We look forward to working with the Assembly to achieve it.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I support the work that the Finocchiaro CLP government is doing. The year ahead is about momentum, how we build it, how we protect it and how we turn it into a lasting opportunity for all Territorians.

After eight years adrift under the inept Gunner-Fyles-Lawler Labor government, the Northern Territory economy is finally finding its footing again. Confidence is improving and, more importantly, activity is lifting. Independent commentators are beginning to reflect that shift. Most importantly, Territorians can see and feel the difference. We see it in employment, investment, interest and in a growing sense that the Territory is moving forward again rather than standing still.

The Country Liberal Party came into office with a clear mandate to restore the economy. Over the last 18 months we have begun to restore economic discipline, back businesses and workers and put the Northern Territory on a stronger, more sustainable path. That task has not been simple given the mess that Labor left for us. We inherited cost blowouts, severely weakened confidence and a public sector that, quite frankly, expanded over time without sufficient focus on project delivery and value for money. After eight years of Labor, debt was projected to rise to nearly $15bn. Project delivery was poor, and far too often process replaced outcomes.

We also inherited something more important: a Territory with extraordinary potential. Our 2025–26 midyear budget review confirms that the direction set by the CLP government is the right one. It shows an improving fiscal position compared with the 2025–26 budget, driven by stronger revenue and tighter control of expenditure growth. It confirms that economic conditions are improving. That is not through chance but through a renewed focus on fundamentals. That represents a clear break from the approach taken in the previous eight years.

Independent assessments reinforce this change in direction. The CommSec report identified the Northern Territory as the biggest improver in the nation, moving from eighth to fourth place. This is a report that the previous Labor government did not believe in. I think Michael Gunner once said in this Chamber—I am happy to stand corrected—that he threw it in the bin. Deloitte forecast the Territory to lead the nation in economic growth over the next two financial years. The ANZ Stateometer shows the Territory economy operating above trend.

These third-party assessments matter because confidence matters. Businesses invest when governments are stable and disciplined; workers relocate when opportunity is credible; and economies grow when governments focus on the basics.

Building on this is our fiscal strategy for the year ahead. It is built on three clear priorities: growing the economy; growing revenue through increased business activity; and maintaining firm control over expenditure. I will deal with these one at a time.

The Northern Territory has what Australia needs. We have energy, space, proximity to Asia and strategic depth. For too long those advantages and opportunities were squandered by the previous Labor government. I can tell you that will not happen anymore. The CLP government is laser focused on turning this opportunity into economic activity.

Recent data indicates that momentum is building. Gross state product grew by 1% in 2024–25, outperforming earlier expectations of actual contraction. State final demand increased by 2.9% above the national average. Household spending strengthened through the year to the September quarter 2025, reflecting improving confidence. Inflation in Darwin remains among the lowest in the country and below the national average, easing pressures on households and businesses, particularly in times of increased difficulty for households to meet their day-to-day bills.

Employment is at historic highs, with more than 147,000 Territorians in work as at December 2025. Workforce participation remains the strongest in the nation, reflecting a strong culture of work and opportunity.

Population growth has returned, supported by overseas migration and stabilising interstate flows. We have the highest population growth in the country, which is great to see when previously we saw our population retract.

Housing activity is showing signs of strengthening, and tourism continues its recovery.

These trends were not evident in the final years of the failed Labor government. They reflect a renewed focus on enabling private investment and supporting economic participation. We continue growing revenue by growing activity. The CLP government makes no apology for pursuing revenue growth through economic expansion rather than increased burden.

Payroll tax reform is a clear example, which I spoke about during Question Time. The CLP government delivered the highest payroll tax-free threshold in Australia, recognising that small and medium businesses are central to the Territory's economy. When businesses grow, wages grow. When wages grow, employment grows. When employment grows, revenue grows. All this makes the Territory grow. Since lifting the threshold more than 200 businesses have benefited, with average improvements of about $22,000 to their bottom line. They can invest this money back into their businesses.

Employers, apprentices and trainees are also seeing savings that support workforce development and growth. At the same time payroll tax revenue has increased, driven by higher wages and stronger employment growth in sectors such as mining, transport, real estate and healthcare. This reflects a broader economic base rather than higher rates.

Law and order is a key foundation for confidence. Unless people feel safe we will not grow, develop and thrive. Economic confidence depends on community safety. After eight years under Labor, Territorians were left with a justice system that too often failed to provide certainty for victims and communities. More often than not it put the rights of offenders over the rights of victims.

The CLP government was clear at the 2024 election that law and order matters, consequences matter and government must take responsibility for that enforcement. That position has been reflected in actions already taken. The age of criminal responsibility has been reset to 10 years. Bail laws have been strengthened to address repeat and serious offending. Mandatory sentencing has been reintroduced for serious domestic violence order breaches, placing victims' safety first rather than the rights of the offender. These reforms were not symbolic; they were practical measures aimed at restoring confidence in the justice system.

Law and order require capacity. Under the previous government Corrections infrastructure did not keep pace with demand, placing pressures across the system. The CLP government is progressing work to expand Corrections capacity, including planning for additional facilities and work camps. This work is focused on restoring functionality, safety and accountability within the system. This is desperately needed because unless we turn around the justice continuum, we have to provide facilities where offenders can address their offending behaviour. The Minister for Corrections is doing an excellent job in developing those services and providing not just those spaces for the offenders but also improved services for staff members.

At the same time, investment in Police, Corrections and frontline enforcement has increased. Community safety is not achieved through statements; it is achieved through seriousness and follow-through.

The Territory government always has to address fiscal discipline and value for money, which the previous government did not seem able to do. Economic improvement must be matched by fiscal discipline.

The midyear review shows that debt, although remains high, is now projected to be lower across the budget cycle than forecast in the last budget. That improvement reflects stronger revenue and tighter control over spending growth.

The CLP government is committed to protecting frontline services while applying stronger discipline elsewhere. Programs will be expected to demonstrate value. Back-office growth will be tightly controlled. Procurement will be subject to stronger scrutiny. Project governance will be strengthened to improve delivery discipline. Waste in government is not abstract; it shows up as delays, duplication and cost overruns. Restoring discipline is essential to rebuilding trust with Territorians and across the private sector.

The Territory is well positioned. Energy projects are moving from construction towards production. The Beetaloo Sub-basin continues to progress towards commercial development. Critical minerals development

is strengthening the Territory's role in secure supply chains. Defence investment continues to support national security and local industry. Trade relationships are strengthening. Tourism capacity is expanding. Infrastructure investment is being more tightly targeted to unlock regional growth.

This is not by accident; it is happening because we have ministers who care about what is happening and have their fingers on the pulse of what is happening within their agencies to make sure we drive cost effectiveness and development for the Northern Territory.

The Territory is not starting from a clean slate. Territorians are still dealing with the legacy of eight years of Labor—high debt, missed opportunities and weak delivery. The difference now is direction, discipline and seriousness.

In my home of Central Australia our government is increasingly driving targeted infrastructure as a practical way to lift productivity, improve safety, strengthen liveability and restore our valued lifestyle. Four projects in particular, along with our co-investment in the newly opened skate park, demonstrate this. We are pushing hard on the commencement of Santa Teresa Road, Mereenie Loop Road, the multicultural centre and the Gillen sports precinct.

These projects illustrate a recognisable approach focused on the basics that remove friction from everyday life, support community connection and unlock regional economic activity.

Upgrades to Santa Teresa Road matter because roads in remote and regional settings are not just about transport; they are the backbone of reliable access to education, health services, policing and supplies. When a road is cut by weather or becomes unsafe and slow, the cost is paid in missed appointments, higher freight charges and reduced workforce mobility. Investment in sealing, drainage, flood immunity and maintenance capability is, at its core, an investment in service continuity and community resilience.

For far too long members of the Santa Teresa community have been waiting for this road upgrade. If my memory is correct—I am getting a little old and sometimes do not remember things as well as I should—I think it was the CLP government that put up the money to seal Santa Teresa Road between 2012 and 2016. On losing government, the money for Santa Teresa Road was taken away, and that community missed out.

I am glad to say that money is back. It was not from a Territory Labor government. Credit has to go to Marion Scrymgour, the federal Member for Lingiari, who got that money back from the Commonwealth. I am working hard with her, along with the community and the land council, to get that project delivered.

That will also support local jobs during construction and though ongoing maintenance, which is often where long-term value is won or lost.

Mereenie Loop Road has a different but complementary logic. It is an economic enabler tied directly to tourism, freight efficiency and the reputation of the region as accessible and safe. Better driving conditions reduce vehicle damage and travel time, which increases visitor confidence and broadens the market beyond the most experienced outback travellers.

For Central Australia—where tourism spend supports accommodation, hospitality, tours, arts and retail—a boring road upgrade can be one of the most powerful multipliers, provided it is matched with good signage, rest stops, mobile coverage improvements where feasible and a clear maintenance plan so standards do not slip after ribbon cutting.

Mereenie Loop Road will be a game changer. If you ask any tourism provider or Tourism Central Australia what the biggest benefit to tourism in Central Australia in future years will be, just about every one of them will say Mereenie Loop Road. That will link Alice Springs with Kings Canyon and Yulara with a bitumen road, expanding opportunities for tourism in Central Australia.

The multicultural centre will be a wonderful piece of social infrastructure. It plays a different role. In a town as diverse as Alice Springs, a fit-for-purpose venue signals that multicultural participation is not just an afterthought. Done well, it becomes a platform for settlement support, community events, language and cultural programs and cross-community engagement.

Work that reduces social isolation and builds the kind of civic trust that makes other reforms makes it easier and brings our community together.

Darwin has had the luxury of many multicultural centres across the region. This will be a first for Central Australia. I cannot wait until that is delivered for the multicultural communities of Central Australia.

Finally, the Gillen Oval Multi-Sports Precinct sits at the intersection of youth engagement, health and community pride. Quality sporting facilities are not just for weekend competitions; they provide structured activities and pathways for young people and opportunities for major events that bring visitors and spending into our town.

The key test is utilisation. Programming, accessibility, lighting, safe design and partnerships with clubs and schools determine whether the precinct becomes a genuine community anchor.

Across all four projects the central question is delivery discipline, transparent timelines, clear scope and whole-of-life funding for maintenance.

Infrastructure in Central Australia paves the way when it is finished to a standard that lasts, is actively used and is backed by operational planning that turns capital works into enduring public value. Every project I mentioned will provide all those things to Central Australia, which was forgotten for far too long under the previous Labor government, and we missed out badly.

I am glad to speak about some of the positive things in Central Australia that will deliver tangible outcomes for our community into the future. The Northern Territory economy is turning. The year ahead is about locking in that momentum, growing our economy, strengthening our revenue and maintaining safety, balanced with controlling spending and removing barriers to effort and enterprise.

The Northern Territory has what Australia wants and needs. We can solve energy issues for the rest of the country. We have the resources and minerals to help grow our country.

The Country Liberal Party government is focused on ensuring it is delivered responsibly and sustainably. We are here for the long haul and to make sure the Territory grows in the right way. We will be here, and those benefits will be available to our kids and grandchildren for many years to come.

Mr CHARLS (People, Sport and Culture): Mr Deputy Speaker, we are proud of the progress we have made together as Territorians and how far we have come under the Finocchiaro CLP government.

Serving as Minister for People, Sport and Culture has been incredibly rewarding. It is a portfolio that touches every aspect of our lives in our community, including youth, seniors, equality, veterans, disability, multicultural affairs, sport, the arts, libraries and the thousands of volunteers who support our communities every day.

The work we have done in the past year provides a strong foundation for the year ahead, particularly to address the key pillars of growth, certainty and security announced by the Chief Minister on Monday.

Before providing an overview of the year ahead in my portfolio areas, I will provide a brief overview on the guiding principles of the major whole-of-government strategies and action plans. These strategies include the NT Disability Strategy, Youth Strategy, Seniors Policy, Multicultural Policy, gender equality strategy, Defence Veterans Strategy, the NT Arts Strategy and the Libraries Connecting Communities Strategic Vision.

In the year ahead we will provide the certainty and security to implement these plans aligned closely with our various stakeholders and advisory groups. There has been much work done to re-engage with the community, particularly with the various ministerial advisory groups that provide me with lived experience and direct advice on matters related to these key community areas.

I deeply value the advisory group members' honest insights, thoughtful guidance and continued dedication, and I look forward to working with them this year and beyond.

This year I am also looking forward to engaging with National Cabinet, ministerial councils and forums on disability reform, veterans, women's safety, sport, culture, youth and multicultural affairs, ensuring the Northern Territory has a strong national voice.

Given the significant announcement in Canberra last Friday, where the Chief Minister fought for additional funding for health and disability, I will provide an overview of the year ahead.

There are more than 31,000 Territorians living with disability. Last year I was proud to release the Northern Territory Government Response to the disability royal commission, addressing all 222 recommendations. Importantly, we are now getting on with the work.

In 2026 the second action plan under the Northern Territory Disability Strategy will be finalised, covering 2026 to 2029. Consultation has already reached more than 177 Territorians, ensuring the voices of people with lived experience are shaping outcomes.

Last year it was a privilege for me to host and celebrate dedication and innovation at the Disability Inclusion Awards at Parliament House. It was a privilege to attend the Autism NT 2025 Luncheon, the Henbury Christmas party and the TCASS Christmas party. These opportunities to hear firsthand from families and see service providers is an ongoing reminder of challenges experienced, the resilience of families and the dedication of all service providers.

I have listened to families about their challenges with NDIS bureaucratic systems and their day-to-day struggles as their NDIS plans are being reduced. I see and hear the pressures they are faced with, fighting for what their children need. I am proud to have advocated at the highest levels to ensure decisions are equitable and contribute to better outcomes for these families. I have worked closely with the Disability Advisory Committee and listened to their robust feedback, affirming the value of lived experience and its contribution to direction and policy.

The Office of Disability will continue working across government to progress the significant disability reforms, including foundational supports, NDIS review implementation and ensuring reforms work for regional and remote Territorians.

We are signing the heads of agreement for the landmark deal delivering record funding for hospitals and securing the future of NDIS. I will continue to work collaboratively with my counterparts on the Disability Reform Ministerial Council implementing framework planning and considering NDIS rules and legislative amendments as reform progresses.

I welcome the recent announcement regarding Thriving Kids and foundational supports, and I am keen to work closely with community service providers and government departments to ensure these supports translate into practical, effective outcomes for children and young people.

It is important that services are well coordinated, accessible and responsive to the real needs of families. I look forward to continued collaboration so we can strengthen early support, empower families and help every child and young person reach their full potential.

This will be a year to reinforce what we love about senior Territorians. Our seniors built the Territory we love, and, increasingly, seniors are staying well past retirement. In fact, they have proven to be an invaluable untapped resource. Our government continues to invest in programs, policies and services that support older Territorians. At the top of the list is our support of seniors through the NT Concession Scheme, arguably the most generous in the country.

This government provides cost-of-living support to eligible senior Territorians through this scheme to cover essential services such as electricity, water, motor vehicle registration, drivers' licences, council rates, waste removal and spectacles. In addition, this year will see the confirmation of the increased annual value of the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme prepaid cards. This was increased from $500 to $550 last year by our government to strengthen support for senior Territorians.

This year we will commence the stage 2 element of the new pensioner concession system to replace the 30-year-old legacy system, supported by a total project budget of $5m.

We will also commence a program to increase membership to the NT Concession and Seniors Recognition Schemes for eligible Territorians who may not currently be accessing the scheme. This promotion of the scheme is aimed at increasing access and uptake of supports and is a key initiative in our Finocchiaro government's Northern Territory Lifestyle Strategy. There will be a strong focus on membership in remote communities. The scheme supports Territorians with cost-of-living expenses, and we are working to ensure that all eligible Territorians have equal access to this opportunity.

That is not all. We have invested $1.6m over five years for the NT Seniors Card program, providing discounts to seniors aged 60 and above at participating businesses. We have also strengthened service delivery across

the Territory with the new systems to confirm membership eligibility and targeted training for concessions staff in regional centres.

The second National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People is expected to be released shortly. We funded the Darwin Community Legal Service to deliver its older persons abuse outreach model through to 2028.

In 2026 Seniors Month grants will again support things that promote physical activity, social connection and community celebration across the Territory.

We have refreshed the membership of the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians. I look forward to new voices, innovative ideas and hearing advice from them during the year.

Although our senior population is growing, the Northern Territory remains the youngest jurisdiction in the nation. This will be a big year with some major announcements, notably regarding the future of the northern suburbs youth hub. I do not want to pre-empt the proper process for this announcement; however, despite the positions grandstanding regarding this issue, there has been significant work done in this space, and I expect to make announcements soon.

This will be an informed process of incorporating feedback from consultation, ensuring co-design with young people and addressing community concerns in regard to safety and accessibility. The youth hub is intended to support prosocial engagement and early intervention support for young people. Community participation, respect and safety for young people in the surrounding neighbourhood are central to the service delivery model which includes transport home in the evenings.

Meanwhile, the Darwin interim youth services model continues to be delivered through the SHAK youth drop-in centre operating out of Sanderson High School. The department continues to implement, monitor and report on the Northern Territory Youth Strategy Action Plan 2024–2027, with the first progress report on actions taken across government due in quarter 2 of 2026. The department has invested more than $2.26m during the 2025–26 financial year to support all 50 youth, sport and community organisations to deliver fun, safe and inclusive programs during the school holidays and after school hours.

They will continue delivering school holiday calendars in 2026, providing free and low-cost activities that support safe and positive engagement for young people. The 2026 NT Youth Week ambassador program is already underway, with 11 young Territorians—a cohort reflecting strong diversity—appointed to lead contributions and amplify youth voices across the Territory.

This year five of the 11 appointed ambassadors are experienced members of our NT Youth Round Table 2025. Ambassadors serve as the face and voice of Northern Territory Youth Week; lead Territory-wide activities; and contribute to the initiative's overall theme, design and celebrations.

Youth grant programs supported grassroot organisations, with new applications under assessment to fund upcoming activities across the Territory. The department has committed $150,000 over the next three years towards the NT Youth Parliament program, helping more young people, especially those from regional and remote communities, to participate in civics education. The NT Youth Parliament brings together more than 30 young Territorians to develop, draft and debate youth Bills in Parliament House, demonstrating the power of youths' voices in shaping policy discussions.

Another appointment that I have just signed off is for the new members of the 2026 Youth Round Table. There are 22 members representing all five regions of the Northern Territory, including culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Youth Round Table members directly influence policy discussions, raise key issues and progress community action projects.

The Northern Territory is proudly multicultural. A new long-term multicultural strategy is nearing completion following consultations across the Territory and will be released in the near future. It will align with our priorities to restore the Territory lifestyle and rebuild the economy.

Preparations are underway for the 2026 Darwin Waterfront Harmony Soiree, celebrating our cultural richness and cohesion. Work continues to progress multicultural centres in Katherine and Alice Springs.

We also refreshed the membership of the Minister's Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs. I am proud to inform the Assembly that the council has 21 members representing 13 different regions around the globe. This diversity is a real strength. Members bring a wide range of lived and professional experience,

perspectives and insights that could never be captured by a single voice alone. The advisory council now truly reflects our vibrant multicultural community and is better positioned to provide balanced informed advice to me as minister, ensuring our policies are shaped by the rich mix of cultures that make our Territory great.

The Alice Springs multicultural centre is at 30% design stage. Consultation by the DLI happened two days ago with multicultural community leaders. It is another consultation done by the DLI.

I turn to Veterans. We continue to honour and support our veterans and their families. In 2026 work will continue to implement responses to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide while positioning the Northern Territory as the preferred place for veterans to live. Purple Poppy Day will again be delivered in February, recognising the service and sacrifice of war animals. Initiatives such as #CheckYourMates, employment partnerships and Soldier On services will continue.

I am proud to have new members in place on the Veterans' Affairs Ministerial Advisory Council, and I look forward to working with them in 2026. The council has been scheduled to meet four times in 2026 in March, May, August and November.

We will continue to deliver and support a series of initiatives and programs under Operation Thrive, with upcoming projects including:

- Veterans Medical Group delivering veteran-centric healthcare training in March 2026 to general practitioners, nurses and practice managers to further their knowledge of the Department of Veterans' Affairs compensation system and to encourage more providers to service veteran clients

- the continuation of the Veteran Community Grant to enable community organisations and businesses to support the veteran community

- Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) Queensland branch delivering an employment program to veterans, partners and industry primes in Darwin and Katherine

- Human Quotient Group delivering the Cowork Coplay program in Darwin and Katherine for partners of current and ex-serving members of the ADF to create opportunities to foster connections, pursue employment goals and boost wellbeing—we heard firsthand at the end of 2025 the significant impact this program had on participants' wellbeing

- establishment of an intra-agency working group to collaborate with the Commonwealth, states and territories on joint responses to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommendations.

The Arts portfolio, which I am extremely passionate about, continues to provide inspiration every day. Our creative sector is central to who we are and how we tell our story. In the second quarter, the first five-year action plan under the NT Arts Strategy will be launched, providing a clear roadmap for investment in people, communities and audiences and strengthening the creative economy.

One of the first jobs of the new ministerial advisory committee for the arts will be to provide feedback on this strategy.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr CHARLS: Applications for the establishment of MACA are open and close on 12 February 2026. MACA will provide strategic and regionally informed advice to me as Minister for Arts on issues, opportunities and challenges affecting the Northern Territory's arts, culture and creative industries. Membership will consist of up to 12 members, including six leading arts organisations and six community members. Membership will reflect expertise across the breadth of the creative industries, including visual arts; crafts and design; performing arts, such as music, dance, theatre, comedy and circus; literature; digital and interactive media; and community cultural development.

In the year ahead our government will also finalise the expression-of-interest process for the State Square building. This is about securing a future use that benefits Territorians, supports local jobs and businesses,

boosts the economy and adds vibrancy to the Civic and State Square precinct, making our city centre a destination for locals and visitors alike.

Library and Archives NT will continue supporting public library services, free wi-fi in regional and remote locations and improved collection development to reflect our diverse and evolving society.

I turn to a key elements that binds the Northern Territory community together, which is sport. In the second half of 2026 work will commence on a whole-of-government NT sports strategy, ensuring participation, performance and infrastructure are aligned for the future.

An incredible amount of work has been done in the background on existing infrastructure, and we will see incredible progress on this in 2026. We have already seen Anzac Oval come back to life in Alice Springs, and Richardson Park has a new anchor user.

Work has commenced on the design phase of the Tracy Village project. Part of this includes an approved master plan, which has been endorsed by all user groups, with planning, design, engineering activities and construction works mapped out. The master plan provides a comprehensive, precinct-wide framework incorporating multi-sport layouts, lighting upgrades, irrigation, change room development, car parking, landscaping and long-term expansion planning.

The total project budget is $7.3m, which includes $3m of Northern Territory Government funding for upgrades to the Tracy Village precinct; $1.3m of Australian Government funding awarded to FNT to establish facilities for the Hellenic Athletic Club; and a further $3m Australian Government election commitment to secure the future of baseball and softball in the NT, enable Hellenic Athletic Club to finalise plans for a permanent home and provide lighting for cricket and AFL at the precinct.

The Tracy Village project has been on the drawing board for years without any action, and it is great to see this finally underway. As minister, I have been regularly briefed on this project, and there has also been a substantial level of community consultation. I have been encouraged to see the various peak bodies involved in this project, as I strongly believe that any upgrades to sporting infrastructure in the Northern Territory should be led by, or done in consultation and agreement with, peak bodies, not just sporting clubs. It is not to say that sporting clubs are not at the coalface of knowing what their requirements are; it is important for compliance, growth and to ensure that it is not just the NT Government footing the bill. Sporting infrastructure should always be joint efforts from federal, state and local governments, as well as state and national peak sporting bodies. This will enable the best use of funds for projects such as Tracy Village. I am sure that there will be many more announcements to come about Tracy Village, but I look forward to this progressing substantially in 2026.

I look forward to updating the Assembly on many other infrastructure projects around the Territory, including those at Woodroffe, Jim McConville and Gillen Ovals. We will be in a position shortly to provide an update on the Woodroffe Oval project, which has been out for substantial community consultation.

The NT Sports Academy will continue delivering Open Futures, all-abilities programs and elite athlete development, strengthening the Territory's contribution to national success through to Brisbane 2032 and beyond.

While I am talking about sport, I need to mention some of the big-ticket items and major sporting events. Thanks to the minister for Tourism and Major Events, we saw the announcement on Sunday of international test cricket returning for the first time in 22 years. Last year we saw the return of T20 Internationals with South Africa, and now we will see a full-blown test with Bangladesh. This deal will also see a further two T20 Internationals scheduled in 2027.

We are committed to a fair, inclusive and safe Territory for everyone. Building on the work already underway, the Northern Territory gender equality strategy will be finalised and launched, providing a long-term framework for action across government.

In the first half of 2026 the revitalised Damoe-Ra Park will reopen in honour of the women of the Northern Territory and their contribution to our communities, families and civil society.

The year ahead is about building on momentum, backing Territorians, supporting strong communities, growing opportunities, providing certainty and security to Territorians and, above all, restoring our Territory lifestyle. I look forward to continuing this work in 2026.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Mr Deputy Speaker, 2025 was a year of hard work, determination and resolve. It was a year when this government set clear goals and got on with the job of delivering them.

In 2025, as Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, I had the privilege of leading delegations to Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan, working to rebuild relationships between the Territory and Asian neighbours and exploring opportunities to collaborate and showcase the limitless prospects for investment and partnership in the Northern Territory.

This work has already delivered results for the Territory, as demonstrated by the MOU signed with Indonesia for critical minerals and strategic supply chain. Export opportunities are being progressed by a number of Territory businesses that joined our government's successful delegation to Osaka and ensured a strong foundation for the work to be undertaken as we move forward into our year of growth, certainty and security in 2026.

Our international partners are ready to invest because they know that this CLP Finocchiaro government is serious about backing investment and supporting the growth the Territory has been waiting for.

The 'business of the Beetaloo' is a phrase that Territorians will hear much more of in 2026, as the Beetaloo Sub-basin, the largest onshore gas field in the world, moves closer to first gas production this year. Investors are embracing the opportunities this critical resource presents.

With the support of the hardworking team at the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, I have taken the transformational opportunity that is the Beetaloo Sub-basin to the world. It is a transformational opportunity for not just the Territory but also Australia and the Asian region more broadly as it ensures energy security for the Territory, Australia and the Asian region for decades to come, which is critical to the development and economic growth of the Territory.

This development is expected to attract thousands of workers to the Territory, with forecasts of up to 20,000 people at peak activity. That means families relocating to the Northern Territory, children enrolling in schools and communities growing and thriving. The flow-on benefits will be felt across our economy, from cafes and restaurants to construction, maintenance, health, education and transport. The opportunities for local small businesses are enormous. Support industries, including equipment, maintenance, cleaning, accommodation and logistics, will benefit.

It is not unreasonable to say that the business that will be enabled by the Beetaloo is even more significant for the Territory than the project itself. The Northern Territory offers unique advantages to investors, and the world is starting to notice. The opportunities are already opening up.

Last week I was invited to attend an international investment meeting, the Baker Hughes Annual Meeting, where the Territory was the only Australian jurisdiction in attendance. There were 2,500 investors at that meeting. I had the opportunity to tell the Beetaloo story to providers of one of the world's most critical infrastructure needs—data centres.

Data centres underpin our digital economy, communications, Defence capability and the way modern businesses operate. At a time when expansion of data centres is presenting logistical challenges in traditional locations and with the advent of the Beetaloo gas, the Northern Territory has what data centres need: cheap, secure energy supply; land; water; and strategic geographical positioning.

Darwin is already connected to international digital infrastructure through the North-West Cable System linking Australia and Singapore, and we will soon see three additional subsea cables in the Territory. We already host a data centre in Darwin, and construction is well underway on a second larger facility. An overland fibre connection to Adelaide will further strengthen our connectivity to the east and west coasts, improving speed and reliability. I am reliably informed that milliseconds saved in data transfer relates to millions of dollars saved in costs.

These improvements may sound technical, but they translate into real economic value and savings for businesses that rely on digital infrastructure. That is why the Territory is increasingly being seen as a smart, strategic place to invest and operate.

Last year was a strong year for the Northern Territory economy, and 2026 will be even stronger. Investment is rising, confidence is returning and the Territory is reclaiming its position as Australia's gateway to Asia. I will continue to work tirelessly to promote the Territory as open for business and ready to partner with

investors who share our vision for growth. The Territory cannot afford more years of drift and delay; investors want certainty, and under this government that is what they are getting.

The Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations will continue to consult with businesses on a range of issues of concern to ensure the actions taken work for our businesses. This will include continuation of the work commenced in 2025 on procurement reform to ensure that Territory businesses are front and centre, sending a clear message to those who want to invest in the Territory that they must have a Territory footprint.

In my portfolio of International Education, Migration and Population, 2026 will see the progression of work undertaken in 2025 with our Asian neighbours to deliver opportunities for upskilling and skills exchanges. The work commenced at the end of 2025 to develop a Territory-wide workforce development strategy will continue, as will our efforts to increase the Territory's allocation under the federal government's general skilled migration program and international student visa.

I note the Chief Minister's remarks in her ministerial statement that tackling the root causes of crime is a key focus for this year. To that end, in my role as the Minister for Children and Families, the focus will remain on early intervention, working with families to stop the cycle before it starts, supporting them in changing behaviours, setting clear expectations on parental responsibility and working with young people before they head down the wrong path.

For too long families were left without early intervention until problems reached a crisis point. Our approach through programs like Circuit Breaker will ensure that families are supported sooner, changing behaviours before they become entrenched.

Since Circuit Breaker commenced in Alice Springs in December 2024—it has now rolled out across the Northern Territory—491 cases have been opened. That is nearly 500 families who have received coordinated support across housing, alcohol services, education, health and, most critically, domestic violence services. We are not walking away from these families; we are walking alongside them for as long as support is needed.

For families requiring more intensive assistance, 238 family responsibility agreements have been entered into. These agreements are voluntary, meaning hundreds of families have stepped forward and said, 'We need help, and we are willing to accept it'. That willingness to engage is the foundation of real lasting change.

Domestic violence has been a scourge in our communities. That is why our Finocchiaro CLP government committed $36m per year ongoing to support work to reduce domestic violence. Recipients of this funding will need to demonstrate real outcomes as we have made it clear that we will not keep doing more of the same unless we see real results.

In 2026 we will progress the creation of a new domestic, family and sexual violence hub in Casuarina, which will bring together key services in one safe, welcoming location. Too often I hear victims of domestic violence say that they have to tell their story time and again in order to get assistance. The intent of this hub is to ensure that they will need to tell their story only once and that services and support they need will be coordinated for them. It will allow survivors to access support, accommodation pathways and financial assistance in one place, reducing the trauma of having to retell their story multiple times. It is designed to be about dignity, compassion and practical help when people need it most.

Addressing the root causes of harm and supporting survivors go hand in hand. Strong families, safe homes and connected communities benefit every Territorian. This is how we break cycles of violence, strengthen communities and restore safety and stability across the Territory. This is how we work to restore our lifestyle, rebuild our economy and ensure that every person living in the Northern Territory is safe today, as they deserve to be.

In the year ahead our government will continue delivering real outcomes to reduce crime, restore our lifestyle and rebuild our economy. Without question, 2026 will be a year of growth, certainty and security for the Northern Territory. All Territorians should be able to celebrate the end of 2026 in a whole new world.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, when Territorians elected our CLP government they were clear about what they wanted, which was to feel safe in their homes and around their streets. They wanted an economy that worked for local families and small businesses. They deserved to have their lifestyle restored, which had gone clearly wrong for almost a decade. Territorians wanted action.

Last year was about addressing what was left in crisis. Our focus was on making tough decisions and laying the foundations so we could turn the Territory around.

This year is about delivering. We are calling it the year of growth, certainty and security. Everything I do across my portfolios comes back to real people—someone running a cafe or doing shiftwork, the tradie trying to get approvals, the volunteer running a local club or the family who just wants to feel safe and get ahead.

Our government made it clear from the start that community safety would come first—not in a year or after a review, but immediately. That is why, within weeks of coming into office, the CLP delivered Declan's law and further strengthened it in April last year, putting it up there with the strongest bail reform in the country.

Declan's law has put victim safety and community protection back at the centre of bail decisions. It has been one year since Declan's law commenced, and the results speak for themselves: more than 5,800 people have been refused bail, keeping repeat and violent offenders off the streets; nearly 20,000 wanding operations have been carried out, with hundreds of dangerous weapons seized; serious crime is trending down; and there are nearly 10% fewer victims compared with the same time last year. That is not just law for law's sake; this is real reform, delivering real consequences.

As Samara Laverty said:

> *Declan's life was viciously ripped from him and from us … His legacy is about leaving the Northern Territory a safer place.*

We are beginning to see that happen. Declan's law will never bring back Declan, but it is protecting other families from the same heartbreak. That law set the tone for our government's approach to law and order: act early; create accountability; and always put victims first.

In 2026 I will go further as Attorney-General, because strong laws matter only if a system can move. We will continue clearing remand backlogs through the TIG-ER Taskforce. More than 600 matters were finalised, with 65% of those resulting in early guilty pleas. Our focus on early resolutions continues in 2026. Our system needs to be efficient. We established this team to intervene early so that victims are not left waiting for months or years for justice.

For the first time in 10 years the number of court matter finalisations is higher than the number of total lodgements; the Territory has the largest number of judges now; and more people have been sentenced than those sitting on remand. This shows that our courts are working far better under a CLP government despite the increase in demand due to our new strong laws. This year will also see streamlining of outdated practices, with a focus to reduce delays, support early resolution and fast-track matters.

When you restore safety, confidence in the Territory follows. We are starting to see confidence return on the ground. Tourism Central Australia CEO Danial Rochford said, 'There is a different conversation happening in Alice Springs now. After a better-than-expected summer, operators are not talking about concern; they are talking about confidence. Bookings at the Alice Springs Visitor Centre are up by 10% from this time last year, and for the first time in a long while there is a genuine sense of optimism about the year ahead.' That is what reducing crime looks like in the real world.

There is no crime more devastating than the murder of a partner. Too many women in the Territory have lost their lives at the hands of someone who was supposed to love and protect them. For nearly a decade under Labor, domestic violence assaults increased by 82%, leaving the Territory with the highest rates in the country and intimate partner homicide rates about seven times the national average. That is why this year sentences for intimate partner murder will have a mandatory minimum non-parole period of 25 years.

Under a CLP government, the message is clear: if you murder your partner, you will spend the rest of your life in prison. This is accountability, because when offenders are held to account Territorians are safer, and that will always be our government's priority.

Backing victims means more than words. When we came to office we inherited a victim support system that failed the people it was meant to protect. We identified that under Labor, victims were left waiting nearly four years for help after experiencing violence or trauma. That is unacceptable. In 2026 we will be fast-tracking victim support. That means clearing outstanding victims of crime claims and strengthening services for victims.

We are backing this work with action and real investment. This includes $15m over five years for victim services and the 40% increase for the victims levy, which commenced on 1 July last year, so support is sustainable and available for victims when needed.

Clearing the backlog is not just about numbers; it is about prioritising the people who have already suffered enough harm. Under our government, victims will be prioritised every step of the way. Under our government victims' rights will always be above the rights of offenders.

In addition to my role as Attorney-General, I am also privileged to be the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Parks and Wildlife, Major Events and Racing. Tourism and Hospitality are not side conversations for our government; they are central to rebuilding the economy and restoring the Territory lifestyle.

We live in a place unlike anywhere else in Australia. Our government wants to tell the world all about it and get people here to experience it for themselves. The rest of the world has started to notice, with the *New York Times* recently ranking us as the best place in Australia to travel to in 2026.

We recognise that tourism is one of the five key pillars that will grow our economy. The year ending June last year, when the Territory recorded the strongest growth in visitor numbers and expenditure in the nation, was a turning point. Our clear focus on increasing visitation is turning the Territory around, and it is starting to make a difference.

In 2026 we are moving on with our one clear vision, strategy and coordinated approach to the visitor economy. This includes the cruise ship sector, in which we have made a significant impact. The latest figures from the Australian Cruise Association confirm the total economic impact of the Territory's 2024–25 cruise season was $205.6m. While other states had declines, the NT cruise sector experienced an increase of 13.3%, and this industry supported nearly 600 local jobs for Territorians.

Strategy only matters if it is delivered by the right people, which is why I have established the new Tourism and Events NT Advisory Board. This is a board deliberately selected for vision, global experience and commercial depth to grow our visitor economy. Appointees bring together expertise in international aviation, major events, global distribution, cruise investment, Aboriginal tourism, regional development and much more. I have selected them because we need the right people sitting around the table with the right global and local vision, experience and partnerships to compete against a competitive global and interstate market.

The results of our approach are already being felt on the ground. Alicia, an accommodation operator in Litchfield, said last week when I visited that the Best Kept Season campaign was having an effect. She noticed that guests were booking now to see everything when it is green and when they thought it was quieter.

Journey Beyond's forward bookings on the *Ghan* are tracking 10% ahead of last year, which itself was a record year. International demand is at an all-time high; that is confidence and conversion.

We are also putting the Territory front and centre as Australia's battlefield. More bombs were dropped in the Top End than Pearl Harbor, including hundreds of kilometres from Darwin, with historical sites along the Stuart Highway. Under a CLP government, we are telling the world that if you are looking for war history, you come to the Northern Territory. Last year I launched the Territory's first military tourism AI trip planner, and this year the new digital and immersive experiences are coming through the VEEP grants for businesses. There will be ongoing upgrades to key military heritage sites across the Territory, and work is already underway to leverage from the significant Pitch Black Defence exercise later this year.

This event brings so much economic stimulus into our town, and locals also love it. It represents freedom in the air, and for 30,000 people it is a chance to get up close and see these magnificent flying machines at the RAAF Darwin open day. We want more locations for Territorians to watch it, and we would like friends and family to visit and stay with us to see this unique Territory event. This is how we rebuild the economy and restore the Territory lifestyle.

Major events are one of the most effective ways that we deliver our Visitor Economy Strategy on the ground. What has changed is how we deliver them and how we make sure that more Territorians can enjoy them while they work harder for our economy. A great example of that was the Laksa Festival in 2025. It has been around for a little while, but last year our government moved the grand final to a Saturday night—for the first time—at the Darwin Waterfront, and this opened up the event so that more people could visit. We had families, locals and visitors, with more than 9,000 people attending this event; that was up by 5,500 from the year before. Local businesses told us that it was the biggest festival yet. That is how you deliver events for Territorians and the visitor economy.

In 2026 our focus is clear. Under our government, events are no longer just about the weekend on the calendar; they are viewed as economic drivers. They are about restoring our lifestyle, backing local business and driving year-round visitation across the Territory.

The Dolphins NRL team is the Territory's new team to play in Darwin over the next three years. The first game is in April—ahead of the peak season—with the Penrith Panthers.

We also brought international cricket back to the Northern Territory in 2025 for the first time in 17 years, with those two T20 matches generating more than $4.25m in economic activity. Both matches were sellouts, and the atmosphere was electric, so we are going even further this year. We announced this week that the Territory's first international test cricket match in 22 years will be played by Australia and Bangladesh at TIO Stadium in August, which is exciting.

Beyond events and marketing, there is one asset that underpins our visitor economy more than any other: unique Territory parks. Our parks and wildlife are the heart of what makes the Northern Territory better than the rest. They are where locals camp with their kids, take visitors, connect with the outdoors and lap up the lifestyle that sets us apart from the rest of the nation. They are also one of the biggest reasons people choose to visit the Northen Territory in the first place.

For too long, parks were treated as something that simply exists. They were preserved but with no focus. There seems to be only one goal—protect—and Labor could not even do that right, as there was no investment in our parks. They were underutilised, with facilities degrading or closed, opportunities missed and key regions locked out of economic benefits that should flow from them. We see things differently. Under this government, parks are treated as our strength to be protected and activated. I see opening the door to new products, investments and experiences across our parks estate as essential. I want to see high-quality nature-based tourism, cultural experiences, multi-day walks and accommodation options that reflect the scale and uniqueness of the Territory.

I want places like Wangi Falls Cafe brought back to life, creating real jobs for locals with cold ice creams at the ready for families and visitors when they call in; that announcement is about to be made. I want more new ideas like outdoor and exclusive glamping at Territory Wildlife Park to enhance the visitor experience without compromising the values of the attraction.

We cannot forget that last year we purchased Silkwood, the biggest expansion of Litchfield National Park in a generation. When our parks thrive our regions thrive, and when visitors fall in love with our parks they fall in love with the Northern Territory. That is the future our government is building.

Racing is part of the Territory's DNA. It supports more than 2,300 local jobs and contributes more than $120m to the Territory economy every day. Racing brings visitors, confidence and energy to locations across the Territory, including Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. When race day comes to town, local businesses feel it; hotels fill, hospitality lifts and retail gets a boost. For regional towns like Tennant Creek and Alice, race day is not just a sporting event; it is an economic injection. Who does not love dressing up and going to the races? The Chief Minister and I love it, and we were at the Darwin Turf Club many times last year.

Last year, as Racing minister, I attended a wagering operator in the Territory with the Member for Fannie Bay and had the privilege of sitting with their staff to hear directly from them and take part in a Q&A about the future of the Territory. That operator alone employs more than 200 Territorians; that is local jobs supporting families and enabling people to build long-term careers in the Territory. That visit reinforced why racing and this portfolio matters to the Territory.

Under Labor the Racing portfolio was scrapped, and the industry was left without leadership or vision. We brought it back because racing deserves growth, certainty and security.

Last year I commissioned a comprehensive review of the NT racing industry, which set out a clear practical list of recommendations to strengthen governance, improve sustainability and give the industry confidence for the long term. In 2026 I will move from review to action to establish Racing NT as the new controlling body delivering clearer accountability; better coordination across codes; and long-term certainty for clubs, participants and workers.

Despite the views of the opposition, our government is backing racing now and into the future because it is not just a sport but also an employer, a visitor economy driver and a proud part of the Territory way of life.

This year for me is about delivery of less crime, faster justice, more jobs, stronger regions and a Territory lifestyle that works for families and businesses. We were elected to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle, and in 2026 we are staying the course and getting on with the job. Growth, security and certainty is what Territorians expect, and that is what we will deliver.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, action, certainty and security were the hallmarks of 2025, and it cannot be denied that this government has acted decisively over the last 12 months.

There are promising statistical signs of crime reduction. In keeping with that, as we move forward to our next level of positivity, I am delighted that 2026 will be headlined by the ideal of growth, certainty and security. It is a small point, but not for nothing, that I pushed hard at the 2024 election campaign for us to lead with the idea of growth as something desirable for the Northern Territory because it is the foundation upon which we can build opportunity.

Achieving sustainable economic growth will be paramount to addressing the social and economic mess that was sadly created by Territory Labor over almost a decade. The question of how to achieve growth is a complex and contested one. One thing you need is to improve economic fundamentals. I am heartened, as somebody who cares about data and economic indicators, to see that in recent CommSec data there are encouraging signs of activity. It is not insignificant that we went from being in a position where we had little to no economic activity to having signs of movement on a range of indicators and metrics.

Sustained economic growth also requires specific economic initiatives. Things like the payroll tax reforms that we put in place last year and improving our labour force capacity via, for example, the payroll tax exemptions for apprentice and trainee wages are the kind of specific initiatives that underpin the idea of achieving growth with action and security.

I look forward to supporting more of our forthcoming initiatives to stimulate and support sustainable long-term economic growth over the course of the year. In the short term, having heard a number of people reflect on the macro picture for what will happen in the reform space for 2026, I want to drill down to something smaller but important that is an underpinning for growth.

One of the things we all agree upon in the NT context is the need to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As we heard earlier and have been reminded on a number of occasions, 96% of private businesses in the Northern Territory are small and medium-sized enterprises. They have small turnover, a handful of employees and fledgling premises. They are not monolithic entities that can weather the storm without the support of government and the right economic levers in motion.

Likewise, I remind the Assembly—not that it necessarily needs reminding—that my electorate of Fong Lim is the industrial engine of the Northern Territory. What I lack in primary schools I make up for in businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises, that drive economic growth. They are the mum-and-pop operations and the ones that will become the next level up of operation.

Those businesses are in East Arm where, for example, we are using the Territory Coordinator's power, and in the year ahead we hope to drive the marine precinct. That will be an important development if it can get off the ground. Here's hoping that the Territory Coordinator can drive it with gusto.

In Berrimah, Wishart, Woolner and especially Winnellie there are businesses we need to support and which, as a local member, I want to drive. I want us all to understand how important it is that we get behind these businesses, because those precincts are filled with voters who cut across the whole of the Northern Territory and contribute to the Territory's economic fabric. It is important for us to support them and their endeavours.

For me, 2026 will be a year focused on supporting our small and medium-sized enterprises. This is an opportune time to briefly shine a light on some of them that I recently had the pleasure of engaging with.

Over the holidays, many of us end up doing a bit of DIY. I had a crack at trying to fix a bed frame and realised that I am not a welder. Do you know who does welding? The people at Top End Welding Services do, so I went to them with my cast iron bed frame. I was dressed like a civilian; they did not know who I was.

I asked Ben Proctor, the owner—who is a helpful, super guy—'Mate, I do not know what I am doing in spot welding. Could you help me out?' They were so good about helping me with a small job. It seems like a niche parochial story, but in all seriousness it is all these small jobs that add up to sustainable economic growth. They do large jobs as well; they have a laser-cutting machine for steel and a bandsaw—neither of which they would let me touch. They were helpful in supporting me.

To Ben Proctor I say: what a great business you have. Spot welders make the difference. Another person at that business was Jacques 'Sharky' van der Meulen, and I mention him because I went out to chat with him afterwards. He has trained 163 apprentices.

That is what small businesses we support to become medium enterprises do to create sustainable economic growth. That is invaluable knowledge transfer. If we do not support businesses like that with the right economic levers and initiatives, we lose them and the capital, institutional memory and corporate knowledge of an important bloke like Sharky.

Speaking of valuable knowledge transfer, another little mom-and-pop shop I popped into the other day was Kim's Upholstery, which …

Mrs Carlson: I have to go there.

Dr RAHMAN: Thank you, Member for Wanguri; I take the interjection. I want you all to support these small mom-and-pop shops.

Kim's Upholstery is one woman—Kim Howard, the owner—in two adjacent small workspaces doing unbelievably specialised work and high-level craftsmanship. There are so few people left in the Northern Territory who do upholstery work. I went to that place and could not believe …

Mrs Hersey: We have one in Katherine.

Dr RAHMAN: Thank you, Member for Katherine; there are few places to get that work done.

Go to that shop and watch the care, attention and detail that Kim provides to bringing things back to life. It not only reduces waste but also beautifies our landscape and provides us with somebody who does an important job. It is not just couches and cushions; she does sails, awnings, car upholstery—all manner of things. I do not want to play favourites, but I picked Kim's because it is a new enterprise, and I want to support it.

Winnellie is more than just welders and upholsterers; there is a tonne of food and hospitality there. I mention that because food and hospitality, as we all know, are critical to sustainable economic growth. We cannot lose those small businesses.

Tip Top Snack Bar in Winnellie has some of the best Greek food you will find in this town. The reason those guys have been in that shop since 1999 and at the Mindil Beach Sunset Markets since 1988 is that they are providing a high-quality service. Do you know how tough it is to stay in catering long term? Anyone who knows anyone associated with catering will know what hard graft it is. Those guys have been in the business for a long time. I know I will risk upsetting a lot of my Greek constituents, but that is some of the best souvla in this town. Places like Tip Top provide excellent service thanks to Peter and, more importantly, his mother, who was running the operation before Peter was back when I was in high school.

On the other end of the scale is Darwin Sheetmetal, the largest sheet fabricator in the Northern Territory. Ashton Simpson runs an amazing operation. I mention that business because it is not just making small panels; it is a critical component of our supply chain. Think about how many people that business feeds into and how many other businesses are dependent on it producing sheet metal to order on its amazing machines. There are 20 employees, and it has a fantastic work culture.

I encourage you all to check out our small and medium-sized enterprises. I assure you that, yes, they are my constituent businesses, but they are all your voters. Check out these fantastic businesses.

Darwin Sheetmetal is a fantastic operation and is critical in supporting our industrial supply chain. Member for Drysdale, I note that at the front it has a fine collection of memorabilia associated with Anzac Day and for the Defence forces. It does beautiful work that you should check out.

Speaking of work that supports all of us, Territory Uniforms has been in business for 30-plus years. It recently changed hands from the old owners to Gerry and John Travers. What a fantastic business they run. There are people who have been working in that business for 25-plus years doing embroidery and fine craftsmanship work. That provides us with a supply chain locally so that we do not have to outsource everything to a niche provider in another state or territory.

If we want to keep small and medium-sized enterprises in the Northern Territory we have to support them with the right economic initiatives. This government is doing that; it is providing a range of initiatives to support our industrial base. Our industrial base does not support itself. It works hard graft all the time, but it needs us to work with it, not against it.

I do not get any joy out of punching down on the last government—everyone knows it—but it is tragic that the economy was driven into the ground over the best part of two decades. In the last eight years of Labor governance there were poor economic and social policy choices. It is all well and good to make grandiose announcements, but what are you doing to help people on the ground in small and medium-sized enterprises? What are you doing to create sustainable economic growth?

I am sorry that the opposition is upset that we have not made a lot of big-ticket announcements on new economic projects, but that is because Labor made them all in the ongoing *Utopia*-esque series we were all party to for a decade. We will not make an announcement a day on a new project, mine, spaceship or road to oblivion. We are making careful and cautious decisions about what we say we will do because when we say we will do something, we actually do it.

I know that those opposite do not like everything we have done, but the fact is that we acted last year—action, certainty and security. We acted decisively, and there has been a lot of movement and change. Now we will see how it plays out. Some of it will be good, some will be great, and some might not go quite as well as we expect, but we have acted. It has not just been about hollow announcements in that regard. When the Chief Minister says, 'It is about growth, certainty and security', I expect there will be growth and support for small and medium-sized enterprises because, without that, there will be no sustainable economic growth.

We need labour as well as capital, which is why another great business that has been around forever, HPA (Helping People Achieve), is so important. Rachael Wright, CEO, and Sue Clarke, business development manager, were good enough to show me around, including all the guys who work in the workshop, like Al, who runs the Breaking Ground gardening crew. They do phenomenal work to support garden maintenance across the Northern Territory. This is an entity that supports people with disabilities to have enhanced opportunities to do value-adding work that is important, as a supplement to our workforce.

It is not the only one. I do not want to play favourites. When I am in the neighbourhood I always drop into Equal Grounds Cafe. It is a great social enterprise, which makes fantastic coffee and great cakes. It was good to hand out certificates I and II to people working in that space.

I could go on about a number of these businesses, but I will not go through them forensically; other people will want to speak. I am committed in 2026 to growth and to making it to many more of these SMEs in person. As my learned colleague the Treasurer pointed out earlier today, they are the canary in the coalmine. If the small and medium-sized enterprises are flourishing, succeeding, expanding and putting on new trainees, plant, capital and apprentices, we are all succeeding. If they are not, they are the canary in the coalmine.

I am optimistic and hopeful that this government will be as committed to growth as it was to action in its first year. You will note these businesses I picked out are not all random choices; I deliberately chose local businesses I use and support, and I want you all to do the same.

I sleep on a bed welded by Top End Welding Services. Kim is reupholstering a chair for me that I dragged back from England and was smashed to pieces. I am eating a lot from Tip Top cafe, and everyone can see it. I could go on. The uniforms for my office staff are made by Territory Uniforms. HPA's Breaking Ground crew help me pick up my thousand palm fronds. These are important businesses for us to get behind, and I encourage you all to do the same.

For my many constituents who have inquired about it, I am still as committed to the redevelopment of the Stuart Park high street as I always have been. I will continue to advocate for this excellent long-term project in 2026, fundamentally because it will seriously contribute to substantial, sustainable economic growth. That is why I will champion it.

I have been systematically consulting with land and business owners along that strip since coming to office to gain feedback and advice on what might be desirable and possible to reinvigorate that important historic area. We have had initial concepts, designs, artwork and architectural plans made, but why have we done it? To reflect a broad consensus starting concept, with the aim of improving amenity up and down that area to create a high street with a sense of character, a sense of place and well-thought-out access for pedestrians, cyclists, locals and visitors. It is the neck leading into the head which is the Darwin CBD. Growth in that corridor will create a knock-on effect for all of Darwin and, frankly speaking, all of the Northern Territory. If you want a high return on investment for infrastructure spend, I continue to maintain that you will find almost no better precinct.

Initially, you must start small. It is not the kind of thing that happens overnight. Traffic management will be the initial focus to try to make that promenade safer, parking easier and frequenting it easier and more desirable.

Our government—because we are good at reducing red tape—will not make it harder than it needs to be to make that happen. The NT Planning Scheme 2020 gives us everything we need to gradually develop gateway locations and improve building and laneway access, activate street frontages and balance options for commercial and residential mixed-use development.

I will continue to drive this initiative because it represents something great for my electorate. It is one of the best, ready-to-go areas of Darwin, with high scope for return on investment for the Territory. It supports the CBD growth, which we all want.

Growth is the mantra for 2026; I am delighted that we are targeting growth this year. I want that growth to be sustainable, as does everyone here. Nobody wants to live in a Northern Territory that is defined by boom-and-bust cycles. If you nurture small and medium enterprises, you lay a foundation for that. If you focus on key sectors, like agriculture, hospitality, tourism, mining and the industrial support required to wrap around all that, you can create the preconditions and the foundations for sustainable economic growth.

I want that for the Northern Territory, and I know everyone in this House, no matter their ideological position, also wants that because sustainable economic growth will lead to long-term opportunity for Territorians young and old. It will mean that we have the money and the economic base to support public health, housing, education, infrastructure and to create an architecture of opportunity in the Northern Territory again.

I will see many of you at small and medium enterprises in Winnellie, Wishart, Berrimah and East Arm over the course of this year, and I welcome all my government, crossbench and opposition colleagues to come and have a souvla at the Tip Top cafe with me any time you are available.

I will simply say that I am looking forward to nothing more than working with my government this year to start getting the Stuart Park high street project up and running.

Debate suspended.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Disorderly Comments

Madam SPEAKER: I interrupt this debate on the ministerial statement. Member for Nightcliff, did you want to make a statement regarding the ruling I made earlier that your remarks to the Member for Drysdale were disorderly?

K McNAMARA: I would be happy if you could show me the *Hansard*. That was a heated moment running out there.

Madam SPEAKER: I am asking you to withdraw the comments that you made.

K McNAMARA: Which comments? I said a lot of things as I was walking out of the Chamber.

Madam SPEAKER: You were witnessed and heard calling the Member for Drysdale a racist.

K McNAMARA: I did not call the Member for Drysdale that.

Madam SPEAKER: Okay.

K McNAMARA: If I was saying anything, I was referring to the Administrator.

Madam SPEAKER: That is out of order too. Please take your seat.

What transpired in this Chamber during Question Time was nothing short of shocking, outrageous and extraordinary. As you all know, I have been working in this Chamber and a part of this Chamber in many different capacities for more than 15 years, and I have never witnessed the likes of it. I am staggered by the behaviour I saw from opposition and crossbench members.

Clearly, this was a well-organised, orchestrated and staged walkout of the opposition and crossbench members, screaming and shouting as they left through the front door of the Chamber. We all witnessed it; the public witnessed it. Obviously, people in the gallery were invited to witness it. People in the gallery were supportive of it, and they knew what to expect, unlike me as the Speaker. It came as a surprise and has caused a commotion and disruption in the parliament—no doubt, that is what was intended.

I think it showed a complete lack of respect. At a bare minimum, when we all leave the Chamber we comply with Standing Order 15, which means we bow our heads in respect of the Speaker. None of the members did that. Instead, there was no regard at all for the sanctity of this Chamber and the order that must be always exercised.

The march was led by the Member for Daly, the Deputy Opposition Leader. Participating in this staged walkout were the Opposition Leader and the Members for Gwoja, Arafura, Mulka, Johnston and Nightcliff. I am appalled by this stunt, and I think most people who witnessed it were appalled too. All members involved in this stunt should feel deeply ashamed of being rude and disrespectful to me and the sanctity of this parliament.

I have pulled a stunt or two in my time in this Chamber, but nothing on this scale or of this seriousness. Your disrespect for me, the parliament and the Administrator has been noted. Bringing this level of disruption and disrespect to the Chamber is unprecedented in my time as a member. Therefore, I must respond in some way. You knew that what you were doing would have a reaction, and here it is; this is my reaction to your appalling behaviour.

Let me indulge myself by reflecting on the week that was. The week started with advice that from Sunday 1 February 2026, Mr David Connolly's commission as Administrator commenced. From that date, we were clearly advised that he was entitled to the protocols, styles and titles afforded to the Administrator of the Northern Territory; that he would officially assume all duties from his inauguration on 27 February; and that he was to be called 'His Honour the Honourable David Connolly, Administrator of the Northern Territory', salutation 'Your Honour', not 'Dear Your Honour', and in conversation, 'Your Honour', followed by 'Sir'.

These are clear instructions from Protocol NT. Upon that advice, I decided that the right thing to do as the Speaker of the Northern Territory was to remind people that the Administrator is commissioned and has started work and that he will be treated with the respect that he deserves as the Northern Territory head of state.

On Monday I sent an email to every Member of the Legislative Assembly reminding them of Standing Order 30 that he will be respected. That triggered an interesting response. I have given material to the media in the past, so I had no problem with my email being circulated to the media. It was not confidential; it was given to you all, but it triggered a response from the media which was interesting and, on the same note, disappointing. It triggered allegations against me that I was gagging and silencing debate in parliament because I reminded people of a rule that we all abide by within the Westminster parliamentary system.

We all have standing orders throughout parliaments in the Westminster system around the world. All Commonwealth countries have these rules. It is a feature of all standing orders in all Commonwealth countries that you respect the head of state. This is not peculiar to the Northern Territory; it is not unique. It is a part of any set of standing orders for all Commonwealth parliaments. Members, be mindful.

The media grabbed hold of it, and I was contacted and made comments. I think they were reported—I am not sure how far or how widely—but other people made comments about the allegation that I was gagging parliament by reminding members of Standing Order 30, including the Member for Daly, the Deputy Opposition Leader. He made comments that were highly offensive to me, and we had a conversation about it. I drew these comments to his attention. He said that they were unintentional, that he did not mean it and that his comments accusing me of gagging debate were meant for the CLP.

Yesterday in parliament the Member for Daly, on my advice, made a personal explanation apologising for reflecting on me unintentionally, and the matter was closed from my perspective.

At the beginning of the first day of parliament I addressed you all and was clear on what would happen in the Chamber regarding this issue of respecting the new Administrator. I gave advice as clear as it can be; it can be confusing in that I was open to debating issues about the appointment process or other issues regarding the position of Administrator, but there would be no debate or discussion of a personal nature regarding the new Administrator.

It was a bit of a grey area, but we got through it. I thought we handled ourselves well on Tuesday. There were some motions that did not get up, but there were several motions that did, which were debated on Wednesday during General Business. There were questions asked; some were allowed to be answered by the government, and some were not. We managed to negotiate this difficult process and standing order at this difficult time. Things have transpired in the media and in the public which have generated a lot of emotion

and controversy, yet in this Chamber we managed to get to Question Time without it being uncontained; we have been civil.

Today in Question Time some members decided to flout the rules of this parliament and exercise their right to leave the Chamber, which is their right, but they did it in a way that was unacceptable.

I am left at a juncture as to what to do, and this is my decision. One of the people involved, who was already referred to, is the Member for Daly. He is a former Speaker of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. He apologised after a conversation we had yesterday, but then today—you all witnessed—he said again that debate had been gagged, and I take that as a direct reflection on me. The only person who can gag, stop or silence—whichever word you want to use—debate in this Chamber is me as the Speaker.

NAMING OF A MEMBER
Member for Daly

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, I will name you. You have persistently and wilfully obstructed the business of this Assembly. Your conduct has been disorderly, and you have wilfully refused to conform with Standing Order 30.

In accordance with Standing Order 51, the question is that the Member for Daly be suspended from the service of this Assembly for 24 hours.

Motion agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: Your suspension will commence now, Member for Daly.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja—also a former Speaker of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly—your behaviour in front of me this afternoon as you left the Chamber screaming and shouting has left me incredibly shocked and disappointed. There was no bowing of the head or respect, just screaming whatever you were saying. Your behaviour is extremely disappointing for someone who sat in this seat for quite some time.

EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS

Madam SPEAKER: For the other people who were involved in this stunt, for this display of disruption and chaos, I have decided that you will all be excluded for one hour from the Chamber. That includes the Members for Arnhem, Gwoja, Arafura, Mulka, Johnston and Nightcliff. I ask you all to leave the Chamber now for one hour.

Madam SPEAKER: Perhaps we should not reconvene or parliament finishes for the week soon—within the next couple of hours—and we do not come back until 10 March. As you leave the Chamber, you all need to think of why you are here. I remind you of the oath that you took when you decided to accept the position as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

I read my oath that I took on 19 October 2010:

> *I, Robyn Jane Lambley, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Her heirs and successors according to law: So help me God!*

I swore an oath on the Bible, and I know some of you made an affirmation to the same effect, so take it seriously. If you cannot adhere to or abide by that oath that you made, you need to question why you are here, and some of you need to remove yourselves. If your behaviour this afternoon is a reflection of your deep-seated views of the Westminster parliamentary system, the King of the Commonwealth and the head of state, you have a major problem and ethical issue that cannot be resolved unless the whole parliamentary system of Australia is resolved or you agree to work within the confines, constructs and rules of this parliament. I cannot see how your tenure here has a future unless you can reconcile that within yourself and within this parliament.

I will conclude my comments, but I must say that this is an incredibly dark day in the history of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The behaviour exhibited is nothing short of disgraceful. People may have a different opinion of that, laugh and think it was great fun, and your supporters may slap you on the back tonight and tell you what a great job you did, but you did not. You have disappointed yourselves and Territorians.

K McNAMARA: Can I make a brief personal explanation?

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nightcliff, I have given you the opportunity to withdraw the comments that you were heard making, but you decided not to do that, so no.

MOTION
Note Statement – The Year Ahead 2026

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, I place on record what the agenda for the year ahead means in practical everyday terms for Territorians, especially for the people I am proud to represent in Casuarina.

Casuarina is not just a suburb; it is the beating heart of Darwin. It is where people from Tiwi, Nakara, Brinkin, Lyons, Muirhead, Lee Point, Alawa, Wanguri, Anula, Rapid Creek, Nightcliff, Wagaman, Karama, Jingili, Darwin and across the rural area and even regional communities come to shop, work, study, access services and connect.

It is home to one of the busiest retail centres in the Territory. It sits alongside Charles Darwin University and close to Royal Darwin Hospital. It has major bus routes running through it. It is a hub for multicultural communities, small businesses, sporting clubs, schools, health services and community organisations.

When we talk about growth, certainty and security, we are not speaking in slogans; we are speaking about things families can feel when they leave their driveway, workers can feel when they walk to their shift and business owners can feel when they open their doors in the morning.

The Chief Minister has set a clear direction: 2026 will be anchored by growth, certainty and security. I will explain clearly and honestly what those three pillars mean for the community moving forward.

There is no stronger foundation for a good life than safety. When people feel safe they go out, use local shops, attend events, enrol their kids in sport, visit the markets, go to the movies and take pride in their neighbourhood. When people do not feel safe everything contracts; families isolate, businesses lose trade, confidence drops and opportunities shrink.

That is why reducing crime was this government's number one priority when it came to office and why it remains the number one priority.

Casuarina residents know what it means when antisocial behaviour rises: business owners have break-ins; staff feel unsafe walking to their cars; older residents stop going out after a certain time; and parents start planning every outing around safety.

When this government moved quickly—within weeks—bringing forward reforms to strengthen police powers and restore community safety, it was responding to a real lived experience Territorians had been forced to accept for too long.

The Chief Minister's statement points to the deliberate and consistent sequence of law and order reforms, including stronger bail laws, youth justice amendments, stronger powers for authorities, targeted alcohol harm measures and increased support for policing. The point is that community safety and victims come first. Serious offending must be met with real consequences while government still tackles the deeper causes that push people into offending in the first place.

The results being recorded are not theoretical; they are tangible. A reduction in the number of victims of crime is not just a statistic; it is a person who was not assaulted, a family home that was not broken into, a business that did not have to replace a smashed window, a staff member who did not go to work anxious and an elderly resident who felt confident enough to go shopping again.

We heard examples of communities across the Top End feeling safer, and that sense of safety is rebuilding confidence. That matters across the Territory, including in greater Darwin, because it proves something important: when the government sets a clear standard and follows through, behaviour changes.

It also means police are better empowered to do their job, supported with the right resourcing and systems, not just words. The Chief Minister's statement outlines another important reform for the year ahead: the rollout of police public safety officers, a stream of public-facing police who will support visible policing at events, shopping centres, public housing, transport and public places across the Territory.

For Casuarina, that is directly relevant. Casuarina is a busy place with constant movement, high foot traffic and high patronage, which is why visible presence matters. It prevents problems before they escalate, reassures families, supports workers and means response times improve.

Security also means a justice system that works. The Chief Minister outlined important work through the TI-GER Taskforce—early resolution, faster outcomes and victims not waiting months or years for justice. That matters because the delays do not just frustrate the public; they damage trust in the system.

A strong Corrections system matters for accountability and to stop the knock-on effects that happen when police are pulled off the front line to manage prisoners due to capacity problems. The statement talks about new beds, reopening facilities and allowing police to get back onto the streets faster. That matters for communities across the Territory because it improves what people feel every day with visible policing, quicker responses and fewer repeat offenders cycling through the system. I support this focus, because without security, everything becomes harder.

Certainty is as important as security. It allows a family to plan their lives and allows a business owner to sign a lease, invest in equipment, train staff and take a risk on growth. Certainty is what investors look for when deciding whether to back projects in the Territory, and it is what gives communities stability.

Casuarina is a community built on work and enterprise. We have many small businesses, often family run, employing Territorians, apprentices and school leavers. Many of these businesses serve diverse cultural communities, bring jobs and keep money circulating locally.

Small business cannot thrive if operating costs are high, crime is rampant, approvals take too long, procurement shuts out local suppliers or government policy changes every five minutes. That is why certainty in economic policy matters.

The Chief Minister's statement talks about reforms such as payroll tax changes for small and medium businesses, procurement modernisation, approvals fast-tracking and cutting red tape. In plain terms, that means a small business can plan again, a cafe owner can employ another staff member with confidence, a retailer can expand hours without fear, a tradie can take on another apprentice because work is coming through and local businesses have a better shot at supplying government and participating in growth.

Certainty also matters in housing. When families can access support to build, when builders have confidence that projects will keep flowing, when supply chains strengthen and when apprenticeships are supported, that certainty is turning into jobs and stability.

In Casuarina housing certainty matters deeply. We have families trying to get ahead, young people trying to enter the market, long-term residents wanting stability and workers in essential services who need affordable, reliable options.

We also need certainty in essential services such as health, education, community safety and public housing. The Chief Minister's statement makes it clear that this year includes further focus on antisocial behaviour in public housing and stronger housing policy settings. That matters for residents living near problem areas and for the many good tenants who do the right thing and deserve a safe, respectful neighbourhood. Certainty means protecting the amenity of communities for everyone, not letting a small number of people ruin it for the majority.

Growth is not just a number on a report; it is opportunity; job creation; skills development; population; confidence; investment; better services funded by stronger revenues; and the Territory being seen as a place to live, work and raise a family. The Chief Minister's statement points to an improving economic picture of improved rankings, stronger economic growth, population growth, housing finance and dwelling starts.

Let us bring this back to Casuarina. If the Territory grows, Casuarina grows. If the Territory attracts investment, Casuarina businesses get more customers. If we expand workforce participation, Casuarina families get more stable incomes. If we bring people to the Territory, Casuarina becomes an even stronger hub because people will go there to shop, study, work and access services.

The Chief Minister outlined five key economic strengths: energy; Defence; agriculture; mining; and tourism. All five of those strengths flow through NT, and Casuarina feels the impact.

Energy reform matters to Territorians because power prices and reliability affect every household and business. When costs rise, families feel it first. When reliability drops, businesses lose trade and confidence. The Chief Minister's statement sets out continued reform in this space because Territorians deserve cheap and reliable power. That matters for Casuarina's small businesses operating refrigeration, lighting, equipment and with long opening hours. It matters for families paying bills and for the local economy.

Defence investment is also a major driver, and the statement speaks to strengthening our role in the Indo-Pacific. Casuarina residents work in Defence-adjacent industries. Our local businesses supply Defence personnel. Our hospitality venues, retailers and service providers benefit from that spending. When we secure more Defence investment, we are securing local jobs that help families pay mortgages, school costs and living expenses.

Tourism growth also matters for Casuarina. Visitors come to Darwin, spend money, support local jobs and build the Territory's reputation. The statement speaks to major events, new tourism experiences and a longer tourism season. That matters because events do not just fill hotel rooms; they support local employment and stimulate business.

Growth also requires people. Population growth is not a headline; it is essential. We want people to come, stay, build careers and raise their family here. That is how we sustain schools, services, sporting clubs and local business growth. The Chief Minister's statement speaks to growing the workforce and population and ensuring the Territory is competitive in attracting skilled workers. For Casuarina, that means more families choosing our suburbs, more students at CDU, more people using local shops and services and more diverse community strength.

Security is not only about enforcement; it is also about prevention, and this government has been clear. We must tackle the root causes of crime, reduce the pipeline to youth offending and support families in crisis while demanding accountability.

Mr MACKAY: 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.

Mr PATEL: The Chief Minister's statement outlines measures like family responsibility agreements, early interventions and stronger school attendance measures. In Casuarina we know that school attendance matters. Every day a child is not in school is a day they fall behind, and when kids fall behind early, the long-term consequences on employment, mental health and vulnerability to crime are severe. I support strong action to improve attendance and to ensure every child has the chance to build a better future in the NT. No child should be written off, and no parent should be allowed to deprive their child of a future.

Prevention is also about domestic violence. The statement outlines investment in programs, interventions and support. Domestic violence is devastating and destroys families. It traumatises children and places immense pressure on police, hospitals and housing services. Tackling it requires enforcement, prevention, early intervention and support—together.

Restoring our lifestyle is not only about big projects or major events; it is also about making everyday life more affordable and manageable. The Chief Minister's statement outlines measures like back-to-school support with Sport Vouchers and Learn to Swim vouchers. Those measures matter to families doing it tough; parents juggling bills; and kids who deserve the opportunity to participate in sport, education and community life. In Casuarina—where many families are working hard, often in essential services, retail, hospitality, healthcare and education—those supports can make a real difference.

Territorians deserve confidence in their healthcare system, especially families relying on maternity services. In our community, Royal Darwin Hospital plays an essential role for families across the Top End. I pay respect

to all our hardworking health staff. Royal Darwin Hospital is a place where babies are born, emergencies are treated and lives are saved daily. Royal Darwin Hospital staff are doing amazing job.

The uncertainty about private maternity services creates real stress for women and families. When people are starting or growing a family, the last thing they need is uncertainty about access, continuity of care and what services will exist.

The Chief Minister's statement reflects strong advocacy and a clear position that Territorians deserve the same access as other Australians, and any new provider must return private maternity services**.** That is the right approach because certainty in healthcare is not optional; it is essential.

I come back to where I began: Casuarina is the heart of Darwin. It is a meeting point of cultures, communities, services, employment and opportunity.

When the government delivers better safety, stronger economic confidence and practical cost-of-living support, Casuarina feels it early and benefits strongly. When Casuarina is safe and thriving, it sends a message across the Territory that we are moving forward, confidence is returning, families can plan, businesses can invest and communities can breathe again.

The three pillars the Chief Minister has set for 2026—security, certainty and growth—are not three separate ideas; they are one connected plan.

Security is the foundation. When our streets are safer, antisocial behaviour is tackled and police are empowered and backed, families regain confidence; they go out again to shop, visit friends and let their kids play sport. Small businesses trade with less fear and more confidence, and communities that were once anxious begin to breathe again.

Certainty turns confidence into action. We want certainty for families to plan; for businesses to invest; for workers that jobs will be there tomorrow; and for investors that the Northern Territory is stable, disciplined and open for opportunity. When certainty returns, the Territory stops standing still and starts moving forward.

When we get it right growth follows in jobs, population, skills, housing and local enterprise—growth that funds better services and attracts people to come, stay and build their lives here because they can see a future.

If one truth sits at the centre of all this that will decide whether these reforms deliver lasting change for the next decade, it is that education is the key; it is the only long-term answer. I think the Chief Minister and Minister Hersey explained in this Chamber how education is important for our children and why we care so much.

We can strengthen laws, and we should. We can improve policing, and we must. We can reform Corrections, and that matters; but if we want fewer victims, fewer offenders and a stronger Territory lifestyle for generations to come, we must ensure every child has the chance to learn, attend school, build skills and see a pathway to a good life.

Education is how we break cycles, build aspiration and replace despair with opportunity. It is how we grow the workforce, grow the economy and strengthen the Territory's future. That is why the work of this Finocchiaro government across law and order, housing, health, training, population and economic reform must always be tied back to giving our kids something better than what they were handed.

I place on the record my appreciation to the Chief Minister and all ministers for the work being delivered across their portfolios, because this is not easy work. It is hard work that requires discipline and courage to make tough decisions. It requires focus to stay the course, but it is necessary work, because every reform we pass, every program we strengthen, every investment we unlock and every school and family we support is not just about the next news cycle; it is about the next generation. It is about children growing up in a Territory where they are safe and can learn; dream big; and build a life with dignity, opportunity and pride. That is what security delivers, certainty enables and growth makes possible. With education as the key, we are not just responding to the challenges of today; we are building the future our children deserve.

I love Casuarina.

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

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

MOTION
Note Report – Public Accounts Committee Report
on Inquiry into Howard Springs Accommodation Village 2023 Flood Evacuation Costs

Continued from 29 July 2025.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MOTION
Note Report – Public Accounts Committee Report
on Inquiry into the Darwin Waterfront Corporation

Continued from 31 July 2025.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MOTION
Note Report – Public Accounts Committee Report
on Inquiry into the Darwin Ship Lift Project

Continued from 25 November 2025.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MOTION
Note Report – Public Accounts Committee Report
on Inquiry into the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum

Continued from 25 November 2025.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the report be noted.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

MOTION
Note Petition No 19 – Review of the Safety Conditions for Pedestrians and Cyclists on Bagot Road

Continued from 27 November 2025.

Madam SPEAKER: I would give the call to the Member for Nightcliff, who has been suspended from parliament.

The question is that the petition be noted.

Motion agreed to; petition noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I believe that you led with professionalism and integrity in your decision to restore the dignity of the important institution of which we are all privileged to be members. I will talk about two events.

The joint seniors Christmas party, hosted between the electorates of Karama and Sanderson, was held on 19 December at the Darwin Golf Club. It was well attended with approximately 150 seniors. Music was

supplied by Peter, Paul & Jacko. The main thing was that people participated. We went out of our way to invite seniors from across our electorates; they came in, sat down, talked and enjoyed themselves.

We were privileged that the Chief Minister came—she had a busy schedule that day—and talked to people at each table. They wanted her to say a few things, and she did. She spoke to them and got raucous applause. The seniors said that they were impressed with the way the Territory has improved in terms of lifestyle. They were celebrating. It gave the Member for Sanderson and I wonderful joy to see that happening.

I thank the Member for Sanderson's electorate officer, Suzi Spedding; my electorate officer, Jessi Allen-Shaw; and all the other people who came together to make it happen. Congratulations; that was fabulous.

The second event was on Australia Day. I was not here for it, but one of my constituents, Sarah Grego, reached out to me two days beforehand. She had the idea that we should we support the Ute Run and raise money for Variety. It was getting a bit late to do something big and formal, so I said, 'You go for it. Organise whatever you want; I am happy to sponsor with bread, sausages, drinks and so on.' Sarah, to her credit, decided to make it a Karama residents' free brekkie at the Manunda Terrace–Vanderlin Drive intersection.

She had one day to pull it together and advertise it. Sarah said that about 60 people came together. A lot of them did not know each other but they took the opportunity, which is fantastic. This is the community spirit.

I will give you some background about Sarah. I met her when I first came to the electorate, and she reached out to me as the new member. Her request to me was, 'Brian, I have an Australian flag and an Indigenous flag, but I cannot find the Territory flag'. I told her to leave it with me. I purchased one from Ron at National Flags, and we hand-delivered it to Sarah and her family. She was over the moon that I came personally to hand her the flag.

Sarah probably will not mind me saying that she is salt of the earth. She is a public housing tenant and a single mother; she has four or five kids. She has a job and works hard, and she does everything right. She does not have much money, but what a community spirit she has. I will show her this video because I want her to know this.

We will help her next year. It will be led by Sarah and the community, and I will come in behind them. We will make watching the Ute Run a much bigger event. I will put up marquees, and it will be a gold coin donation for the Variety Club. We will raise money. If she managed to get 60 people within one day, it would not surprise me if she has about 300 or 400 people, because that is the community spirit.

We will get out there. I have already canvassed some local businesses, and they will come in behind us as well. Some have offered free marquees, because it can be hot; others have offered to donate water for everyone. This is the community spirit I want to emphasise. Do not think we have to control everything or run everything. We have to support initiatives within our electorates.

For Sarah and all the other helpers there: I am with you. I am sure—and I will put the acid on my northern suburbs colleagues. When we do this next year I will tap into each of them so that we combine and make it a northern suburbs team that sponsors or supports this event. We may broaden it to just past Karama.

I thank Sarah. She is fantastic, and that is what we need more of.

Ms CAHILL (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, I remember and pay tribute to one of the Territory's great ladies, Sandra Lew Fatt, who passed away on 14 December 2025 at the age of 85.

Sandra Lew Fatt was a legend in the world of travel in the Territory. In total she spent 50 years ensuring Territorians' travel was planned and executed with military precision, with nothing left to chance. She was generous with her time, did not hesitate to share her experience and skills with colleagues and mentored many aspiring travel industry professionals—some of whom continue to work in the industry in the Territory to this day.

She was a woman well before her time who defied the convention of the day when she continued her career, both as an employee and business owner, while raising her family. The remarkable thing about Sandra Lew Fatt was that clients and customers soon became friends, and the lucky few became family. I think I fell somewhere in the middle.

I met Sandra not long after I moved to the Territory in 1995. She was recommended to me as 'The only travel agent I would ever want to deal with again', when I sought advice from a colleague while trying to navigate the booking of corporate travel out of Darwin for a group of doctors, which was no mean feat.

My colleague was right. I reached out to Sandra, and after a short conversation as to the challenges of booking travel for a group of doctors, Sandra had everything organised, including flights, accommodation and hire cars. Nothing was left to chance, and so began my three decades of friendship with Sandra.

I have many fond memories of long conversations with Sandra about her experiences in the travel industry. The fondest are the stories she told about her family from anecdotes about her adored husband, Benny Lew Fatt—another Territory legend who sadly passed away last week—her wonderful children, Michael, Jodie and Tracey; her grandchildren; and her great-grandchildren.

My favourite was when she told me the story of how she decided pretty much from the time she met her childhood sweetheart, Benny, that they would marry. Nothing and no-one would ever get in the way. She was true to her word and, at the tender age of 20, she married Benny Lew Fatt in 1960. They celebrated 65 years of marriage in April 2025.

In her later years Sandra and I shared a hairdresser. Some of the best laughs I ever had were listening to her recount stories of growing up in the Territory in between hair washes, colours and stints under the hairdryer.

Sandra epitomised the true Territory spirit—fierce, independent and loyal beyond reproach.

To her family, friends and all her loved ones, I extend my condolences.

Vale, Sandra. You will be forever missed.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, on Australia Day this year I had the fantastic pleasure of attending the Litchfield Council Australia Day event at Freds Pass Reserve.

Madam Speaker, I know you spend most of your Australia Day celebrating in Alice Springs, but if you ever happen to be in Darwin, come out to the rural area; it is a great time. There is a fun run—I believe the Member for Nelson had a fun walk—and other activities for the kids. There was a fantastic set-up by the lovely Kenyon family who run Pudakul. They did a fantastic welcome to country. It was a lovely day out celebrating.

After the event the Member for Nelson and I quickly rushed across the Stuart Highway to watch the infamous Ute Run. While the Member for Nelson and I were serving snags, watching the Ute Run and having a grand old time, the Member for Daly was in town at an Invasion Day rally. At least the rural area has two out of three great representatives.

We proudly sang the national anthem at the Australia Day awards, which I note the Member for Daly did not do on Tuesday. He was on ABC radio last week saying that the national anthem leads to terrorism.

The Member for Nelson and I had the pleasure of welcoming 38 brand-new citizens to the rural area and celebrating our Australia Day award winners. Before I talk about some of the winners and nominees, I give a special shout-out to the ambassador and former winner, Mignon McHendrie, who gave a nice inspiring speech about her role for the Australia Day Council.

There were four nominees for the Community Event of the Year. The first was Sattler Christian College's Global Leadership Summit, which was a wonderful event I attended with the Members for Fannie Bay and Drysdale at Foskey Pavilion. Currently, 400-odd Territorians have been evacuated to there. It was a student-run event and it was fantastic. They were empowered to basically plan the whole event, organise the speakers and have a great time.

Another nominee was the Evolving Women's Business Circle's Rural Women's Day event. It is always good to see more events in the rural area. As much as I enjoy driving to town, it is much nicer when we do not have to. Rana Everett—I hope she is listening—did a fantastic job in pulling together stakeholders and organising that event.

The Southern Districts Crocs' T for Thomas Round was also nominated. This fantastic event is organised to raise money for T for Thomas in recognition of 'Is It Sepsis?', the sepsis campaign. These fantastic people have turned what must have been an horrific ordeal into something positive, ensuring that parents and kids

are aware of the risks of sepsis. Late last year a woman in Katherine was able to quickly respond and save her baby's life. Well done for that.

The award winner of that category was the Virginia Bees Creek Volunteer Fire Brigade's annual Santa Run and Community Christmas Party. I joined in early. I was on the side of the road waiting for my lollies. It is true; Santa does come out to the rural area. It was a great event. It is a wonderful committee. I shout out to the captain, Mr Ben Kolstad, for helping put together such a wonderful event.

The Young Citizen of the Year winner was Mr Jack Logan for his outstanding contribution through his dedicated volunteering with St John Ambulance NT. Jack recently achieved his Advanced Responder accreditation. He is a fantastic young man with a bright future ahead. He loves giving back and volunteering. Well done, Jack; we are all proud of you in the rural area.

There were a number of nominees for Citizen of the Year, including quite a few from St John Ambulance. St John Ambulance attracts such a wonderful group of Territorians who go out and volunteer. They are there when you are watching polocrosse, motocross and other sporting events. These volunteers are on standby. They give up their own time to give back to the community, and I love that.

Ms Christine Turner was nominated for her volunteer work with St John Ambulance. Also nominated from St John Ambulance was Nicolle Shoobridge, who is another fantastic regular mainstay of the rural area.

Colin and Dorothy Brown were nominated for their Food for Life Charity in Howard Springs. I note that Colin unfortunately passed away prior to the award ceremony. I send my condolences on Colin's recent passing. Dorothy continues to be driven to positively touch lives in memory of all that they achieved together. She is a fantastic human being.

Joy Wood comes to my office frequently to print out music notes for the 34 Mile Choir. She is a local treasure who brings people together through music, cooking and community spirit.

Sara Baker was also nominated. She constantly goes above and beyond, supporting parents and children in remote towns and advocating for the importance of early learning. Well done, Sara.

The winner was Mr Garry Fischer for his unwavering commitment to the Berry Springs and wider rural community through nearly two decades of volunteer service to bushfire brigades, including many as captain of the Berry Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. Well done, Garry.

Other Territorians who have connections to the lovely part of the country that I represent received Australia Day Honours, including Senior Constable Josef Hart APM. Senior Constable Hart has dedicated more than three decades to policing in the Northern Territory, serving across frontline, specialist and remote postings, including at Borroloola, Maningrida, Daly River and Galiwinku.

Since 2013—this is how I know Senior Constable Hart—he has been a cornerstone of the Junior Police Rangers Program. I have been praising that program as much as I possibly can because it is such an important mentoring program for young people to get out and about and believe they can overcome any obstacle put in front of them.

Senior Constable Hart also supports the NT Police and NT Fire and Emergency Services Cadet Program, recruit training and driver training. Through his mentoring and leadership, countless young Territorians have been empowered with skills in leadership, teamwork, cultural awareness and resilience, with many going on to careers within policing and emergency services.

He has also been recognised for his acts of bravery, including a 2012 ocean rescue at Dhudupu Beach, for which he received a Royal Humane Society bravery citation. His career reflects a lifelong commitment to building capability within the NT Police Force and strengthening community relationships across the Territory.

He is a fantastic human being. Well done to him on getting the recognition he probably hates but deserves!

Mrs Beverley Shuker AFSM was recognised for her exceptional service as a volunteer with Bushfires NT. Bev has attended more than 4,000 fires in her 47 years of volunteering. She commenced volunteering in 1978 as a founding member of the Berry Springs and Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigades. She has since served in numerous roles, including captain, secretary, the ever-elusive treasurer and committee member of the Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigade.

Throughout her career Ms Shuker has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication, and she is a lovely human being. In the rural area we joke that when there is a fire the first thing you see is Bev's boys coming down and then you see Bev telling them exactly what to do. She is a mainstay of saving houses and properties in the rural area.

I pay small tribute, which is far less than this man deserves, to Mr Jeff Hardwick, who was a mainstay of the Noonamah Tavern in the rural area. He spent his life working for the betterment of the Territory, and he leaves behind his lovely wife and children. Eighty years is a good run, but it is not long enough for some people. He had so much more to give.

Rest in peace, Jeff.

Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling): Madam Speaker, I bring to the Assembly's attention information regarding illegal dumping in Alice Springs.

Recently in Alice Springs the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment caught and fined three people for illegal dumping. Our government takes this extremely seriously. Illegal dumping has been occurring for far too long in my home town of Alice Springs, and since coming into this role I have wanted to put a focus on this issue. I give a big thank you to the department. Through the 'Don't Be A Dumper' campaign and operation, cameras have been placed around Alice Springs in known hotspots. These cameras have caught a number of offenders who have been illegally dumping around our town, and I am proud to say those people have been fined. The message could not be clearer: it is much cheaper to go to the tip and dispose of your rubbish appropriately than it is to illegally dump it around Alice Springs and be caught.

To finish on a high note, I thank the departments and stakeholders that have been involved in the Alice Springs school holiday program. Over the school holidays many people travel away from the town of Alice Springs, but many families also choose to stay. It is a wonderful time of year to be in Alice Springs because while everyone else clears out you have the entire town to yourself.

Many programs were run over the school holiday period to support young people in our community. Those programs had 15,399 participants—almost double last year's figure. Our government has been proud to continue to support these initiatives.

There have been 8,394 people attend the ice skating, which is always a sought-after activity. It was wonderful to get there with my family in January and partake in the ice skating.

A record 30,224 people attended the Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre. The Member for Namatjira and I wanted this to continue in our town of Alice Springs because we know just how hot it gets over the summer months. With record temperatures above 40 degrees, the pool is a great place to take your family.

Our government will continue to support great initiatives like this over the summer period so that we can ensure young families have a place to go together. We are glad to see the money we have invested has been so well taken up by the community of Alice Springs. Thank you to all the government departments, the Alice Springs Town Council and the federal government for supporting the Alice Springs holiday program over the 2025–26 period.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, as we obviously adjourned before the Christmas break last year, I give a shout-out to Methuli Kulasekara who was our top ATAR student for 2025, with an ATAR of 99.80. Congratulations, Methuli. Darwin High School's Molly Suradi was the top Aboriginal student. Darwin High School, in the amazing electorate of Fannie Bay, also had five top ATAR students, who were Matilda Crowe, Liam Huang, Haylia Lewis, Bishwesh Puri and Ruhan Sun. Congratulations to those students. This year they are moving on to the next stages of their lives and careers, and I wish them all the best for everything they do in the future.

In early December we had our Fannie Bay seniors Christmas party at Waratah Football Club; it was an amazing success. It was good fun. More than 120 seniors from the electorate came and had a great time. They danced, ate, played games and won prizes. It was good to have the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations and the Chief Minister there. Everybody who attended that event had an amazing time.

I congratulate the winner of our Christmas colouring competition, Kora from Ludmilla Primary School. Her colouring in was phenomenal. She and her family won a Christmas-themed cyclone kit with some fun stuff in it. Congratulations, Kora.

I shout out to Sam Weston and Nicole Brown, City of Darwin Councillors who put on a Christmas morning breakfast for people who are struggling in the electorate and across Darwin City. Thank you to Sam and Nicole for putting on that one. There were amazing volunteers who came and helped.

Earlier in the year I attended the Darwin Botanic Gardens and participated in a cane toad bust for the first time. It was good fun. The squealing people could hear was me; picking up cane toads is not the best thing for me to be doing. It was a good outcome; we collected more than 1,000 cane toads that night. It poured down with rain, so kudos to the people who came out in the rain and were up to their knees in water collecting cane toads. The heaviest cane toad was nearly 300g. We were all in teams. The team with the biggest haul had more than 350 cane toads. It was a good event. Thank you to the Botanic Gardens and Territory Wildlife Park staff who put that on.

I shout out to the coordinators of the Hottest 7s rugby competition held on the Australia Day weekend. The winners of that competition were the Northern Flame for the men in the Big Croc category; the Top End Marlins for the women; the Brisbane Brothers in the Buff category; the Top End Marlins in the Barra category; and the Northern Flame in the Gecko category. Congratulations to all those winners. It was good to have All Blacks legend and iconic player Eric Rush there for that weekend. I cannot wait to see how they do it in 2027; I have heard that it will be bigger and better than ever, so I look forward to that.

I also attended the Australia Day Awards ceremony where Grace Chandler from Darwin High School and Tatenda from Parap Primary School won Student Citizen Awards. Congratulations to them; they have done amazing work for their community.

The Member for Goyder spoke about outstanding service awards. Senior Constable Josef Hart, who has completed more than 30 years of service with the Northern Territory Police, and Detective Superintendent Lee Morgan, who has completed more than 27 years with the NT Police were awarded the Australian Police Medal in the 2026 Australia Day Honours List. Congratulations to them for their outstanding commitment, leadership, service and dedication to the Northern Territory.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, today marks one week since schools across the Northern Territory returned for the 2026 school year. I sincerely thank our hardworking educators, school staff and families who have stepped back into the rhythm of the school year with such professionalism and care; your commitment to our students does not go unnoticed.

I acknowledge a few schools that have recorded an excellent increase in attendance so far this year: Nitjpurru School is up by 26.9%; Ti Tree School is up by 21.7%; Lajamanu School is up by 15.7%; and Borroloola School is up by 10.1%.

This year our government is delivering key education reforms, including the phased transition away from middle schools, the continued rollout of explicit teaching practices and a strong ongoing focus on improving school attendance.

All children across the Territory have a right to an education. We will continue to hold to account those who neglect their responsibility and consistently fail to send their children to school. Every child, no matter where they are, deserves the opportunity to learn, grow and succeed.

I acknowledge the dedicated teams at all our middle schools for their patience and flexibility while we undertake the secondary schooling reforms, which started this year. Last week I spent the first day of the school year at the remote community school in Barunga, highlighting our government's strong commitment to improving outcomes for students in remote communities. Whilst at Barunga, I met new teachers who had recently relocated to the Territory from Victoria, and their enthusiasm and dedication was inspiring.

I am also pleased to report that we have only 51 teacher vacancies, which is the lowest number on record and a significant improvement from 117 at the same time last year. To all those teachers who are new across the Territory, welcome. We hope you fall in love with this incredible place, put down roots, choose to build your future here and perhaps even your first home, supported by our $50,000 first home owner grant which is available until the end of September 2027.

Thank you all for your dedication to education in the Northern Territory. I look forward to visiting you at your schools and seeing firsthand the great work happening in classrooms.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, before I commence my adjournment speech, I put on the record my respect for your ruling. I understand the points you made, which I listened to carefully. I believe you have

acted with the highest integrity this week, and I very much appreciate your impartiality. There have been a lot of ups and downs in this place, but I believe that you, as the Speaker, held yourself in high regard. My actions this afternoon were not a reflection on you, Madam Speaker; I respect you, the Chair and the institution. When I exited the Chamber, I bowed because I continue that even in those heated moments. I did not speak out loud; I exited quietly. I respect your ruling and your reflections, and I take that on board. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your work because I know it has been a challenging week for us all.

We are fortunate, as you said, to be members of parliament and have the privilege and honour to represent fellow Territorians. I will continue to represent Territorians, particularly in the Arnhem electorate. I am blessed and honoured to have a third term as the Member for Arnhem and will continue to fight for my electorate as well as in my role as Opposition Leader and the party leader of the Northern Territory Labor Party. I take that in high regard.

We just heard from the Member for Katherine, who is the Education minister. I wrote to her in good faith last year about a preschool fence that needs to be fixed in the Arnhem electorate, in the community of Minyerri. It is pertinent and essential for me, as the local member, to place on the record the advocacy I have made for my electorate, particularly Minyerri School, about this issue that has not been attended to by the Education minister. It is appalling. Actions speak louder than words—the words are pretty loud in this place—but the Education minister has failed the people, school, community and preschool students of Minyerri.

On 31 October 2025 I wrote to the Member for Katherine in her capacity as the Education minister to ask, in good faith, for urgent repairs to the Minyerri Preschool fence. It had been reported to me on a visit before I wrote to the minister that there was a large hole in the fence, causing concern about the safety of Minyerri Preschool students, their families and the staff at the school. When you live remote or out bush, it is not just things within the school people have to worry about; it is things outside. A bullocky (wild bull) entered the preschool through the hole in the fence, which caused alarm and distress. The fence needed to be fixed.

I wrote to the Member for Katherine to ask, in good faith, for her to attend to this with her department. That was on 31 October last year, and—believe it or not, Madam Speaker—there was no politics in the letter. I will table every piece of correspondence for the record because the more we hear empty words by the CLP, particularly from the Education minister who is failing Territory students, teachers, principals and therefore our communities, the more that people in the general public—particularly in my Arnhem electorate—know there is no focus on or care for kids out bush. The Member for Katherine should be ashamed of the disgusting letter she wrote back as a minister of the Crown in the Northern Territory.

I wrote simply, 'Could you please fix the fence? Community members, students and staff have raised this as a concern. Wild animals are entering the school and putting at risk the safety of our Minyerri Preschool students.'

I think it is pertinent to bring up this today, because yesterday in Question Time—I note this is just the draft *Hansard*, so maybe there are corrections—Minister Hersey said at the start of an answer to one of her Dorothy Dixers:

> *Madam Speaker, our government has placed early childhood education at the centre of its agenda through our Early Childhood Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan.*
>
> *We are driven by the belief that every child deserves a safe environment and a strong foundation for lifelong learning.*

What a bunch of crap.

The reply I received from the Member for Katherine is one of the most disgusting letters I have ever seen from a minister in my nine years in this place. The letter she replied with has me astounded, and I honestly hope that no-one in the Education department has been able to read this final letter and that it has been changed by the political staff in Minister Hersey's office. It is one of the most disgraceful replies I have ever seen from a minister in any government. It talks a lot of hogwash and plays a lot of politics. It does not even mention that there will be any works to fix the Minyerri Preschool fence, which was causing safety concerns for the families and community members who have students attending there.

A reply was received from the minister on 10 December 2025. I read it, and I can tell you that at first I honestly was not even angry; I was so shocked at the disgusting language that the minister had allowed on behalf of the Northern Territory Government—I will table this—on a Northern Territory Government logo letterhead, representing the Crown.

After my shock, yes, the anger came, but I still needed to get the Minyerri Preschool fence fixed. I promised the people, students, staff and community members in Minyerri to get the fence fixed, so I have to write to the esteemed Education minister—who is the worst-performing CLP minister in that team. She is the weakest link and she shows it by her hostility, disgusting words and lack of care for our bush students, particularly the preschool students in Minyerri.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; those imputations about the minister for Education are out of order and should be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: That sort of language and commentary is not uncommon in this place. It is not great, but I—look, it is offensive, but it is not unusual.

For the sake of the fact we are within minutes of finishing today, can you withdraw that and move on.

Ms UIBO: The incompetence I will withdraw, because it has offended the Member for Barkly who, I would think, would be worried about the safety of preschool students. I will withdraw the comments I made about the Member for Katherine. I withdraw.

Madam SPEAKER: Okay.

Ms UIBO: The incompetence and hostility written in that letter from the Member for Katherine should make every one of the CLP members—ministers and backbenchers alike—ashamed.

With my important job as the Member for Arnhem, I rewrote a letter asking the minister to address the issue that I wrote about in the first place:

'Please, minister, will you make sure that the Minyerri Preschool fence is fixed?'

That is what I did on 2 December 2025, just before Christmas. At the end of my letter I asked:

'Could you please ensure that the department repair the Minyerri Preschool fence prior to the commencement of the 2026 school year?

'I look forward to your reply.'

I received a reply from the Member for Katherine on 20 January this year. She obviously goona-ed herself because then they have gone, 'Uh-oh, I have written some really crap things in my letter; I will have to retract, because everything I have written on a ministerial logo letterhead can become public.' There is a sorry letter, and guess what? On 5 February 2026—today—the Minyerri Preschool fence is still not fixed. It is still putting the students of Minyerri School at risk.

The minister for Education comes in here and says that student safety and early childhood safety is a priority of the CLP government. I will believe it when I see the action. I will not believe the empty words of the Member for Katherine, who is charged with an important role of representing all schools in the Northern Territory, when she cannot even get her department to act to fix a fence to make sure our students in Minyerri School are safe—or perhaps something more sinister. It does not matter what they say; what they do means more, and maybe they do not care about students in the bush and the safety of our remote kids in our schools.

NAMING OF A MEMBER
Member for Nightcliff

Madam SPEAKER: At this point I want to raise, again, an issue that I raised earlier with the Member for Nightcliff.

Member for Nightcliff, you made comments during Question Time, just before you exited the room, and I want you to reflect on exactly what you said, because I have just received the transcript from *Hansard*. What did you say?

K McNAMARA: Madam Speaker, I honestly was heightened, and I was going to address this in my adjournment. I am happy to retract anything. I would like to see the *Hansard* because I, hand on heart, do not 100% remember what I said. It definitely was not directed at the Member for Drysdale, but I am happy to retract whatever is on there.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nightcliff, given what has happened throughout this week, the fact that I have told you all countless times that you cannot breach Standing Order 30, this is what you said in your departure:

Because you appointed a racist, bigoted Administrator.

That is despite all the warnings and all the things that have gone on. Reluctantly, I will name you, because I have had enough. You had an opportunity earlier when I raised it with you to own it and withdraw it, and you did not.

I move that the Member for Nightcliff be suspended from the service of the Assembly for 24 hours.

Motion agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: Please remove yourself from the Chamber. I will withdraw it from the record if that is what you wish. Let us move on.

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, I forgot to provide the tabling of this.

Madam SPEAKER: It is too late.

Ms UIBO: I said I would table it, but I just forgot to physically give it to them.

Madam SPEAKER: You did not seek leave.

Ms UIBO: We do not need to seek leave in adjournment.

Madam SPEAKER: In adjournment you have to seek leave, so you cannot table those documents.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the Territory's recent successes and achievements on the tennis scene. The results across team and individual competitions reflect a positive trajectory for the sport.

In December the Northern Territory recorded an important team success at the Queensland Junior Teams Carnival, where the under-12s team finished first in their division and claimed the championship trophy. The campaign saw 16 junior players and three coaches travel to Brisbane, providing valuable competitive exposure against strong interstate opposition in a high-pressure environment. The Territory's performance at the carnival was further recognised through individual conduct, with Caitlyn Casey and Darius Chung each awarded sportsmanship awards, acknowledging their fair play, attitude and respect for others throughout the competition.

I acknowledge Thomas Van Haaren, representing the Alice Springs Tennis Association, who recently claimed a championship title at the Darwin International Tennis Centre. As a result of this win, Thomas secured a $5,000 tennis grant for the Alice Springs Tennis Association and earned the opportunity to represent the Northern Territory through a national Australian Open-linked player experience. His pathway from growing up in Alice Springs to competing in collegiate tennis overseas and returning home to succeed highlights the strength of Territory tennis pathways.

In January Hunter Mills began the new competitive season with a strong performance at the Frankston Centenary Tennis Club New Year's Tournament in Frankston, finishing runner-up in the boys' 12 and under singles tier 2 event.

These achievements across junior teams, emerging players and open competition reflect the continued progress of tennis in the Northern Territory. I congratulate the athletes involved and acknowledge the contributions of coaches, volunteers, family and clubs who support tennis across the Territory.

I congratulate the recipients of the 2025 Administrator's Medals honouring the distinguished service of members of the Northern Territory Police Force and the Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services. As both the Police and the Fire and Emergency Services minister I was proud to attend the medal presentation and witness the family and friends of the people who received their awards, bursting with pride over the acknowledgement of their loved one's contribution. I thank those service men and women very much for their contribution to the Northern Territory.

The Administrator's Medals pay tribute to the remarkable dedication of those who safeguard our Territory every day. They recognise men and women who with unwavering professionalism, courage and compassion devote themselves to protecting Territorians, often in demanding, complex and unpredictable circumstances. I extend my warmest congratulations to this year's recipients.

Senior Constable Csaba Boja received Police Officer of the Year. Senior Constable Boja has served communities across the Northern Territory for more than 21 years. He brings compassion, cultural respect and professionalism to every role. Whether leading complex investigations, responding to community crises or being the trusted officer his colleagues rely on, his service is rooted in kindness, patience and genuine connection, particularly with the Yolngu community of the East Arnhem region.

Senior Police Auxiliary Heidi-Marie Lehmann received Police Auxiliary of the Year. Senior Auxiliary Lehmann has a profound impact on the lives of young Territorians through her work in school-based policing. Nominated 13 times by her students, families and school staff, her leadership, care and commitment towards young people have earned her widespread respect and trust throughout the school community.

Senior Aboriginal Community Police Officer Brian Stanislaus received ACPO of the Year. With nearly 20 years of service Senior ACPO Stanislaus exemplifies integrity, resilience and compassion. He is known for his community leadership, extensive youth engagement, mentoring and crisis response. His ongoing contribution to sport and youth development influences and inspires young people across the Territory.

Ms Zelda Dhamarrandji received Aboriginal Liaison Officer of the Year. Ms Dhamarrandji is a respected cultural elder at Galiwinku Police Station. Her deep understanding of community needs, gentle leadership and advocacy have helped strengthen the relationship between police and the community. Her work in women's safety, youth empowerment and cultural connection has a profound positive impact across her region.

Senior Firefighter Michael Hamilton received Career Firefighter of the Year. Senior Firefighter Hamilton has been recognised for his leadership and longstanding commitment through a distinguished career. In addition to his operational duties he has been instrumental as a lead instructor for firefighter recruit training and is a strong advocate for mental health initiatives for the Fire and Emergency Services community.

Fire Auxiliary Captain Carly Smith received Auxiliary or Volunteer Firefighter of the Year. Fire Auxiliary Captain Smith is based in Nhulunbuy and embodies the spirit of volunteerism. Her commitment as a volunteer firefighter is inherent to community safety, particularly in remote regions where auxiliary capacity is essential. She emphasises the vital contribution of volunteers who support their communities without expectation of recognition.

Unit Officer Jonathan Wright received Emergency Service Employee or Volunteer of the Year. Unit Officer Wright has a strong dedication to emergency service delivery. He has shown humility and team-focused leadership. He is deeply respected by his colleagues and sees every achievement as the result of collective effort and commitment to service.

Each of these recipients embodies the commitment, integrity and dedication that underpin the Northern Territory Police Force and the Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services. Their work protects lives, strengthens communities and reflects the best of public service in the Northern Territory. Congratulations to all the recipients. Thank you for your outstanding service to the Northern Territory. Your dedication does not go unnoticed.

Too often we hear the bad news stories about youths in our community, so it is important to acknowledge that there are many special young people across the Territory. A particular group ended last year on a big high. I am talking, of course, about the Territory's top-performing Year 12 students. Last year 1,536 students from government and non-government schools successfully received their Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET). That represented an increase of 68 students from 2024.

Methuli Kulasekara from The Essington School was named the top NT student for her ATAR of 99.80 and a university aggregate of 88.90. Including Methuli, the NT's top 20 students were La-on Canales Chun, St Philip's College; Alvin Yat Fung Lam, The Essington School; Ruvinya Abeyaratne, The Essington School; Anna Abraham, The Essington School; Haylia Lewis, Darwin High School; Kevin Jimmy, The Essington School; Tenzin Finch, Taminmin College, who is also the grandson of Fred Finch, a former esteemed member of this parliament; Tehan Abeywickrama, The Essington School; Herath Rathnayake, The Essington School; Jayden Wong, The Essington School; Ruhan Sun, Darwin High School; Matilda Crowe, Darwin High School; Mithuru Perera, The Essington School; Bishwesh Puri, Darwin High School; Jeswin Johnson, The

Essington School; Dinev Thotawatta Bandulage, St Philip's College; Elijah Lane, Casuarina Senior College; Liam Huang, Darwin High School; and Jaedon Hocking, The Essington School.

Molly Suradi was named the top Aboriginal student for 2025.

I also note that Haileybury Rendall School students complete the Victorian Certificate of Education, not the NTCET. Haileybury's top student was Ethan Christrup, with an ATAR of 99.90.

In music to all our ears, Methuli is poised to study medicine and plans to come back to Darwin once qualified, which is fantastic news. Molly is planning to study primary school teaching in the Territory, which is fantastic. These are our young leaders and they are our future. I know the future is in good hands when we look at how much these young people are achieving.

Congratulations to all graduates of the 2025 class, and best wishes for the next chapter in your lives. We look forward to seeing the amazing things that you will achieve in your future, and we are all proud of you.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I will speak on the issues in the year ahead for the people of Drysdale and where my focus will be throughout 2026.

I will stay committed to preventing crime and antisocial behaviour, particularly throughout our public housing in Drysdale, on behalf of all constituents. Tenants come to me and ask to be moved because they do not want to be where they are and they feel unsafe. Neighbours deal with antisocial behaviour. For everybody in the electorate, it will be a key focus of mine.

We have continued issues with public drinking; with housing, as I have mentioned; in our shopping centres; and at the bus depot. We still have public drinking and littering throughout the parks. These issues will remain my focus throughout the year. I look forward to the police public safety officers coming online and working in the areas I just mentioned. I am proud to be part of a government which will deliver that to the people of Drysdale so that we can free up police and have dedicated officers working on the antisocial behaviours.

I thank Territory police for their hard work, as we have seen a drop in house break-ins. I encourage them to keep applying what they are doing and, hopefully, we will see a further decrease in the number of house break-ins throughout 2026.

Domestic violence remains a scourge on our society throughout, and I think that unites every member of this parliament. I spoke last year about my true desire—I say this as an individual member of parliament—for us to look, as a collective, at the definition of 'domestic violence' in the Northern Territory. We have only a set amount of resources for police.

I gave the example last year that if the Member for Blain was my second cousin and, as two middle-aged men, we got on the beers and attacked each other, it would be domestic violence, and police would have to respond accordingly. I think everybody agrees that we want domestic violence to be defined as what the public expects domestic violence to be, so that police resources can be applied to intimate relationships where women are subjected to a horrendous relationship which can ultimately lead to death—and yes, there are some men as well, but the impact of what a man's violence can do is over-proportional. I ask that all members think about changing the definition of 'domestic violence' so that our police resources, which will always be limited, can be focused on where they need to be.

In relation to housing, I will unequivocally keep pushing to remove 'Sin City' entirely from Gray. I say that for every tenant in there. I spend much time in that block. I have been begged so many times—they want to be somewhere else. To all the aunties in there, I want to get you into safe accommodation. I know you do not feel safe there. I want it removed. We can get better new housing, especially for the seniors and kids in there. We can do better. I do not believe it can be fixed. Government after government has tried to fix it. It does not work. It is not suitable and needs to go, so I will push for that throughout this year.

I will also push for a reduction in housing density in Gray and Driver, especially in southern Driver, and for the continued effort to address public drinking, especially in Gunn and throughout all the parks. That remains a steadfast focus of mine. I thank the Members for Blain and Karama for their camaraderie in supporting this push for our government. I thank the Housing minister for his continued listening and support for what we are trying to achieve for our constituents.

The economy will be a major focus for me. The simple reason is that when my constituents are at Coles, Woolies or Target and see the impact inflation has and their dollar is not going as far, I do not want them

going there with anxiety about what they can buy or that they will not have enough money in the bank. I do not want them stuck there feeling ashamed and embarrassed because they do not have enough money and they have to put something back—the kids cannot have something for nutrition, which is needed. That is why I have a focus on the economy.

School uniforms, sports uniforms, shoes, seeing the dentist, getting medication, having a reliable car, even having a holiday—these are the things I want for the people of Drysdale. I want every family to have those things. I do not want to give them to you; I want you to own it. I do not want to say that the government will give you all this; I want to create an environment where you can earn it and it is truly yours and you have extra capacity and money. It is your wealth to do with as you please. I do not believe we are here to magically create wealth and dump it in accounts. It does not work like that. I want to create an environment where the people of Drysdale genuinely build wealth and they feel much more wealthy when they are at Coles and Target or picking a holiday because they can finally go on one. These are the things I wish for.

We have lowered taxes and increased the threshold for the company payroll tax, so there are more jobs. When I see a kid finishing school in Drysdale, I want there to be a job that is easy for them to go into so that they can start their journey of success. If you are a mum coming off maternity leave—whether it has been years or just six months—I want there to be a good-paying job for you to go into and continue your career.

I want to ensure we have confidence in our oil and gas industry. Our government has been clear, and I am happy with the decisions we have made to put confidence into the industry. It is for the same reason: to create the economy, which is the engine room. All the social good that this Assembly can do requires a big engine room. The bigger it is, the more carts we can whack onto the back. We have to create that engine room. It is simple. I have a focus on it and my political beliefs focus on it because we can do more good, but we need that big engine room.

My love of education is no surprise to my constituents. At Gray Primary School, Driver Primary School and the new Driver high school, I welcomed the teachers back. Like last year, I will be at those schools as much as possible because I believe I need to fight for every child so that they have the future they deserve. Education is the pathway to give them knowledge to be independent citizens in the future. That is the gift we need to give them, and I will fight every day for them.

I look forward to the Palmerston Markets.

I will continue my doorknocking. I have knocked on more than 7,000 doors; I will see how high a number I get this year.

I will raise the profile of veterans' issues, and will work closely with the Minister for Veterans on this. I look forward to planning our next Night for Digger. A lot of my constituents know that event. I look forward to that as a welcoming, separate day to Anzac Day for veterans to get around and feel a sense of community.

I give no reflections on today, but at Duntroon something drilled into our moral core was 'the hard right over the easy wrong'. Madam Speaker, today's decision would have been difficult for you. As someone who holds the moral compass of this institution, I acknowledge that today was a hard right over an easy wrong and sometimes we have to make those hard decisions, which you did. I say that as a servant of the people and this House.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, it has been a long day. To assist in the adjournment, I seek leave to table a set of documents.

Madam SPEAKER: Can you explain what the documents are, please?

Mr BROWN: They are documents that the Member for Arnhem wanted to table earlier.

Madam SPEAKER: You need to provide an explanation. She did not table them, but you are now, so what are you tabling?

Mr BROWN: Letters from the minister for Education that the Member for Arnhem is concerned with and wants to table them for the public record.

Madam SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

Mr BROWN: I contribute to the year ahead, as I was not present …

Ms Uibo: Why would you say no to tabling documents in parliament?

Madam SPEAKER: Cease your interjections, Opposition Leader. Please continue, Member for Arafura.

Mr BROWN: These are my hopes of the government looking into remote regions and consulting with people in the bush.

I am a fierce advocate for the Gunbalanya clinic. I hope that the Minister for Health has a look at that this year and puts it back on the table.

In regard to education we want more engagement from the department and the truancy mob. One of my biggest complaints is that they have not come out to explain what it all means. We still have not had them on the ground in Maningrida, Gunbalanya and Tiwi Islands. We all want education participation to increase. It is everyone's business. What better way to increase attendance than to come out and engage and consult?

Look into the remote regions. Some of the social issues in the bigger towns can be fixed and stopped in communities and remote areas. We have a lack of services, and that is why people come in and are stuck here. They come for specialised healthcare—rheumatic heart disease care, dialysis and all this other stuff. If we start looking at helping out in the regions and the remote areas it will stop people from coming in and bringing their families and spilling out into the streets, car parks and parks. It will stop that antisocial behaviour.

There has been the pullout of departments such as CM&C. They are all based in Darwin now. I do not have any contacts on the ground. We want them to be on the ground so that we can negotiate a few of these issues without coming into town to see them. MVR is another example; everyone needs to come to Darwin to fix their driver's licence and their gun licence.

Focus on the remote communities to save on some of the social issues that are happening in the main centres.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
Member for Katherine

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a personal statement under Standing Order 26.

Madam SPEAKER: Proceed.

Mrs HERSEY: After my adjournment—and we have had a pretty unruly afternoon and the opposition is clearly on edge and rattled about how well our government is doing with a number of things. I am shocked by the Opposition Leader lashing out at me after she clearly has had a very bad day.

The Opposition Leader wrote to me on 7 November about the Minyerri Preschool fence. After speaking with department staff, I was informed that the fence had been fixed in May.

I understand that during the preschool's assessment and rating on 13 May 2025 authorised officers identified that sections of the external fence had been damaged, with poles removed by vandals. My advice is that the removed poles were replaced at that time and the area was made safe through the Department of Education and Training's urgent minor works process. The fence was then fixed. It has been fixed numerous times.

I have been in contact …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: No. A personal explanation is heard without interruption. Please take your seat.

Ms UIBO: It says, 'When there is no question before the Assembly'.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

Ms UIBO: There is a question …

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Ms UIBO: … that the House do adjourn, so there is a question before the House.

Mr Maley: Throw her out.

Madam SPEAKER: I have given …

Ms UIBO: I am looking at the standing order, Madam Speaker. The whole week has been …

Madam SPEAKER: If you want to argue with me tonight, you can leave the Chamber again, Leader of the Opposition. I have given the call to the Member for Katherine to give a personal explanation. She will be heard without interruption. If you do not like it, you can leave or just sit down, please.

Ms Uibo: There is a question before the House.

Mrs HERSEY: Madam Speaker …

Ms Uibo: Breaking our own standing orders.

EXCLUSION OF MEMBER
Member for Arnhem

Madam SPEAKER: Okay; you can leave. I order you to leave the Chamber.

Ms Uibo: What is the point in having standing orders …

Madam SPEAKER: That is enough!

Mr Maley: Name her!

Ms Uibo: … if we are not even going to take …

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, what I have put up with from you and your team today is beyond belief. You can leave the Chamber now for an hour and stop your interjections.

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! She is clearly speaking after you told her to leave, on the way out when she was not at her table.

Ms Uibo: Because it is not written in the standing orders.

Mr MALEY: She is yelling out again. She needs to be named. I move a motion that she be named because of her action. You could hear her yelling out then.

Madam SPEAKER: I will listen to the personal explanation given by the Member for Katherine.

Mrs HERSEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have been contacted by the Opposition Leader about the Minyerri fence. It has been fixed on multiple occasions. The CE of Education has spoken to the principal, Juliette Coco, this evening. The fence, however, has been vandalised again. She reported to the chief executive of Education that as soon as it gets fixed it gets vandalised again.

I apologise for the people at Minyerri that their community cannot respect the preschool fence. I am not sure what we can do about that, but I have now asked for that to be escalated. To which I might add, no-one from the school has escalated this through to the department through the channels to get to me about this, this year, so we have then asked for …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Katherine, I think you can finish there. A personal explanation is of a personal nature and you do not reflect on other people or other institutions in that. It is about you explaining from a personal perspective, and I think you have done that. Any more could move into ground which is not suitable for a personal explanation. You have made your point, so thank you. Sit down.

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Continuing on, Standing Order 50: Naming of a Member. The Speaker may name a member who has persistently and wilfully disregarded the authority of the Speaker. You heard …

Madam SPEAKER: I am well aware of that, Deputy Chief Minister.

Mr MALEY: When the Opposition Leader left the sittings you heard her yelling outside the Chamber when the door was open. I say that your authority should be used to name the member because of her disregard of your authority as the Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: I have instructed the Opposition Leader to leave the Chamber under Standing Order 49 for one hour. That is my decision.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, as we start the year it is important to acknowledge a number of achievements across the bush.

I am a proud member for my electorate. It is the largest electorate in the Northern Territory. I will always stand up for the people of Gwoja and make sure that their voices are heard. If that comes at a cost to me, it is a cost I am willing to take on.

It is a strong electorate full of language, law and culture. I hope that this is a great year for the people of Gwoja. We can continue to do good work together and raise important issues and concerns across the electorate. I look forward to getting out and seeing people at sports carnivals and committee meetings across the bush.

An incredibly important issue was raised with me over the Christmas period; that is, housing. Communities are crying out for help. I continue to stand up in this place because communities deserve a strong voice and a parliament that listens. That is why we have launched an online petition calling on the Northern Territory Government to take immediate action on housing. Since launching that petition, people from across the Territory have come forward with their lived experiences and stories.

One constituent has reported to me a broken air conditioner that was reported over a year ago. She has lived through extreme summers and is still waiting. Others told me that they have reported issues to Housing only to be told that there is no record of their request.

I have heard deeply troubling accounts from public housing tenants whose homes were destroyed by fires last year and they are still being required to pay rent if they want to be considered for another home and not be put on the bottom of the waitlist. It is important that is on the record: people have been warned that if they do not pay, they risk being placed on the bottom of the waitlist while they wait for their home. They are homeless waiting for another property. This is not just a Housing failure; this is a failure of basic fairness. People who have lost everything should not be punished for circumstances beyond their control.

The CLP government must explain how such a policy can be justified. It must take immediate steps to ensure that no-one is forced to pay rent for a home that no longer exists. People are frustrated and angry, and they have every right to be.

Every government must reflect, and every government must do better. Continuing down the same path while expecting different results is not leadership.

The housing system in the Territory is broken. It needs reform. It needs to be rebuilt around local knowledge, community leadership and accountability. Housing must work for the people who live in it. The parliament has a responsibility to act, and Territorians are watching. We need a new housing system, and we need it now.

It does not matter where you live in the Northern Territory, Territorians have seen and experienced firsthand how bad housing conditions have become. After travelling through the bush and listening directly to community members, I have heard how desperate people are to have their housing concerns even acknowledged by the CLP government. I witnessed the deterioration and unacceptable condition of houses across the Northern Territory. It is deeply concerning and, frankly, indefensible. This crisis is not confined to remote communities; it is in urban centres, including Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Palmerston and Darwin. Public housing sits empty and boarded up, not for days or weeks, but for months and in some cases years.

The government promised to fix housing. The CLP has been in office for more than 500 days, and Territorians are still waiting. Despite repeated claims and announcements public housing remains in crisis. When it comes to remote housing, the government is quick to celebrate new builds across the bush. Those homes are real, and they should be acknowledged and celebrated, but they are the result of plans put in place by previous governments of all persuasions. We must continue to build more homes, but let us be clear that new homes alone do not fix the problem or the system.

We have seen a government that has failed to adequately fund and deliver timely repairs and maintenance. It has failed to implement effectively tenancy management and keep existing stock safe, liveable and functional in urban and remote communities.

Over recent months I have stayed with my own families in communities and have seen firsthand the appalling conditions this government is allowing housing to fall into: families waiting months for basic repairs, such as for broken taps; failed plumbing; light switches being left unrepaired; air conditioners remaining broken through extreme heat; and tenants being told by housing that they have to wait three weeks until there are enough jobs.

I am realistic. This problem has not happened overnight, hence the call for the entire system to be reformed and for us to work with the Commonwealth Government to come up with a system that works. We know that we need to get on top of housing across the Northern Territory and that we need a new system. We need systems that work, but we also need systems that care, support people and provide a safety net for the most vulnerable Territorians. That is incredibly important to most of us in this Assembly, and we all must do better.

I am the proud Member for Gwoja, and I will stand up every day and talk for my communities. When I get knocked down, I will get back up. When I get silenced, I will continue to speak up. I have been elected by the people of Gwoja, the Northern Territory's most remote and largest electorate, to make sure that their voices are heard—and that is exactly what I will do.

Do I regret walking out today? No, I do not. Do I regret engaging and interjecting with the Member for Blain upon leaving? Yes, I regret that. I apologise to the Speaker for that. However, I will always stand up for the people of the bush, for Aboriginal Territorians, for people in the rainbow community and for and alongside women.

I acknowledge that members in this parliament should have a differing of view; that should not be seen as a weakness and it should be celebrated. However, accountability and integrity matter. Leaving here today, until the next sittings, gives everyone a moment to stop, pause, reflect and acknowledge that we all must do better in asking and answering questions and being kind to one another.

Hand on heart I say that I was elected by the people for Gwoja to be their voice, and I will be. I will make sure that the roars coming from Gwoja are heard loud and clear, today and every day. That is who I am and who my communities are. They are some of the most amazing communities in the Northern Territory. From the South Australian border to the entire NT–WA border and the amazing communities on the coastlines, I represent the Territory's magical parts and I will continue to make sure that their voices are heard and celebrated and will never be silenced.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I give a shout-out to people in Johnston. At the beginning of the year we all think we have the best electorate, but I know I do. You can get anything you want in Johnston. The people are fantastic. I have lived there for 30 years, and it just gets better and better.

One of the things we have started doing is a Friday shout-out to people and businesses in the community. It has been a great way to thank people for the work they do, often unrecognised and unsung. We have a lot of new businesses coming into Johnston, which is wonderful. I heard the Member for Fong Lim promoting local businesses, and I agree with that 100%. It is good to support and promote them. I quickly will tell a few of their stories.

Like many of us, when I was elected I thought, 'This electorate office is not in the right place; it is not where the community is or where people are. I need to move.' My advocacy for that was unsuccessful with the DLA and we have now been in our office for 18 months, like everyone else. It has become a hub for people to come to. I was worried that it was not somewhere where people would drop in, but it has been the opposite. We have many people coming in every day, some just for a cup of tea and to look at the books in our community library, and some to sit down and get out of the heat. Also people bring us things every day, which is amazing.

There is Val, who every week brings us a huge bunch of fresh flowers from her garden. She says, 'I am bringing this to you. You are all working really hard and I want to make this space beautiful.'

There is Di, who came in on my first week that we were in the office. She was pretty cross when she came in. She was not happy I was elected. She had a lot of complaints about things she needed to have addressed. She left saying, 'I want to come and volunteer for you'. She has been doing that for 18 months. She is our champion letterboxer. She is in her seventies—I will not say her age. She letterboxes quicker than anyone else. She has incredible pragmatic optimism about everything, so she is wonderful to be around. She is also a great hockey player, so some of you may know her.

There is Lisa Pellegrino, who won Performer of the Year in the People's Choice Award at the NT Performing Arts Awards and is a wonderful person in the community. We see her every Sunday at the markets with her daughter. She is great fun and always up for a bit of entertainment and performance and someone we are lucky to have in our community.

There is Vera, who comes to our office every week for a meeting. She bumped into me at the shops last week or the week before. I was baking biscuits to take to teachers going back to school. I have this idea that it is nice to bring teachers home-baked things, but unfortunately I am a bad baker. She said to me, 'Here, I have a good recipe for you'. As I was on my way out, she put something into my trolley and said, 'I bought these biscuits that you can give them, just in case yours do not work out'. She is wonderful.

There is Bill, who came to paint our office. Our office looks beautiful, so thank you, Bill. A few days later he came back with a lot of incredible art. He said, 'This is art I have from when I worked out bush, and I think you should have it here in this office'. We put some of it up, and then someone came in to ask for water and said, 'That is a beautiful painting', so I told him the story of it. He said, 'That painting is by my mum'. There are beautiful stories all the time of the connections people build in the electorate.

There is Bernie from Top End Print, which is just outside our electorate but used to be in it before the electorate boundaries were redrawn. We go to him all the time with chaotic requests—which might surprise some people—and he makes them work for us. Thank you, Bernie.

There is Vivienne, who runs Sarah Lyn, which some of you may know. She is an incredible woman. If you do not know her, I encourage you to meet her. She is full of advice for me every day about the state of the economy in the Northern Territory, how it is for small business, what kind of bra I should wear—whatever it is you need to know. She also feeds the magpie geese in the field across from our office every afternoon. She is a generous donor to our seniors morning tea lucky door prize which was—much to her amusement—won by a fella. She was happy to see that.

There is Peter, who has done decades of work with Rapid Creek Landcare. We are so lucky to have this amazing, living creek running through the middle of the electorate. Rapid Creek Landcare has been looking after it for decades, and Peter has led that work.

There is Somi, who runs Sabai Thai, which I think is the best Thai restaurant in the Northern Territory—but I will take it on with other people. He was away for five weeks and just got back this week. I was happy to get out of parliament in time to go there on Tuesday night when it had just reopened. We are all happy in Johnston to have him back again.

There is KingKing, a new business that has just opened, with amazing Aboriginal art and clothing.

We have four Vietnamese restaurants in Johnston now; one has recently opened, and another has been taken over by new owners. One of the Vietnamese restaurants has also what I think is the best Vietnamese iced coffee in the Northern Territory: salted cream iced coffee with coffee ice cubes. I highly recommend it.

There is Stan and my friends at the Greek Men's Club, who I have talked about in this Chamber before. They are also my quasi-advisers about all things in the Territory.

There is Tenzin and Jack, who help us with letterboxing when we need extra help, and many other people.

I feel incredibly lucky to have the role of representing people in the community, being able to work with and for them. We have a lot of plans this year to not only address some of the issues that affect people in our community and beyond but also bring people together to keep building that community and connection. That is something people value.

In the midst of the many difficult things happening in the world—it has been a difficult beginning to the year for me personally—I feel hopeful and have lots of joy for being able to represent the people in my electorate. I stand for what they think is important and what they tell me they want me to stand for. I work with them and have them come in and spend time with us to help build community.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, December seems a long time away, but wonderful things happened between December and now in my community that I took part in and which I must mention today.

Stuart Park Primary School is a wonderful place to spend time. My favourite thing to do every year is participate in the school's music assembly at the end of November. That is closely followed by its Year 6 graduation, which is a super fun event that I loved attending on 1 December. Stuart Park Primary is turning 60 this year, so it will be a big year. I look forward to being a part of a range of activities over the course of the year.

People are graduating school apace in December. It was wonderful to be alongside my colleague the Member for Fannie Bay on 2 December at the Darwin Middle School graduation, which was fantastic with excellent musical and dance performances.

Likewise—a theme is emerging—with my team Darwin colleagues, the Members for Fannie Bay and Port Darwin, it was great to be at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory on 28 November, where we saw a fantastic exhibition, Tracy's Echo: 50 Years of Resilience. It was also lovely to see there—Mr Deputy Speaker, as I am sure you will appreciate—the Waters Ward Darwin City Councillors. I had a lovely time catching up with them about all the things we have in common and look forward to accomplishing for the electorate over the course of the year.

I am delighted that a lot of us could attend the National Pharmacy Awards of the Northern Territory auspiced by the Pharmacy Guild on 4 December. I extend my gratitude to Peter Hatswell the president and to Keely Quinn for being such great hosts to me and the Members for Fannie Bay and Drysdale—I am forgetting one more. We had a fantastic time. It was great to celebrate Elijah Callis, the NT Student Pharmacist of the Year—what a powerhouse that guy is—and, likewise, Hibiscus Day & Night Pharmacy, a compounding pharmacy and the Community Pharmacy of the Year. I think we all know how important community pharmacies are and to have ones of that calibre is extremely important.

On 7 December it was pure joy and delight, albeit at smaller scale, to play a small part of the program in the 50th anniversary of the City of Darwin Carols by Candlelight celebration. It is a joy for me to be a part of that, in any small part. Although it would have been lovely to have the 50th anniversary with 8,000 people in the amphitheatre, it was still great to have 3,000 in and around the Waterfront and the Convention Centre. To Nora Lewis AM, who I am predisposed and slightly biased towards, as I think everyone knows, and Captain Natalie Dajski who led the band of the 1st Brigade so ably, thank you so much for letting me be a part of it. It is lovely when all of us can get out and about in the community and flex our wares in different capacities, whether it is making team of the decade like the Member for Fannie Bay—I could go on; there are lots of people we could shout out to in that regard.

I love attending the Haileybury Rendall School Celebration of Excellence. On 9 December I did so again alongside the minister for Education and the Member for Gwoja. Hats off to all involved for the many books that we hand out at that ceremony. It is great that hard copy books are still given as prizes to kids. I tell you what: a library's worth of books are given away at that ceremony, and so they should be because in addition to phenomenal music and entertainment, exceptional academic results are coming out of that place, as the Chief Minister alluded to in her adjournment.

It would be impossible to try to name all the people who performed out of their socks, but I was pleased to get to know a lot of the kids at Haileybury over the last year in relation to their advocacy on their petition on the Berrimah Road duplication and by just getting out there. I look forward to having some time in the classroom with kids at Haileybury over the course of this year.

I extend my gratitude to Principal Andrew McGregor and CEO Derek Scott, both of whom are great advocates for the independent school sector but also do a huge amount to support our public school system. Haileybury does phenomenal over-recruiting, quite frankly, in providing teachers to that school, and a lot of them end up in our public school system as well. Their social impact and their community impact—it is a fantastic school led by fantastic people, and I am privileged to be a part of their community.

On 11 December it was great as always to get down to the Rotary Club of Darwin. You will not find a finer collection of Hawaiian shirts in the Northern Territory than if you attend a Rotary Club of Darwin meeting.

Jokes aside, club members were great supporters of mine as a kid. They provided me with many great educational opportunities, so it is wonderful to go back and share a meal, say a few words and contribute something in the thought space. I am particularly grateful to John Brears, who is active in my Fong Lim electorate, and Peter Hopton, who is another great contributor to civic life in the Northern Territory, for inviting me repeatedly to come back and say a few words.

On 12 December it was great to work under the auspices of the minister for Education alongside the Minister for International Education, Migration and Population and the Leader of the Opposition at the Alana Kaye College graduation. Our VET sector is important, and the graduates we are pushing through VET are often not recognised in the same way as university graduates. It was wonderful to recognise the connections with the Philippines, the support network surrounding that and all the people who contribute towards providing a sustainable and durable workforce and labour supply in the NT by providing vocational education and training programs.

Having said that, as you all know, I am something of a university-phile, so it was wonderful to be part of the Flinders University medical students' graduation the following day, alongside the Minister for Health and the minister for Education, under the auspices of the ministers for Education and International Education, Migration and Population—albeit hiding in the background, not in an official capacity, I think. It was probably in an official capacity—my bad. All of us were there celebrating and watching a huge new class of people take the physician's oath together. That is a wonderful moment, seeing an incoming cohort all saying together that they have chosen a vocation and a path of service.

We know how desperately we need doctors, nurses and allied healthcare workers in the Northern Territory to build a sustainable social and economic future, opportunity and prosperity for all. Flinders is playing a critical role in that regard and has been for some time. It will be great in coming years to be at graduations for CDU having a program in its own right.

Speaking of the healthcare workforce, I allude to the fact that on 27 November I spoke in adjournment briefly about my motivation for coming to parliament and my link with migration policy work in the past, complementary pathways and utilisation of the federal skilled refugee labour agreement. On 20 December and again last Saturday, 31 January, it warmed my heart to welcome at the airport 10 new Territorians who have come to live in Darwin and who are now, I am pleased to say, starting work in our healthcare and correctional services systems, supporting nursing and pharmacy. There are also five kids, a couple of whom just started preschool and two who have gone into high school. It will be great, and I cannot wait to bring them here and have you all meet them soon. I hope that in time they will be joined by others.

I cannot say enough how grateful I am to the Minister for Health and the Minister for International Education, Migration and Population for allowing, in my assistant ministry capacity, to continue work in earnest on that fledgling program.

This is the month of the Starlight Super Swim. On behalf of team Darwin, the Members for Fannie Bay and Port Darwin, I encourage you all to join us in our quest to raise the $4,000 we have targeted, but it might be more, and 40 kilometres, which might be more. Please join our collective effort to raise money for sick children. It is a wonderful cause and a great time of year to get in the pool. I look forward to fundraising and participating in more community events together going forward.

Mr EDGINGTON (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was honoured and excited to attend the Barkly Regional Council citizenship ceremony and Australia Day awards. These awards reward and recognise individuals and organisations that have made a noteworthy contribution to the local community.

Citizen of the Year went to Roddy Calvert. Roddy has called the Barkly home for more than 43 years and during that time has been a tireless contributor to community life. She is a devoted member of the Country Women's Association. Having been a member for more than 30 years, Roddy currently serves as president and is a proud lifetime member. She has led much-loved community initiatives, including the iconic and beloved CWA Cafe at the Tennant Creek Show and ensured a strong CWA presence at the Tennant Creek markets. Roddy co-authored a significant historical book marking the 50th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy, preserving the Barkly's role and stories for future generations. She is also a familiar and trusted voice on ABC radio's Tennant Talk. Roddy continues to connect, inform and uplift the Barkly community.

The other nominees for Citizen of the Year included David Khoory and Heidi Lee Chmielewski.

Senior Citizen of the Year went to Jerry Kelly. Jerry is a proud Warumungu man and has spent decades sharing his knowledge of country, bush tucker and traditional medicine with visitors and locals. With

a background as a stockman, machinery operator, plumber and road train driver, Jerry has a strong work ethic and brings wisdom to everything he does. For more than a decade he has run cultural bushtucker tours and has delivered pastoral skills training. Through his long service with Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation and his mentorship to young people, Jerry continues to inspire pride in culture, caring for country and opportunity in the Barkly.

Roddy Calvert was also a nominee in this category.

Volunteer of the Year went to Meg McGrath. Meg has been a quiet powerhouse of community service in Tennant Creek for more than 20 years. Since retiring, she has dedicated between 25 and 30 hours a week volunteering at the Uniting Church op shop. Meg has also purchased a truck to deliver pop-up op shops to remote communities. She is a passionate advocate for First Nations families and is a dedicated wildlife carer, hand-raising baby kangaroos and returning them safely to country. Her generosity, compassion and tireless service has made Meg a deserving nominee.

Young Citizen of the Year went to Charlie Jones. Charlie has made a remarkable contribution to Tennant Creek through volunteering, fundraising and youth leadership. Best known for his award-winning mullet—Charlie won NT's Best Mullet of 2023—Charlie turned it into a powerful platform for good, fundraising more than $5,000 for mental health charities when he cut it off. He promoted the fundraising through school and social media, and helped to raise awareness of mental health and bullying. Charlie is a long-time supporter of the Tennant Creek Christmas tree, a regular entrant to the Tennant Creek Show, a speedway participant and a proud Tennant Creek ambassador. He was recently selected to represent Tennant Creek in a national Remembrance Day program, and continues to show leadership, generosity and pride.

Student Citizen of the Year was awarded to Malcolm Billy from Alpurrurulam School. The award recognises students who show a sense of fair play, generosity of spirit, concern for others, cultural understanding, positive attitude and involvement in the school and/or wider community.

At the citizenship ceremony the Barkly welcomed five new citizens: April Atanacio from the Philippines; Nicola O'Donnell from the United Kingdom; Folole Tasi from Samoa; Va'a Tasi from New Zealand; and Taylah Repia from New Zealand. Welcome to those five new citizens. Thank you for being part of the Barkly community.

I also congratulate four recipients of Australia Day Honours from the Barkly electorate. Mr Frank Shadforth OAM was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the Indigenous youth of the Northern Territory. With the support of his family, Frank has delivered short and long-term youth intervention work camps at Seven Emu Station that help young people reconnect with their culture while teaching them about basic work skills, including working on the cattle station, land management, tourism on country, hunting, fishing, construction and mechanical skills, bush tucker and bush medicine activities.

Three brothers from the Alyawarr Ward of the Barkly Regional Council also received recognition in the Australia Day Honours. I recognise brothers Mr Casey Holmes Akemarr OAM, Mr Frankie Holmes Akemarr OAM and Mr Donald Thompson Akemarr OAM. They were also recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for their incredible service to the Indigenous community of the Northern Territory. The trio are senior traditional elders for Antarrengeny country, and are widely recognised as senior knowledge holders across the Alyawarr region in the east of the Northern Territory. In fact, it is roughly 200 kilometres south-east of Tennant Creek. They have each been elected to represent their communities on the Central Land Council, and have all contributed extensive cultural knowledge to several significant native title and land claims. They are trusted sources of guidance well beyond their own country. The brothers are involved with Codes 4 Life, an Aboriginal men's program which aims to reconnect men with their responsibilities and communities. They also contributed to the Alyawarr–English Dictionary, the Alyawarr Picture Dictionary and other significant cultural resources.

I thank the three brothers and Frank Shadforth for their incredible contribution to my Barkly electorate over a substantial number of years. Thank you for your outstanding commitment to young people, Frank. Thank you to Casey, Frankie and Mr Donald Thompson for your commitment to land, country and culture.

I thank everyone who attended the Australia Day service, the citizenship ceremony and awards. It was a great morning hosted at the Barkly Regional Council chambers in Tennant Creek.

After the awards ceremony and official proceedings there were a number of activities at Lake Mary Ann dam. Despite the hot temperature—it was 43 degrees in Tennant Creek on Australia Day—there was plenty of fun, food and entertainment at Lake Mary Ann. There was face painting, lots of games and activities. One highlight

of the Australia Day Family Fun Day was the Tim Tam biscuit-eating competition—you can imagine trying to get your hands around Tim Tams in 43 degrees. I was part of that competition. Whilst the winner had five, I had a number of biscuits slip through my fingers and could eat only two. It was a great afternoon at Lake Mary Ann.

It was great to have Brian Coleman from 8CCC Community Radio broadcasting on the day, conducting interviews and providing commentary throughout the afternoon.

I thank the Barkly Regional Council staff and councillors, the mayor and the volunteers. There were councillors helping on the day. I thank everybody for their contribution and how they went about making everyone feel welcome. It was a great day of entertainment for Australia Day in the Barkly.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I will speak about the Palmerston Citizen of the Year nominees.

On Australia Day I had a busy morning; I went to the fun run in the city and then the Hot100 Variety the Children's Charity Ute Run. I missed running into the Members for Nelson and Goyder at Noonamah as there were too many utes in the line. We had to turn back to Palmerston to get ready for the Palmerston Council citizenship ceremony and awards.

I congratulate Balachander Mohanraj for being awarded Palmerston Citizen of the Year in recognition of his outstanding volunteer contributions to the Palmerston community for more than 15 years. His commitment to Palmerston includes leading the annual Good Friday Walk, supporting St Vincent de Paul Society, organising Christmas and Boxing Day community gatherings and coaching youth cricket. Congratulations, Balachander, and I look forward to seeing you at events around Palmerston.

I congratulate the nominees for Palmerston Citizen of the Year, including Christopher Kimani. Chris is a legend. He has been involved with the Greater Palmerston United Football Club for a number of years. I met him at the club's 10th anniversary. He was nominated for his exceptional contribution as a founding member and coach of the GPUFC. Named NT News Best Coach of the Year in 2024, Chris continues to champion the growth of the club and strives for ongoing improvement, with a vision to see it become the leading football club in the Palmerston–Darwin region. Congratulations, Christopher.

Member for Drysdale, what is the name of the soccer club at the …

Mr Howe: Rovers.

Mr KERLE: Rovers had better watch out; GPUFC is chasing them.

I turn to the Community Event or Group of the Year award. I congratulate the Tamil Society of the Northern Territory which was recognised as the Palmerston Community Event of the Year for the Indian Food Festival held in Goyder Square in August 2025. I attended this event and was blown away by the number of food stalls and the sheer number of people who came to Palmerston's Goyder Square to take part in the Indian Food Festival. Thank you and congratulations to the Tamil Society of the Northern Territory for organising the Indian Food Festival. I look forward to attending in 2026.

I congratulate the Gujarati Cultural Association of Darwin on being nominated for Palmerston Community Event or Group of the Year for its Navratri Festival which was held on 27 and 28 September at the Palmerston Recreation Centre. Navratri is a significant Indian festival that honours the power and grace of Goddess Durga, celebrating women's strength and importance in society. It is one of the most widely celebrated festivals in India and across the globe. This vibrant event brought together approximately 400 attendees, uniting the community in celebration of a culturally significant tradition.

The Members for Brennan and Drysdale and I were at that event. We were dancing and tearing up the dance floor. We had a ball. Unfortunately, as the night wore on I was unable to keep up with the people there, so I had to bow out. It was a fantastic evening, and I look forward to attending later this year.

I congratulate Riding for the Disabled Association Top End on its nomination for Palmerston Council's Community Event or Group of the Year. Riding for the Disabled is a fantastic association, which is in my electorate of Blain in the suburb of Archer. Riding for the Disabled Association Top End is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing safe and supportive equestrian experiences for people with disabilities. Operating for more than 20 years, the program supports 20 regular riders and 96 Saddle Up participants, helping improve physical health, confidence and social and emotional wellbeing.

I visited Riding for the Disabled. The people there do fantastic work, helping out and providing equestrian experiences for many children with special needs in Palmerston. They love it. Thank you so much, Riding for the Disabled. We appreciate everything you do.

I congratulate Palmerston Citizen of the Year nominee Jacob Brant, President of the Palmerston Rugby Union Club. His commitment to the sport extends beyond playing and coaching. Under his guidance the club has seen improvements to facilities, including Moulden Oval which he ensures is safe and accessible to players all-year round. His leadership strengthens the club and inspires others to volunteer and contribute. As the local member, I can say that Jacob is a powerful force and advocate for his club, the mighty Crocs. Congratulations on your nomination, Jacob. I look forward to continue working with you.

I honour Jennie Copley who was nominated for Palmerston Citizen of the Year. Jennie has been an active contributor to the Palmerston community through multiple voluntary roles and ongoing community-building initiatives. For more than five years she has maintained a street library in Rosebery whilst also volunteering at the Darwin Casuarina Lions Club and Bali Pink Ribbon Foundation. Jennie organises home-based fundraising for local and health charities, demonstrating leadership through initiative, consistency and encouragement of others. Her long-term commitment reflects sustained and meaningful community-building efforts that continue year after year.

Jennie Copley lives around the corner from me. I have regularly seen in the community group for many years that every Dry Season she puts out her community library and fills it up with books. Anyone from the community can borrow a book or do a swap. She puts it out every year, looking after and maintaining it. Thank you very much, Jennie, and congratulations on your nomination.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.