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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Drysdale

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Drysdale be granted leave of absence from the Chamber today due to medical reasons.

Leave granted.

REORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move to reorder the notices for this morning by moving number 7 to number 2. All others follow in consecutive order.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS
Sattler Christian School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of students from Year 6 at Sattler Christian School, accompanied by their teachers. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 61

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Firearms Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 61, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the *Firearms Act 1997* to implement recommendation 5A of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce report and related purposes that support the implementation of recommendation 5A.

This Bill formalises recommendation 5A of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce report by extending the period of time a firearms corporate licence and firearms employee licence can be issued. A firearms corporate licence and firearms employee licence can now be issued for a period of up to 10 years. This increased period of operation will apply for licence applications lodged after commencement of the amending Act.

The Bill introduces into section 14 of the Act the ability for a licence to remain valid whilst an application for the same licence type is being considered by the commissioner. For the licence to continue to be in force, the application for the new licence must be lodged before the existing licence's expiry. This amendment supports the implementation of recommendation 5A and the continued use of firearms, making it easier for licence holders to do business in the Territory.

The Bill also introduces the ability for the commissioner to revoke or vary a condition of a licence or permit during its currency. In addition, the Bill introduces the commissioner's ability to specify further conditions to which a licence or permit is subject. This enhances the safety of police officers and the community by ensuring that the most appropriate conditions are in place. Decisions made under these amendments will be reviewable. Accordingly, the Bill includes these amendments into Schedule 7 of the Act as reviewable decisions by the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The Bill also restructures the Firearms Advisory Council established under section 55 of the Act. These amendments create greater balance and independence for the Firearms Advisory Council, creating an independent chairperson and providing for direct reporting to the minister.

The Bill expands the offence provision in relation to matters that the holder of a firearms licence, permit or certificate of registration is required to notify the commissioner. Currently, a person only has to notify the commissioner if their firearm is lost or stolen. The Bill will amend section 90 of the Act to also require notification to the commissioner of any destruction, defacement or damage to a firearm.

Additionally, section 68 of the Act only prohibits a person, unless approved by the commissioner, from altering a firearm in a way that affects its safe operation or converts the firearm to another category of firearm. The Bill will amend section 68 to also prohibit a person from altering a firearm in a way that destroys it or renders it, or part of it, inoperable.

The Bill also creates an offence under new section 125 of the Act requiring the holder of a licence, permit or certificate of registration to notify the commissioner of a firearm that, immediately before the commencement of the amending Act, has been rendered inoperable, destroyed, disposed of, damaged or defaced, within 30 days after the commencement of the amending Act. This is a necessary amendment that will ensure all firearms records are appropriately updated and allow future enforcement of the new requirement.

The Bill makes the necessary amendments to reflect an existing amnesty which enables interstate licence holders to possess, use and purchase ammunition in the Territory. This amendment ensures equitable access to ammunition for visiting licence holders and supports the safe and effective conduct of firearms activities.

This Bill also modernises the Northern Territory's firearms regulatory framework by addressing emerging risks associated with the use of digital blueprints. The introduction of the offence of possession of digital blueprints for manufacture of firearms, or a part of a firearm, in new section 61B, reflects developments in other jurisdictions, where the proliferation of digitally distributed firearms has been recognised as a significant threat to public safety and to the integrity of longstanding licensing and registration systems.

This new offence will not apply to people who possess a digital blueprint for manufacture of firearms, or a part of a firearm, for a purpose connected with their employment pursuant to section 4(4) of the Act, for a purpose connected with a law enforcement function, or for the preparation or conduct of a criminal proceeding. A person authorised by a licence or permit to manufacture a firearm based on the digital blueprint will also be exempt from the offence in new section 61B.

This Bill responds directly to community safety and community concerns. In our year of action, certainty and security, this government is overhauling community safety. The Bill is a key reform to reducing red tape, restoring the Territory lifestyle and making it easier to do business in the NT.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

HERITAGE AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 60

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Heritage Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 60, 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 *Heritage Act 2011* to restore clarity, certainty and confidence to the Northern Territory's heritage regulatory system while ensuring it continues to protect places and objects of genuine significance.

Heritage protection is important. It matters because our heritage tells the story of the Territory and our rich history that sets us apart from the rest of Australia. Our history includes the deep cultural traditions of Aboriginal Territorians whose heritage dates back tens of thousands of years. It includes our significant role in World War II, evidenced by wartime sites, such as underground oil tunnels, airfields and shipwrecks. Our history is reflected in our communities whose identity is tied to places, historic precincts and relics that acknowledge the contributions of those that have come before us and reminds us of how special the Territory is.

This history not only reflects who we are, it also supports our economy through heritage tourism, bringing in domestic and international travellers who seek out the cultural and historical experiences that can only be found in the Northern Territory.

All of this is managed under the framework of the *Heritage Act*, which this Bill is designed to improve and strengthen. Reforms are needed because the heritage regulatory framework has become uncertain and complex. Territorians want certainty that our heritage is protected not just today but for future generations who can continue to visit, acknowledge, celebrate and enjoy it.

The original intent of the Act was to establish a multi-staged framework for identifying and protecting heritage. The framework was intended to balance heritage protection, procedural fairness and practical administration. This Bill reinforces the multi-staged framework and processes on three practical outcomes: clarity, so everyone knows what the law requires; fitness for purpose, so the regulatory response matches the heritage value at stake; and timeliness, so decisions happen within meaningful timeframes.

This Bill achieves these outcomes through amendments that:

- update definitions for key terms such as archaeological places and objects
- strengthen the nomination and assessment processes with clearer screening, timing and notice requirements
- clarify rules for preliminary decisions to improve procedural fairness certainty
- remove automatic provisional declarations and streamline ministerial declaration powers
- modernise Heritage Council (the council) membership and quorum arrangements to improve governance flexibility and reliability of decision-making
- clearer work approval consent requirements, including Aboriginal consultation obligations where relevant and
- expand ministerial delegation powers and reduce duplication.

It is important to be clear about how archaeological heritage, including Aboriginal heritage, is protected in the context of the Act, which focuses on the protection of tangible archaeological evidence. What this Bill is doing is strengthening the way the Act defines archaeological places to ensure the framework is clearer, more consistent and aligned with best practice.

The current definitions rely heavily on broad and sometimes subjective language, which has led to uncertainty in their application. The updated provisions now make it clear that an archaeological place must show evidence of modification of the place by its occupants, and the Bill provides clearer detail on what that means, drawing on decades of archaeological research and understanding.

For Aboriginal and Makassan archaeological places, the definition now draws a direct link to the pre-contact or early contact periods and requires either a group of relics, the presence of ancestral remains or clear signs of modification of the place. Practical examples are also included to help guide interpretation.

The definition of an Aboriginal and Makassan archaeological object is also amended for consistency with the updated places definition. A relic is an Aboriginal or Makassan archaeological object only if located within an Aboriginal or Makassan archaeological place or stored in the place in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. This means isolated relics located outside of these places are not automatically protected objects, while preserving the ability to protect significant objects through nomination and declaration pathways.

These improvements make the law more evidence based and provide greater certainty for the use of automatic heritage protections.

We are also modernising the definition of a relic to ensure the language is both culturally appropriate and aligned with contemporary archaeological understanding. Previous terminology such as ‘human remains’ have been replaced with ‘ancestral remains’, and the examples listed in the Act have been refreshed to reflect the types of materials commonly found at archaeological sites across the Territory, such as animal material, shells, natural pigments, wood and stone. These revisions improve the clarity and cultural sensitivity of the Act without changing the level of protection provided.

These definitional reforms were informed through targeted consultations with archaeological experts and engagement with the land councils. I would like this message to be clear. These updated definitions do not weaken heritage protections. The criteria for heritage significance under the Act are unchanged. What these amendments do is apply protections more predictably and consistently so that heritage controls apply where evidence of heritage significance is established.

This Bill also addresses issues at the front end of the nomination process. Currently, the Heritage Council must proceed with assessment of almost every nomination it receives unless it is clearly frivolous or vexatious. That includes nominations that are extremely minor or extremely massive in landmass scale, poorly substantiated or plainly lack Territory-level significance. In practice, this has meant that the council's limited resources are often consumed by low-value nominations causing delays and resulting in a long backlog of assessments.

The Bill gives the council the ability to decline nominations at an early stage where they are misconceived, lacking substance or otherwise inappropriate to proceed. This is a practical reform that will deliver better heritage outcomes. It enables the system to focus on nominations that genuinely warrant assessment and ensures the community's heritage resources are used where they matter most. Importantly, that approach is consistent with this government's commitment to reducing unnecessary red tape and ensuring regulatory systems focus on outcomes that benefit the community. We are also making assessment periods more transparent and predictable.

The Bill confirms that the Heritage Council can initiate an assessment on its own initiative and must notify the owner when it does so. The Bill also clarifies that the six-month assessment period will now start from the earliest of three clear points:

- when the council begins work on the assessment, or
- when the council next meets after the nomination is accepted or initiated, or
- three months after that acceptance or initiation date.

This creates a predictable window so everyone knows when the clock starts. The council will still be able to extend the assessment period if it cannot reasonably complete the work in time, but it must give written notice explaining why an extension is needed. These improvements give landowners and nominators greater certainty about when an assessment starts and how timelines are managed.

One of the key reasons the Act has become difficult to administer is that procedural fairness obligations have not been sufficiently clear in the statute. This has resulted in interpretations that are inconsistent with its operation and that are unsustainable in practice. This Bill clearly sets out the multi-staged nature of assessments, as follows:

- first stage—early notices at defined points so affected parties are informed
- second stage—public consultations where submissions are invited and must be considered
- third stage—decision to recommend or not recommend declaration leading to final minister decision on whether or not to permanently declare a place or object as a heritage place or object.

This structure is transparent, but it is also orderly. Parties are informed early, they know at what stage of the process they are meant to make submissions and what their engagement is intended to inform. That is why the Bill explicitly prescribes early administrative steps in the heritage assessment process, such as accepting a nomination, extending an assessment or deciding whether a place or object is of heritage significance as preliminary administrative decisions.

Procedural fairness is applied at the public consultation stage supported by fuller information, including a more substantial statement of heritage value and longer consultation timeframes beyond 28 days when the scale or complexity of the assessment warrants it.

We are also strengthening the consent and consultation requirements that apply when people seek approval to carry out works affecting heritage places or heritage objects. The updated provisions draw a clear distinction between the consent needed for a heritage place and the consent needed for a heritage object.

For heritage places, consent must come from the owner of the place. For heritage objects, consent must come from the owner of the land on which the object is located, and applicants will now be expected to show that they have consulted the person who owns, or may have a traditional right to possess, the object as to the object's protection and conservation. These strengthened consultation requirements are designed to ensure that decision-making on work applications is better informed and that all relevant interests are appropriately considered from the outset.

There is a broader policy principle here. Statutory processes should be clear and should prevent indefinite delays. While there must always be opportunities for engagement, those opportunities should be targeted and measured to ensure the process is completed in a timely manner. A regulatory system must protect the public interest, including heritage, but it must also allow lawful activity to proceed with certainty once proper processes have been followed.

One of the most significant reforms in this Bill concerns provisional declarations. Currently, the process has allowed provisional restrictions to flow automatically from preliminary significance findings. For landowners and councils that can feel like restrictions are applied before a final decision is made.

Territorians understand and accept that heritage places are sometimes at risk of destruction and need urgent protection, but they also expect that restrictions on land use that can affect property rights, project timelines and community facilities are imposed deliberately and proportionately.

The Bill removes the automatic requirement to issue a provisional declaration when public submissions open. Instead, the Bill retains interim protections as a discretionary and risk-based mechanism to allow quick action where a place or object is at risk.

We are also modernising the governance framework for the council to ensure it has the right blend of skills, experience and cultural representation to carry out its functions effectively. The Bill will provide for a council of seven to nine members appointed based on their expertise while maintaining the important requirement that, as far as practicable, at least two members be of Aboriginal descent. This moves the council away from a prescriptive representative model and toward a contemporary skills-based approach that better supports effective governance while avoiding conflict-of-interest issues that have at times hampered the council making timely decisions.

This reform is informed by a whole-of-government review of boards and committees, as well as stakeholders who are often frustrated with how long heritage decisions take.

To assist the council in operating efficiently, the rules governing its meetings have also been updated. A meeting can now be called by a majority of members rather than a fixed number, and a quorum will be formed by a majority of members, including the chairperson. These adjustments ensure meeting requirements remain appropriate regardless of the council's size, and support more reliable convening and decision-making.

Overall, these changes reflect modern governance practice and strengthen the council's ability to perform its statutory role with clarity and confidence. A council that can meet, decide and issue clear outcomes is essential for a credible heritage system. That is how you reduce backlog and restore confidence.

The Bill also introduces several practical improvements to ensure the Act operates more efficiently on a day-to-day basis. It streamlines reassessments so they only occur within the five-year period where the owner supports them; allows earlier consultation to be relied upon to avoid unnecessary repetition; and requires the council to reach a decision within 60 days to keep matters moving.

The Bill also modernises delegation powers and removes duplicative written notice requirements by shifting publication to the agency website while retaining the necessary land title recording processes. These are all practical changes that improve how the Act operates on the ground. Transitional arrangements ensure continuity; existing provisional declarations continue under the new framework, and current council member appointments carry over in accordance with their existing terms.

In summary, these reforms align directly with this government's priorities. They reduce unnecessary red tape; improve regulatory certainty; support responsible development by providing clear and predictable processes; and restore confidence in public institutions by making decision-making fairer, clearer and more efficient. These reforms strengthen heritage protection by focusing regulation where evidence of significance is clearest and by reinforcing robust culturally respectful processes that ensure Aboriginal heritage is properly recognised and protected.

This Bill reflects a practical reform-minded approach that recognises the importance of heritage protection while ensuring the system works for Territorians today.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

MINERAL TITLES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 56

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I present the Mineral Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 56, 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 *Mineral Titles Act 2010* and the Mineral Titles Regulations 2011. The Bill also includes consequential amendments to the *Environment Protection Act 2019* and Environment Protection Regulations 2020 to support the amendments to the *Mineral Titles Act 2010* and the Mineral Titles Regulations and address minor issues identified since the introduction of the environmental (mining) licensing scheme under that legislation.

The mining industry plays an essential role in rebuilding the Territory's economy, providing jobs, revenue and resources required for our modern way of life. Mining is essential for critical industries, including manufacturing, construction, telecommunications, energy and technology.

Contemporising the mining legislation demonstrates this government's unwavering commitment to maximise opportunities for Territorians and rebuild the economy. This was first highlighted in the findings of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce, which recommended prioritising the passage of this legislation to increase certainty.

The *Mineral Titles Act* is a cornerstone of the mining industry through regulating the tenure of mineral titles in the Northern Territory, allowing for the exploration, extraction and processing of minerals and extractive minerals. Delivering a current, adaptive and responsive legislative framework is necessary to meet the evolving needs of industry, communities and the environment while providing for the future challenges of critical mineral supply.

In 2024 the Department of Mining and Energy released the Mineral Titles Act and Regulations Discussion Paper and undertook public consultation. Twenty-six submissions were received, spanning peak bodies, industry groups, government agencies, environmental organisations, fossickers and community members. All feedback has been carefully considered during the development of these legislative amendments.

This Bill represents the most substantial modernisation of the Territory's mineral titles framework since the commencement of the *Mineral Titles Act*. More than the 15 years since the Act began, both industry and government have identified areas where the legislation has not kept pace with operational realities, emerging technologies or contemporary environmental and land access expectations.

This Bill delivers a modern, efficient and transparent framework that supports responsible resource development while strengthening environmental accountability, improving landholder confidence and ensuring clarity for all users of the system. The amendments will enhance the efficiency, transparency and sustainability of the mineral titles framework while balancing the interests of key industry stakeholders.

The Department of Mining and Energy has worked closely with the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment to deliver these amendments. Consolidating this Bill for mining legislation demonstrates the effective collaboration of our departments and this government's commitment to supporting the mining industry.

The efficiency and transparency of exploration and mining processes will be improved through simplifying application pathways, modernising reporting requirements and introducing more flexible and proportionate approaches to renewals, reductions and reporting.

New mineral lease categories are being introduced to better reflect the diversity of mining and fossicking activities. These include new leases for small-scale mining, tourist fossicking and fossicking. This provides fit-for-purpose arrangements for activities that are not currently captured under the existing legislation.

The amendments will support our rebuilding the economy agenda through supporting the exploration industry. The initial renewal period for exploration licences is being extended from two years to six years. The short renewal period has drawn concern due to difficulties in securing funding for capital raising efforts. This change will improve investment certainty and retain environmental and compliance safeguards.

The Bill removes outdated limitations relating to block numbers and clarifies work program requirements. The requirement to reduce the size of exploration licences every two years in the initial grant period is being removed with the reduction required at the first renewal. This acknowledges the considerable time it can take to get the necessary approvals, including land access.

This will allow industry time to undertake exploration activities before having to reduce the size of the exploration licence and modernises the reduction requirements for exploration licences, shifting from rigid two-year cycles to a system aligned with actual project timing. The change will be beneficial to both industry and the government, reducing the administrative, regulatory and financial burden.

The maximum and minimum size of an exploration licence has been clarified, along with the requirement for a detailed technical work program for the first two operational years. A summary of the proposed technical work program for the following four years is also required. This will assist proponents through providing certainty on the information required to assess their application efficiently. The minimum size of an exploration licence has been reduced from four to one block, allowing for other applicants to pick up blocks that have been surrendered instead of leaving them stranded and unavailable for exploration.

Going forward, renewals must be received one month prior to the expiry date of the title. This requirement will build a buffer period to ensure that applications are received in a timely manner and to prevent mineral titles being inadvertently lost due to failure to submit the renewal application on time. The application must be accompanied by the rent for the operational year.

The Bill amends the objects of the Act to expressly confirm that the Act applies—and has always applied—to prescribed substances. This ensures legal clarity following advice received in relation to the Jabiluka mineral lease decision. The Bill also introduces clearer definitions for terms that underpin exploration and mining activities.

The definition of ‘mineral’ has been updated to provide clarity to industry and improve understanding for non-industry stakeholders, supporting the broader social licence for the mining industry. ‘Clay’ has been added to the definition of an ‘extractive mineral’ based on feedback from industry and to ensure alignment with other jurisdictions.

An ‘operational year’ is also further defined to provide clarity and exclude certain reporting requirements from this definition to give flexibility for industry to nominate reporting dates outside the operational year. The standard definition of ‘operational year’ will not apply to approved group reporting and provides exemptions for certain historic titles for administrative simplicity.

Three new lease types are being introduced: mineral lease for small-scale mines; tourist fossicking; and fossicking. These new titles accommodate activities previously poorly served under the Act and reduce administrative burden for small operators and fossicking businesses.

The introduction of the mineral lease for small-scale mines supports operations such as alluvial goldmining with modified reporting requirements, including reducing or simplifying reporting requirements where there is a low level of activity and risk. This tenure has less stringent application requirements, including excluding the requirement to provide evidence there is an economical resource.

A number of noncompliant existing interests have been identified. They are historical titles granted under previous mining legislation. The mineral lease for small-scale mines will support the transition of the noncompliant existing interest to modernise these titles and align them with the contemporary legislative framework. It is not intended to remove the existing rights, providing the titleholder complies with the

conditions of the title. This may include the payment of an annual rent and administration fees. An expiry date and right of renewal will be included in the new title. These changes will preserve the holder's rights while ensuring consistency.

Fossicking offers an opportunity for Territorians and visitors to discover the Territory's scenic outback, supporting opportunities in regional areas, aligning with this government's focus to rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle.

Two new titles are being introduced to support individuals and tourist operations undertaking fossicking activities. These cover relatively small areas and allow the use of mechanical means to push back topsoil to a maximum depth of one metre.

A new permit to fossick is also being introduced to facilitate the growing interest in fossicking in the Northern Territory. A fossicking permit will be available to individuals, family groups, clubs and commercial fossicking tour groups for a fee, and an NT resident permit will be available at a reduced fee. The introduction of a fossicking permit will support fossickers doing the right thing and provide a mechanism to manage circumstances where there have been complaints related to alleged fossicking offences in the past or to legal proceedings related to fossicking offences.

The extractive industry plays a crucial role in the development of essential infrastructure in the Northern Territory, including roads, housing and major projects. This Bill will deliver a number of improvements to support extractive minerals operators, including allowing for longer grant periods for extractive mineral exploration licences to provide for the emerging needs of the extractive industry.

A 30-day moratorium period has also been introduced over land previously subject to a ceased extractive mineral exploration licence to allow for more competitive applications.

Amendments will allow extractive materials to be moved from one extractive mineral permit to another, including for processing, storage and, ultimately, removal. This will support larger-scale extractive operations from a number of separate titles.

In addition, the power for the minister to allow for the storage and processing of clean concrete that is not contaminated with other materials has been introduced. This will support the ongoing development of the Territory; however, the processing of concrete must be part of a primary extractive activity and not the primary activity.

A definition of 'care and maintenance' has been included and is aligned with the definition in the *Environment Protection Act*. A titleholder of a mining licence must manage and maintain the title area and its structures, facilities and equipment to minimise environmental impacts during care and maintenance periods. This provides consistency with the expectations under the *Environment Protection Act* and reduces potential liability for the NT.

This Bill streamlines reporting requirements and compliance while maintaining the integrity of the process. An expenditure project area amalgamates the expenditure commitments for a group of exploration licences so that the combined total expenditure commitment may be spent anywhere within the title group. This flexibility allows companies to focus their exploration efforts on targets with the greatest potential for future development while keeping all exploration licences in good standing.

Bulk sampling provisions are updated to include a definition of a bulk sample and permit the use of mobile crushing plant and explosives subject to approval and environmental licensing requirements. This has been introduced to acknowledge that while crushing and blasting is not consistent with the activities allowed on an exploration licence, there may be occasions they are required when a bulk sample is approved.

Preliminary exploration of land enables the initial assessment of the land's geological characteristics for potential future mineral or extractive mineral exploration under a mineral title.

The Bill clarifies preliminary exploration requirements, particularly on Aboriginal land, ensuring that consent processes align with the *Aboriginal Land Act 1978* rather than the more onerous *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* section 41 processes.

Preliminary exploration does not extend any interest in the land; therefore, written consent should be a simple process without imposing regulatory burden or administrative costs. This is commensurate with the level of disturbance associated with preliminary exploration.

To further support the preliminary exploration of land, airborne geoscientific surveys will no longer require the minister's approval. However, the proponent will be required under regulation to provide a notice to the minister at least 30 days prior to undertaking an airborne survey. The minister may, by written notice, impose conditions on the conduct of an airborne survey, including written notification of the proposed airborne survey to the titleholder, landowner or occupier of the land.

The requirements regarding accessing a site via the shortest practicable route have been clarified to ensure appropriate consultation with the landowner and consideration of environmental impacts. Further definition regarding when an access authority is required has been included to provide consistency and transparency.

The functions and powers of an authorised officer have been strengthened to allow authorised officers to investigate complaints regarding fossicking activities. Provisions for NT Geological Survey staff within the Department of Mining and Energy and other personnel carrying out geological investigations are provided with the power to access land subject to requirements to notify the affected landholders.

The Bill includes complementary amendments to the *Environment Protection Act* to ensure seamless integration between environmental licensing and mineral titles administration. The *Environment Protection Act* is being amended to clarify that a mining security extends beyond the period of the licence and includes any periods of post-closure monitoring.

The intent of bonds and security is to protect the NT Government and the public from being required to meet the costs of private sector activities. The *Environment Protection Act* is being amended to allow a claim to be made on all or part of a bond or security for the amount claimed to be used to fund the required activities and then for any unused amount to be returned to the mining operator. A requirement to fund the remediation and similar activities and to claim the money in arrears places an inappropriate, and in some instances, likely impossible, burden on the NT Government.

A new clause has been added that includes the requirement that a standard condition licence is subject to the risk criteria. This reflects the core requirement of the licensing scheme that mining operators must comply with the risk criteria to be eligible for a standard or modified licence.

Amendments associated with the new mineral title types have been added, including that an environmental mining licence is only required for fossicking if the activity involves substantial disturbance. A category of environmental (mining) licence has been created for fossicking to accommodate the new mineral leases for tourist fossicking and fossicking.

The Environment Protection Regulations are being amended to ensure there is no duplication in public exhibition activities for mine operators that also have a mining activity referred to the NT Environment Protection Authority.

The Mineral Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 is comprehensive, forward-looking reform that modernises the Territory's mineral titles system to meet contemporary needs and future opportunities. It strengthens environmental safeguards, clarifies land access and consent and delivers a legislative framework that is more accessible, efficient and fit for purpose.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

PIPELINES AND PETROLEUM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT) BILL
Serial 57

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I present the Pipelines and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Industry Development) Bill 2026, Serial 57, 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 *Energy Pipelines Act 1981*, the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1981* and the *Petroleum Act 1984*.

Before I detail the key aspects of the Bill, it is worth reminding honourable members of the path that these regulatory reforms have been designed, as the name implies, to drive and enable industry development in the Northern Territory.

As evidenced by the scope and technical complexity of this Bill, the amendments do not just create ad hoc investment opportunities; rather, they have been designed to systematically address historic limitations that are impeding investment in the NT and ultimately securing energy security.

The key changes of the Bill will enable the transmission of carbon dioxide and other regulated substances through all licensed pipelines. Allowing carbon dioxide through pipelines is critical for current offshore carbon capture and storage projects that are being driven by Santos, INPEX and Vopak through developments at Middle Arm. In the longer term, these changes will transition the NT's pipeline infrastructure from just carrying NT gas to also transporting low-emission gases and industrial feedstocks, including carbon dioxide.

The Bill will revise when and how retention licences can be granted. This will attract and support a broad investor base that will, through increased investment, accelerate and diversify the development of the NT's unconventional shale gas plays, including the Beetaloo Sub-basin. These changes will assist the various operators in the Beetaloo to effectively implement their 'checker-boarding' development strategies.

Collectively, the development outcomes will significantly contribute to rebuilding the economy. More importantly, they will also enhance energy security by building domestic capacity and diversifying the NT's energy sources.

As well as creating resource development opportunities, this Bill enhances our regulatory capability for energy pipelines. It introduces new requirements for me, as the responsible minister, to consider whether an applicant for a pipeline licence is fit and proper as part of key application processes. It expands and modernises the functions and powers to reach a consistent standard across these related Acts. We will only accept industry development of the highest standard.

The amendments apply to three key Acts that support and enable energy development and energy security in the NT. The *Energy Pipelines Act 1981* applies to pipelines located onshore and up to the territorial sea baseline, including, for example, those in Darwin Harbour. The *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1981* applies to the portion of a pipeline location in NT coastal waters commencing from the territorial sea baseline and extending three nautical miles offshore. I will refer to these two pieces of legislation collectively as the 'pipelines legislation'. The *Petroleum Act* applies to upstream petroleum activities and infrastructure, including wells and their gathering infrastructure onshore.

This Bill will improve how the Acts operate together while maintaining appropriate links and interaction with the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006*, which applies to pipelines that extend to the Commonwealth offshore area, including the Barossa pipeline.

I will now detail the key aspects of the Bill. Currently the transport of carbon dioxide in pipelines is prohibited due to restrictive definitions contained in the pipelines legislation. This Bill will replace references to 'energy-producing hydrocarbon' and 'petroleum' with the defined term 'regulated substances'.

This simple change will redefine what can be transmitted in pipelines to include carbon dioxide, any hydrogen compound, precursor or hydrogen carrier used for the transmission of hydrogen, as well as petroleum. The definition also extends to a gas or any other substance prescribed by regulation. A number of enabling amendments in the Bill support this change.

The transmission of carbon dioxide is a pivotal first step in developing a comprehensive legislative framework that will enable carbon capture and storage and eventually carbon utilisation in the NT.

Carbon capture and storage is a priority for the NT. It provides a vital pathway to reduce or avoid emissions by capturing carbon dioxide separated from petroleum production or other industrial processes and permanently storing it in geological formations deep underground. Carbon capture and storage is attracting new investment from the rapidly developing decarbonisation sector and enabling existing industries to reduce their emissions in response to rising regulatory and corporate pressures. Santos, INPEX and Vopak's development plans at Middle Arm are evidence of this.

Allowing the transmission of hydrogen will position the NT to support the adoption of energy systems that rely on hydrogen as an energy carrier. In addition, a range of practical improvements will be made to the pipelines legislation to provide greater clarity and certainty for industry.

The *Energy Pipelines Act 1981* will be renamed to become the Pipelines Act 1981 to acknowledge that licensed pipelines will no longer be limited to the conveyance of energy-producing hydrocarbons. Other amendments will reduce duplication and improve clarity and efficiency for licensees by removing operational consent provisions from the Act that are also located within the regulations.

Amendments will modernise and simplify processes for licensees to apply to vary, suspend or waive a condition of their pipeline licence, including to increase or decrease their licence area or vary the route of a licensed pipeline. The new process retains the requirement for an applicant who seeks to increase their licence area to notify relevant people with an interest in the land so they can make submissions for me to consider before I decide on the application. These people include the relevant local government councils, owners and occupiers of the land, registered native title claimants and registered native title bodies corporate and each representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander body in relation to the affected land or waters, unless the variation is not a future act.

Amendments will greatly improve the efficient administration of the Act by replacing prescribed forms with approved forms; introducing guidelines; providing for electronic service of documents; and requiring the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that any document that is applied, adopted or incorporated by the regulations is made available for inspection free of charge at the agency's head office or on the agency's website.

Importantly, the amendments provide a statutory right of access for pipeline licensees to enter land to comply with a ministerial direction or a Chief Executive Officer compliance direction. This will mean that in circumstances where a pipeline licensee does not hold a right to access land in relation to their pipeline, they are not prevented from complying with a direction that requires them to enter land and carry out activities. The statutory right of access requires seven days' notice to be given to the owner or occupier, unless it is an emergency and there is a risk of environmental harm if works are not conducted immediately. On entry, licensees have a duty to take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption and must only remain on the land for the time reasonably required to comply with the direction. Owners and occupiers are entitled to be paid reasonable compensation for any loss or damage that results from actions taken by a person in complying with a direction.

This Bill includes substantive changes that have been designed to facilitate the progressive transition from petroleum exploration and appraisal to production. The *Petroleum Act* was originally written for conventional gas activities, and these amendments will further modernise and support unconventional shale gas developments in the Northern Territory.

It removes outdated limitations that required a proposed retention licence area to physically contain a discovery well. It also removes the requirement for retention licences to be contained within the boundaries of a single exploration permit. The changes recognise that innovative technologies, including 3D seismic imaging, can be used to demonstrate that a petroleum discovery is indicative of a broader petroleum pool. They also acknowledge that unconventional onshore shale reserves in the Northern Territory are likely to extend beyond and across current petroleum interest boundaries.

The changes will enable an application for retention licence to be made across multiple exploration permits, in whole or in part, if their boundaries are adjacent and the permits are under equivalent ownership.

The amendments will also redesign retention licence arrangements by introducing new processes for retention licensees to apply to divide or amalgamate their titles. Enhanced flexibility during the appraisal stage will ultimately refine the ideal locations for production.

The amendments will provide support to the major players who have already significantly contributed to developing the Beetaloo. They will also encourage new investment opportunities.

The changes will enable a single party or parties from within a joint venture that hold an exploration permit to make multiple or separate applications for a retention licence. These amendments will provide new options for a higher number of strategically located retention licence areas, encouraging more concentrated investment efforts to be run in parallel, while reducing duplication by allowing petroleum interest holders to transfer petroleum between interest areas for processing, storage or transportation. These amendments directly support checker-boarding development in the Beetaloo.

Amendments to the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1981*—this Act will be renamed to become the Pipelines and Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1981, in recognition that pipelines may carry other regulated substances, not just petroleum.

As previously described, this Act only applies to the three-nautical-mile-wide strip of submerged land between the territorial sea baseline and offshore Commonwealth waters. While it falls under the NT Government's jurisdiction, it was first introduced in 1981 as part of the Offshore Constitutional Settlement and, at that time, was consistent with similar legislation passed in other states and by the Commonwealth.

Over the years, amendments have been made to this legislation without a consistent approach. It contains a separate occupational health and safety regime that does not align with the model work health and safety legislation that applies in the rest of the Northern Territory. This Bill will transfer the responsibility for occupational health and safety matters in NT waters to NT WorkSafe, meaning the same obligations for workplace health and safety will apply to protect workers at onshore pipelines and pipelines in NT coastal waters.

In addition, the Bill will provide a modern suite of inspector functions and powers that broadly align with the *Petroleum Act*. The amendments will allow an inspector to use a range of general powers to ask questions, gather evidence, operate or test equipment and make records.

Inspectors will be able to issue a direction to the registered holder of an interest under this Act to prevent, minimise, manage or remediate certain harms or dangers, including environmental impacts and risks, and harms and risks to infrastructure.

For the NT Government to support economic development and deliver energy security, our legislation must be responsive to global markets. That is why these amendments have been designed in consultation with industry to remove real barriers to investment and facilitate growth. They create tailored investment opportunities that will attract global talent, foster collaboration and support efforts to raise, not deplete, capital. The NT's gas resources need development for local, national and international energy security.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 58

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 58, and table the explanatory statement.

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

When Territorians elected our government they were clear about what they wanted: to feel safe; a justice system that works; and real action. We were elected on a promise to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the unique Territory lifestyle. Fixing our justice system is important to all three.

For too long the system had been under-resourced, with little reform to make it smoother, and that has meant delays, backlogs and frustration for victims who deserve better. This Bill is part of the work we are doing to fix that. It is practical reform about making the system faster and more responsive.

As we have said, 2026 is our year of growth, certainty and security, and this important reform is about real outcomes and faster justice for victims.

The Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 continues our government's work to reform the justice system. The amendments focus on easing pressure on the courts and improving the way that cases move through the system. In simple terms, it is about supporting justice to happen more quickly. The Bill is one step in the broader work we are doing through our reducing-crime strategy.

The Bill amends the *Local Court (Criminal Procedure) Act 1928*, the *Bail Act 1982*, the *Evidence Act 1939*, the *Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*, the *Local Court Act 2015* and subordinate legislation under that Act, the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1990* and the *Sentencing Act 1995*.

Early in the development of this Bill, a Local Court criminal procedure working group was established to ensure those working in the justice system supported the changes required. The group brought together key voices from across the justice sector to look at how the Local Court system could be improved. It is worth remembering that the criminal procedure Act has been operating since 1928. In the almost 100 years since then, a lot has changed. Technology has changed, the way courts operate has changed, and local demands on our Local Court have changed.

I thank the members of the working group for their contribution to this Bill and for the work they continue to do as we move towards the next tranche of reforms.

The working group included the judiciary and representatives from the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, the NT Legal Aid Commission, the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Bar Association and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. These are stakeholders that work in the system every day. They see where the blocks are and when things are slow. Their insight has helped strengthen this Bill.

A key focus of the Bill is encouraging earlier resolution of cases. One amendment allows parties to request an additional court mention before the directions hearing. The goal is simple: to see whether a matter can be resolved earlier through a guilty plea rather than going through a full hearing. Right now, if a defendant cannot indicate a plea at the time of the first mention, parties often have to wait a long time for the directions hearing.

This amendment gives the court a chance to bring the matter back sooner where there is a real prospect of resolution. It is the first step towards establishing what will be known as an early appropriate guilty plea list. This will help identify matters that are likely to resolve early and manage them more effectively. In most cases, this will apply where a defendant is in custody and there is a genuine opportunity for the matter to be resolved.

To be clear, this additional listing is not intended to be used for bail applications; it is simply about creating an earlier opportunity to finalise cases where a guilty plea is likely. This reform also builds on work already happening in the system. For example, the Director of Public Prosecutions has been running the Targeted Intervention Group – Early Resolution team (TIG-ER). In the past 12 months, TIG-ER has handled nearly 1,000 representations, with 760 of those matters finalised. Of those finalised matters, about 62% resulted in an early guilty plea. That is exactly the kind of outcome this reform is designed to support.

The Bill also introduces the first step toward fast-tracking indictable matters to the Supreme Court. Under the proposed changes the parties will be able to skip the preliminary examination stage in the Local Court if three conditions are met: the committal brief must be served; the defendant must accept that there is sufficient evidence; and both parties must agree. This will help move appropriate matters to the Supreme Court faster.

The Bill also expands the range of matters that can be finalised in the Local Court. At the moment property offences can only be dealt with in the Local Court if the value involved is under $50,000. This Bill increases that limit to $100,000. That means more matters can be dealt with in the Local Court instead of going to the Supreme Court.

The Bill also allows certain offences under the *Misuse of Drugs Act* to be dealt with in the Local Court such as receiving or possessing tainted property. This helps matters move through the system faster and reduces unnecessary delays.

Another important part of the Bill is improving the use of audiovisual link technology. The amendments introduce a presumption that remote witnesses may give evidence by audiovisual link in appropriate circumstances. They also allow defendants in custody, including young people, to appear by audiovisual link for certain matters. Currently, there is a lot of administrative work involved in bringing witnesses and defendants to court. Police, Corrections and defence lawyers often have to appear in court just to allow someone to appear remotely. In many cases witnesses or defendants also need to travel long distances, which involves time and expense. These changes will help reduce that burden and make that process more efficient.

The Bill also allows police to deal with certain arrest situations when a warrant has been issued because someone failed to appear in court. In these circumstances police will be able to grant bail if they believe it is appropriate. However, the court will still be able to mark a warrant to make it clear that bail is not allowed. This reform means police will not always need to bring someone straight before the court for low-level matters, which reduces pressure on holding cells and court lists.

Another important change focuses on better protecting victims of domestic violence. The Bill proposes that where there are multiple domestic violence matters involving the same victim and defendant, the Local Court should generally deal with them at the same time. This reduces the need for victims to attend court repeatedly and relive the same events over and again. It also helps the court manage these matters more effectively.

The Bill also introduces changes to improve the sentencing process. For example, the court will be able to give a sentencing indication at any time before a hearing date, and if a judge has already given that indication, they may be able to finalise that case. More often than not matters are delayed because the defendant is unsure of what their sentence might be. Sentence indications take away the fear of uncertainty, which encourages early guilty pleas where appropriate.

The Bill allows bush courts to be exempt from certain pre-hearing procedures where those requirements are difficult to meet in remote communities. This recognises the unique challenges faced in remote areas and helps ensure victims in those communities are not left waiting longer for justice than the process needs to be.

These reforms are part of a much broader program of justice reforms that our government has been implementing since we were elected. The Bill does not stand alone, and this year we delivered the largest law and order budget in the Territory's history at $1.5bn, including for record funding to police, courts and Corrections, and we have strengthened our laws.

We now have 19 judges across the Territory, which is the largest number in history, and we are already seeing improvements in court performance. The number of matters adjourned is decreasing in both the Local Court and the children's court, the number of matters being finalised is increasing, and pending workloads are decreasing also.

There are now more sentenced prisoners than those on remand, and the number of people on remand is decreasing in both the Local Court and the children's court.

Across the Territory the number of victims of crime is down by 10.2% compared with previous years, which is 2,737 fewer victims. That is real outcomes.

This Bill strengthens that progress by improving the way cases move through the courts. It is about putting victims first and making sure there is swift justice without delays where possible. It is about making our courts work better for Territorians. It removes outdated processes that slow things down and do nothing to improve safety. This is another step in restoring certainty and security to our justice system, which we were elected to do and is what we are doing.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

LIQUOR LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FAST TRACK APPROVALS) BILL
Serial 62

Ms BOOTHBY (Tourism and Hospitality): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026, Serial 62, and table the explanatory statement.

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

When Territorians elected this government they were clear that they wanted a safer community and a stronger economy. They wanted a government that removes unnecessary barriers to do business. This Bill delivers on that commitment.

It implements key recommendations from the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce in its final report, Saying 'Yes' to Business. The taskforce was established by people in the private sector to identify practical ways to simplify approval processes and remove barriers to investment across the Territory without compromising community safety.

Basically, business told us how the government could remove those barriers of red tape, and we said that, yes, we would be able to change things. These amendments are the first step in implementing those recommendations in the hospitality sector.

The *Liquor Act 2019* has an important purpose. It protects the public interest and minimises alcohol-related harm, and that has not changed. This Bill ensures the way we regulate liquor licensing is proportionate to the level of risk. It presents applicants for liquor licences, and certain authorities must address the public interest and community impact test regardless of risk profile. While the Act provides some discretion, the requirement broadly applies across most application types. Industry has consistently advised that this approach is disproportionate when applied to clearly defined and low-risk applications. Those applications rarely attract objection or adverse outcomes.

Modern regulatory practice recognises that efforts should be calibrated to risk. This Bill introduces a more proportionate application of the public interest and community impact tests. Importantly—I emphasise this—safeguards remain firmly in place. Where an application's scale, location or risk profile warrants closer scrutiny, the public interest and community impact assessment will still apply. Community notification and transparency will remain where they matter most.

Similarly, the Act currently requires public notification for all applications; that includes very low-risk proposals. Mandatory advertising in those cases increases costs and delays, and that process does not do anything to make a difference. This Bill refines those requirements. Higher-risk or potentially contentious applications will still require public notification, but low-risk applications will not be burdened with unnecessary advertising requirements.

The Bill also extends responsible service of alcohol certificate renewals from three years to five years. Training standards are not reduced, and responsible service obligations remain. What changes is the frequency of renewal. Hospitality businesses, particularly those operating in high-turnover environments, have advised that the current three-year cycle creates repetitive compliance costs and administrative burden. Extending the renewal period reduces that burden while maintaining standards. It supports workforce flexibility in an industry that is critical to our visitor economy.

The Bill also streamlines the process for material alterations to licensed premises. Currently, even where a proposed alteration does not change licence conditions or increase community impact, a full assessment and determination by the Northern Territory Liquor Commission is required. Stakeholders have advised that this can duplicate scrutiny already applied at the time of the initial grant. The reforms allow appropriate delegation to the Director of Liquor Licensing where risk remains unchanged. Oversight is retained, but efficiency improves, and this supports reinvestment in venues which, of course, supports local jobs.

The Bill also refines third-party review rights through the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Community participation is fundamental, and review rights are important; however, concerns have been raised that the breadth of current standing provisions may enable low-merit review applications. Those applications can increase delay, uncertainty and cost. This Bill limits standing in a targeted way while preserving meaningful community input for higher-risk decisions.

Finally, the Bill provides greater clarity about the fit-and-proper person requirement. The test remains a safeguard, but the absence of clearly defined disqualifying criteria has created uncertainty for applicants, particularly new entrants. The amendments introduce clearer criteria. That enhances transparency and confidence in decision-making while maintaining protections for our community.

This reform is not about weakening standards; it is about aligning regulatory effort with risk, reducing unnecessary red tape, providing certainty for investment and delivering on our commitments we made through the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce within our first 12 months. Of course, it is our year of growth, certainty and security. The taskforce was clear: where the risk is low, regulation should be lighter; where the risk is higher, safeguards must remain strong. This Bill reflects that principle; it keeps community protection at the centre but removes duplication and delay where they serve no purpose. That is good for policy, good for small business and good for the Territory.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Tourism and Hospitality): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

RACING AND WAGERING AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 59

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 59, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The Bill is about building a stronger, more sustainable racing and wagering industry for the Northern Territory. It is focused on delivering clear governance, commercial sustainability and long-term growth in an industry Territorians love.

The Northern Territory once again has a Minister for Racing. Our government reinstated this portfolio because racing matters to our economy, our regions and our Territory lifestyle. With restored ministerial focus, I am delivering the structural reform this industry needs.

Last year I commissioned a strategic review of the NT racing industry to establish a modern and sustainable model for the future. Our government accepted its key recommendations—most notably, the creation of a single racing entity. This Bill gives legislative effect to those reforms. It completes the structural reset of the Territory's racing governance framework by separating wagering regulation from racing administration; removing racing functions from the NT Racing and Wagering Commission, including its current role as the race control body for greyhound racing; and strengthening the independence and accountability of both systems.

The Territory's racing industry is important to our economy and lifestyle. Through the thoroughbred industry alone, it generates about $120m annually to the Territory economy. Our licensed wagering operators support employment, taxation revenue, private investment and commercial activity. Our governance framework should support that scale.

This Bill strengthens independence and clarity of the wagering regulator. The current commission will be known as the Northern Territory Wagering Commission, with all racing responsibilities removed. Its focus will be on licensing, compliance, dispute resolution and online wagering oversight.

The Bill dissolves Thoroughbred Racing Northern Territory and enables the establishment of Racing NT as a single controlling body for both thoroughbreds and greyhound racing. Racing NT will be appointed as the race control body for all racing codes and will operate under a clear charter, governed by a skills-based board with defined responsibilities. This reflects the review's recommendation to streamline governance, centralise integrity functions and improve accountability across both codes.

This Bill also modernises the governance standards. It introduces conflict-of-interest safeguards, including prohibiting commission members from owning racing animals or holding wagering accounts with NT licensed wagering operators. A maximum six-year tenure limit for commission members is also introduced, supporting renewal and improved governance practice. In addition, a 12-month post-separation restriction will prevent former commission members from working with NT licensed wagering operators. This cooling-off period will strengthen public confidence and guard against any perception of regulatory capture.

The Bill replaces the term 'legal practitioner' with 'lawyer' for certain commission members. This change is intended to broaden eligibility without diluting expertise. The term 'legal practitioner' requires a current practising certificate, which can unnecessarily exclude individuals who are otherwise highly qualified but not presently in active practice. By adopting the term 'lawyer' the amendment makes it clear that appointment is open to those who are admitted to the profession, regardless of whether they currently hold a practising certificate. This ensures suitably qualified individuals are not excluded from consideration.

Importantly, the requirement remains that legally qualified members must have at least five years' admission, preserving a strong foundation of legal knowledge and experience. In this way, the amendment maintains

the commission's legal capability while allowing greater flexibility in appointments, aligning the provision with the approach taken in comparable statutory bodies.

The Bill includes several technical improvements. It clarifies the commission's authority to impose additional licence conditions where necessary, ensuring it can respond quickly to national issues or emerging risks. The power to impose a condition is generally used to affect all NT licences, such as when a condition was added to all licences in the wake of Lottoland allowing betting on the outcome of lotteries.

Following changes to Commonwealth legislation, the commission of the day added conditions to all existing licences, basically preventing the betting on lottery outcomes. It is this type of issue for which this restored power can be used. This Bill makes the use of that power abundantly clear.

It also confirms that complaints must be lodged within two years, with no extension to that timeframe, providing certainty for consumers and licensees.

Delegation powers are also restored, improving operational efficiencies by allowing routine matters to be handled by the delegate while reserving more serious issues for the commission.

These amendments strengthen the framework without altering its intent.

Beyond governance and the legislative change, the broader reform program focuses on sustainability, as outlined in our government's response to the review. That includes multi-year funding agreements for clubs, greater certainty for in-race fields pricing, shared services and procurement efficiencies, recruitment and retention of participants and a Darwin-based greyhound rehoming program.

It also gives Racing NT sole responsibility for capital allocation across the industry based on transparent priorities such as safety, compliance, participant welfare and infrastructure. By centralising capital planning within Racing NT, we ensure funding decisions are made transparently and in the best interests of the industry as a whole.

Not all those reforms require legislative amendment, but this Bill establishes the structural foundation that allows those reforms to proceed. This is about positioning Territory racing for commercial strength, industry confidence, increased participation, major events growth and reduced long-term reliance on government funding.

Racing carnivals are a key part of our Territory lifestyle. They attract visitors, support jobs and generate economic activity as we work to rebuild our economy. With stronger governance and clearer accountability, the industry will be better placed to deliver a high-quality product both on and off the track.

In our year of growth, certainty and security, this Bill reflects the restoration of dedicated ministerial leadership to the Racing portfolio and enables a sustainable future for racing and wagering in the Northern Territory.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 30 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Note Statement – The Year Ahead 2026

Continued from 11 March 2026.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister for bringing to the Chamber this ministerial statement on 2026, the year ahead.

I thank members for voting in favour of the motion I brought in the February sittings about supporting genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities. That was a good start to 2026, and I felt uplifted by it, but it needs to be backed up by real action.

The kind of action I want to see in 2026 includes working together in this Chamber. There are five Aboriginal members of this parliament who are not being included in the decision-making about issues that affect our people. We stand here in front of the government, and we should be included.

When I started in parliament in 2016, Michael Gunner set up an Aboriginal sub-Cabinet group that met to discuss issues that are important for Aboriginal Territorians. I was excluded from that group, and so was the CLP Member for Daly, who represented a large bush electorate. Later, in the next term of the Labor government, the Members for Namatjira and Barkly were also excluded, even though they also represented large Aboriginal communities. The NT Government—both the CLP and Labor—need to do better. We need to go beyond party lines and work together because too many people are dying.

It would be appropriate for a committee to be created that combines all the bush and Aboriginal members of parliament to make recommendations to the government about what will work best for Aboriginal communities on a range of issues that affect our people. I would be pleased to see the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs create a bipartisan working group on the issues that come under his portfolio.

In 2026 I want a government that is listening to the people—all the people, including those from remote communities. There should be no law or policy announcements about our people unless they are informed by our people with good consultation. I want a 2026 budget that reflects consultation rather than, 'We know what is best for you'.

There are billions of Commonwealth dollars for Aboriginal disadvantage that the NT Government has misspent for decades, but we can tell you how to bring successful change for our people if funding is put into the right areas. There should be much more funding for community-led solutions instead of the failing government-led solutions, and there should be more funding on the ground in our communities with local organisations. One of these community solutions is to increase Aboriginal law and justice groups across the NT.

Two weeks ago I attended the law and justice forum in Darwin, and it was uplifting. I acknowledge the Larrakia welcome to country by Mary Williams. Her leadership and the leadership at the forum from all over the NT filled me with hope that we can support our people, stand together and support each other, especially at this time when we often feel under attack.

The Aboriginal Justice Agreement Implementation Plan states that 20 law and justice groups should be established by 2027. At the moment there are four groups.

Last year I brought a motion to parliament asking for full commitment to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. The motion was supported by the government, which was good, but we need to see this commitment being implemented.

I spent some time with the Attorney-General on Monday last week to discuss some of the problems that our communities face and the need for more law and justice groups to support elders to address growing problems. In my electorate I would like to see law and justice groups in each community. There is urgency to see a group established in our biggest community of Elcho Island. This is important to give the elders a clear space to assert their authority and be recognised by the balanda system so that problem-solving can happen in a shared space.

We need representatives for all clans meeting to address the growing problems, and we need government backing to support this process.

I also want to see preparation for new housing in homelands throughout 2026. The NT Housing department must continue to prepare for new houses in homelands from 2027. Homelands are critical to meeting Closing the Gap targets. This is where people are safe, healthy and learning two-way education on country. This is where we can start businesses and be economically independent.

As I explained to the Attorney-General, hub towns are generating growing problems because people are not living on their country, and they feel disempowered. If $1.1bn is invested into growing hub towns bigger, it is a $1.1bn investment into growing our problems as well. We must see the $1.1bn spread across hub and homeland towns so that families can move out of hub towns and onto their ancestral country where they have more control over their lives. Big homeland towns need urgent plans for infrastructure and housing so that we can save our people.

In 2026 the Gove Peninsula region needs support for thorough consultation of all clans and communities to shape the future of Nhulunbuy and the region. When Rio Tinto exits in 2029, we need a smooth transition. This is already coming under threat this week, as Woolworths has stated that it is looking to leave the Gove Peninsua by mid-next year. What has the government done to try to keep Woolworths in Gove?

This government must do its best to get commitments from big business to support the community through this transition. Who is walking and working with the Yolngu clans to help steer the ship? There is no transparency in this space and process. Who is making a decision? How are people being informed, consulted and included?

I met with the assistant minister for Nhulunbuy transition this week, and she said that she did not know what the land tenure options were for the region. As I understand, seven models were provided to the Rrititjingu and Gumatj corporations to look at which model is best. There have been reports written on this, which the assistant minister and government should have. However, I have not seen these reports, and most of the clan leaders in the Gove Peninsula have not seen them.

The community of Nhulunbuy is also left in the dark, not knowing what the possible options might be or what might happen to the future of their homes and businesses.

I have been outspoken in the past when I did not think that consultation was being done properly. Traditional decision-making involves many clans, and the elders and leaders need to make sure that everyone is being included in the discussions.

I am also having these conversations with the NLC. It is important that we get these consultations right because they will affect at least the next 100 years for the Gove Peninsula. If we get it wrong it could be disastrous.

It is important that all the right clans are at the table, working together with all the information. Our clan system is about connections that work together. If you come to our ceremonies you will see that system of clans working together—the grandmother and grandchild clans, with the *yothu yindi* clans and the *yapa waku* clans, working together as a family. The *djungaya* is the manager coordinating the enormous family of many clans.

Mr PAECH: 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 GUYULA: This is also what decision-making processes should look like—many clans intersecting together and being included in the decision-making. This is what is needed now in the Gove Peninsula.

Late 2024 and 2025 saw many laws and policies that were not underpinned by community consultation, and many of the changes were damaging for Aboriginal people. It is easy for Aboriginal people to lose hope.

In 2026 we must see genuine consultation and a real improvement in attitudes towards First Nations people. Stop throwing Aboriginal people under the bus and blaming us; instead, work with us to fix the problems. As Rosalie Kunnoth-Monks said, ‘We are not the problem’. We are not flora and fauna. We are not your ticket to win government by creating division and fear. We are people, and just like everyone else we deserve to be treated respectfully.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, we are at the beginning of another parliamentary year, although we have moved forward to March. I will take a moment to reflect on what unites us as Members of the Legislative Assembly; that is, it is our shared duty to serve the people who place their trust in us. For me, that is the people of Fannie Bay, Parap, Ludmilla, Coconut Grove and The Gardens. It is their everyday effort, their faith in this community and their resilience that remind me why we are here, which is to deliver real outcomes, not just slogans.

Fannie Bay is a community that reflects the best of the Territory; it is diverse, proud, hardworking and deeply engaged. You will find small business owners running cafes and corner shops, health and allied health workers starting early shifts at Royal Darwin Hospital, police officers doing night shifts and overtime, families walking their kids to schools and volunteers who roll up their sleeves to support our kids and keep our parks and beaches clean and accessible.

Every week, I speak with locals who tell me the same thing: they value the Territory way of life—safe, open, easy going and prosperous—but they also expect action on the issues that shape daily lives. That is exactly what the year ahead must deliver for Territorians.

First, we must keep working to make our community safer. That means strong support for our police and youth programs that get young people on track before crime becomes their future. I am proud to see successful initiatives in the Darwin area that are giving young Territorians the structure, skills and support to make better choices. In Fannie Bay this kind of prevention and early intervention makes a real difference for residents and businesses alike.

Second, we need to keep the cost of living front and centre. We know that Territorians are feeling the pinch from power bills to groceries and rent. Our government's local initiatives are part of that solution. Every dollar we can save a household makes a difference. That is why I will keep pushing for fairer pricing, local incentives and stronger support for families that are doing it tough.

Our small business community is the heartbeat of suburbs like Parap, Coconut Grove, Fannie Bay, Ludmilla and The Gardens. Whether it is the Parap markets on a Saturday morning or the cafes that keep Darwin buzzing, these are people employing locals, sponsoring sports teams and building community spirit.

This year our government will keep supporting Territory-based businesses through local procurement, training and investment. It is about keeping Territory dollars in Territory hands. For the Fannie Bay electorate, this means more small business growth, better local infrastructure and renewed support for urban renewal projects that create jobs and improve local amenity.

The year ahead will see more investment in strategic infrastructure—roads, public spaces and sustainability projects—that prepares the Territory for decades to come. In Fannie Bay we will continue to champion decisions and upgrades that make our suburbs more liveable through safer streets, less antisocial behaviour, improved walking paths, shaded parks and better stormwater drainage. These are the practical improvements that truly matter to local people.

We will also continue our focus on clean energy transition. Territorians know that balancing our natural environment with economic growth is not only possible; it is essential. That commitment runs through our plans for renewable energy and improved energy efficiency across households and government.

If there is one thing Fannie Bay residents consistently exemplify, it is community spirit. From the Mindil Beach Sunset Markets to the Turf Club and the local sporting fields, people show up for each other. They show leadership in what they say and do.

That same sense of connection and responsibility is what I want to see reflected in our law-making this year. The decisions we make in this Chamber must feel relevant and responsive to the people we represent. Whether it is housing, schooling or healthcare, our job is to make life simpler and fairer, not more complicated.

Constituents rightly expect integrity and accountability from their representatives. As the local Member for Fannie Bay, I take that responsibility seriously. The year ahead will see continued work to strengthen transparency, uphold robust standards and ensure that every public dollar is invested wisely in communities like ours. When people can trust their government to act fairly and openly, confidence grows. That trust is the foundation upon which every other success is built.

The months ahead will bring their share of challenges. There is global uncertainty, cost pressures and social strains, but there is also real opportunity. The Territory is young, creative and determined. Territory-led industries are breaking ground, new partnerships with First Nations communities are delivering lasting change and a generation of Territorians are stepping forward with fresh ideas and courage.

In Fannie Bay that innovation and energy is already visible. In our small business networks, schools and across volunteer organisations, the year ahead is our chance to harness that energy, put local priorities first and keep driving practical action.

As the Member for Fannie Bay, my commitment and this government's commitment is clear: work hard for every Territorian; deliver practical reforms; and ensure that we pass on to the next generation an even stronger, safer, fairer and more sustainable Territory than we inherited. The year ahead is full of potential if we work together across government, party lines and communities.

This Finocchiaro CLP government has only just gotten started. If you will indulge me with a metaphor: think of the Northern Territory as a massive ship. Just 18 months ago, under the former Labor government, that ship was crashing and burning. Since coming to government we have worked hard to start the repairs, and I am pleased to say that the ship is operational again. We have fixed the leaks, got the engines running and the crew are excited to come back to work. We have turned her away from the collision course and steered her clear of the disaster zone. The ship still needs more repairs to reach full speed—we know that there will be some icebergs to dodge—but if there is a government that will put in the hard yards, it is this Finocchiaro CLP government backed by the people of the Territory.

There is much more work to do, but we will make 2026 a year defined by progress, integrity and real results for everyday Territorians through growth, certainty and security.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

NOTICES

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I present an amended notice for General Business Notice number 1 standing in my name: that this Assembly acknowledges the vital contribution of emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants, frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members to their communities and the Northern Territory, especially during periods of response to and recovery from natural disasters such as cyclones, floods and bushfires or other significant emergency events.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I present an amended notice for General Business Notice number 3 standing in my name that this Assembly:

1. acknowledges the alcohol policy initiatives of the current government

2. recognises that the drivers of alcohol harm are longstanding and complex and that the development and implementation of these alcohol policy initiatives must therefore:

   (a) be undertaken in genuine partnership with community representatives and sector experts

   (b) include comprehensive strategies for prevention, harm reduction, early intervention and treatment support

3. recognises this Assembly's commitment to shared decision-making and therefore commits to ensuring that Aboriginal communities are properly informed and meaningfully engaged in the development of tailored solutions that reflect their specific needs, strengths and concerns

4. acknowledges the role of alcohol in exacerbating domestic, family and sexual violence and prioritises the safety of women and children

5. acknowledges that effective alcohol policy must be made in the interests of public health and wellbeing above commercial interests

6. commits to establishing measurable outcomes, long-term policy planning and transparent reporting that extend beyond electoral cycles.

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

1. notes that all other Australian unicameral parliaments require human rights compatibility statements for legislation

2. recognises that such statements assist members to understand how legislation interacts with fundamental rights

3. calls on the government to reintroduce a requirement that all Bills presented to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly include a statement of compatibility with human rights prepared by the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner or the Attorney-General.

VISITORS
Opposition Leader's Father and Daughter

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Opposition Leader's dad, Mick Uibo, and her daughter. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTION TIME

Barkly Regional Deal – Cancellation of Reaffirmation

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Yesterday traditional owners, representatives of the governance table, Barkly Regional Council and the federal Assistant Minister for Regional Development gathered with the public service in Tennant Creek to reaffirm the partnership agreement for the Barkly Regional Deal, which is aimed at boosting economic development and improving social conditions in the region. The event had to be cancelled because at the last minute you refused to sign the agreement.

Has your government walked away from the Barkly Regional Deal? If so, why are you turning your back on the Barkly?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not sure what the Member for Gwoja is getting at. There certainly was a federal minister in Tennant Creek, and there have been ongoing discussions about the Barkly Regional Deal since I signed it on 13 April 2019.

I am not sure where the Member for Gwoja is going with this, but my signature is already on the Barkly Regional Deal. It was established under the Coalition federal government, where Labor members had to be brought to the table kicking and screaming before they would sign the Barkly Regional Deal.

Nearly seven years ago Labor had to come to the table kicking, screaming, fighting and resisting and did not want to contribute to the Barkly Regional Deal.

The Member for Gwoja is carrying on that this government has backed away from the regional deal. I will be clear that our election commitment stands. We are committed to the Barkly Regional Deal that was signed six years ago.

There has been work going on in the background to establish a new statement of commitment moving forward to reaffirm every partner's commitment to delivering on the regional deal.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: I think the minister is answering your question. Continue.

Mr PAECH: I am enjoying hearing you trying to dodge the question.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr PAECH: Standing Order 110; relevance. It is a direct question. Will you re-sign the recommitment statement? That event was supposed to happen yesterday, but you cancelled it.

Mr EDGINGTON: Work has been going on in the background to develop a new statement of commitment to reaffirm every partner's commitment to the regional deal. I have said and I stand by the fact my signature is on there; it has been since 13 April 2019. The Member for Gwoja does not like reading it, but that is where my name is. I am committed to it; our government is committed to it; and we are delivering. We have just announced building a boarding facility in Tennant Creek that we are delivering under the Barkly Regional Deal. When it comes to a statement of commitment, Member for Gwoja …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. It was a direct question: did you cancel the signing of the statement yesterday?

Madam SPEAKER: That is a slightly different question.

Mr EDGINGTON: I do not think they know what question they are asking.

As everybody in this Chamber knows, I was in parliament yesterday. I do not know what the Labor government was doing when it comes to arranging a signing of a statement of commitment, but I was in parliament dealing with parliamentary issues and representing my electorate. The parliamentary sittings schedule has been out for close to 12 months. For him to suggest that I cancelled something is disingenuous because we are committed to the regional deal, and we will continue to work on a new statement of commitment. I reassure everybody my signature is on there, and Labor does not like it.

Fuel Prices

Mr O'GALLAGHER to CHIEF MINISTER

With the Prime Minister calling an urgent National Cabinet meeting on rising fuel prices, this issue is clearly a national concern affecting families, businesses and freight operators across the country, including the Northern Territory and my electorate of Karama. Fuel prices have been driven by global market pressures, but there is also a clear role for the Commonwealth in providing national leadership and relief.

Can you update the Assembly on the Northern Territory's position ahead of that meeting? What priorities will we be putting forward and what practical action do we expect the Commonwealth to take to help keep prices under control?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause please. Before she even stood up there were people talking. The Chief Minister will be heard in silence; thank you.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is an issue of great importance to the Member for Karama's community, as it is to all of us. Fuel is critical for people to get to work; for get kids to gymnastics; for industries and remote communities that rely on diesel—for example, for power generation. It is an important commodity, Member for Karama, so I thank you for this question.

The Prime Minister called a National Cabinet for tomorrow morning, which I will attend to represent the people of the Northern Territory. I put on the record that I will back the Prime Minister all the way if it comes to measures that will support putting downward pressure on fuel prices. It is important that the federal government takes that leadership role, given this is a nation-wide issue.

In relation to an international conflict it is important for states and territories to come in under the Prime Minister—that the Prime Minister be leading the charge. Hopefully I will have more to say about that tomorrow.

Since the conflict in the Middle East, on 28 February, oil and gas prices have risen in the Territory. There was a widening of the gap between the terminal gate price and the price at the bowser. In rapid response to that widening gap, which we have been keeping a close eye on, the Treasurer, Bill Yan, wrote immediately to the ACCC asking it to look closely at the widening distance between the wholesale price and the price being charged to everyday Territorians. He also wrote directly to the retailers, sending them a clear message that we will not tolerate this un-Territorian behaviour of people jacking up prices and using an international conflict as an excuse. That happened straightaway.

In response to that we saw a drop in the fuel price. It was temporary; since then it has gone back up. We have been monitoring it closely, and the gap between the terminal gate price and the price at the bowser is about two to three cents a litre, so retailers are doing the right thing. We will keep a very close eye on it. Consumer Affairs is doing a lot more compliance, sending compliance people to Alice Springs, for example. We need to continue this active monitoring.

We are in this global situation, but we should not be taking it out on the people working behind the counter. I know some Territorians are expressing their frustration. We will continue to work with industry and closely monitor the gap. We want to see it narrow.

I hope to have more to say after National Cabinet tomorrow.

NT Floods – Daly River and Palumpa Evacuees

Mr YOUNG to CHIEF MINISTER

Around 500 people from Daly River and Palumpa are currently displaced and staying at Foskey Pavilion and Marrara. This is clearly a short-term arrangement. What is your government doing to secure appropriate interim accommodation if these families cannot return home for weeks or months?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question about the Palumpa and Nauiyu people from his electorate, who are in evacuation centres. Our first priority was to make sure everyone was safe, so we used facilities at Foskey Pavilion and Marrara. These facilities have been used for a long time for these types of emergency evacuation efforts. The Department of Children and Families and a range of other agencies, including Salvation Army and Red Cross, are doing an amazing job to make people as comfortable as possible. There are limits to how comfortable you can make a pavilion or a hall, that is normally used to sell showbags, for people who are looking at a medium to long-term scenario.

The Daly River is dropping, but we potentially have more weather coming. We are working hard to find what we are calling the mid-term solution. I was at Foskey Pavilion yesterday, and I visited Palumpa last week. I went to Foskey's with Joy Cardona, one of the traditional owners, and spoke to people about any concerns that our local teams on the ground are addressing. I expressed to them that it is my focus and commitment to have a solution for them, in the next day or two, where they will be much more comfortable and homelike. It will have more privacy and different food catering solutions so they can be in a position to rebuild their lives when the Daly River goes down and we have a better understanding of what the impact to that community is.

It is a very good question, Member for Daly, and I thank you very much for asking it because people want certainty. If people can be told what will happen in four, five or six days, it gives them a light at the end of the tunnel. Right now, people are sitting at Marrara and Foskey Pavilion wondering what is next; they are worried about the impact to their home and community and about what the future holds.

I had the opportunity to meet with the women's forum of the Northern Land Council this morning and heard directly from the women in that group, from across the Top End, regarding the extraordinarily broad impact the weather is having on displacing people across the Territory.

I hope to have more to say soon, Member for Daly. I will make sure that you are briefed and across that as well. We want that communicated on the ground as fast as possible to give people comfort and reassurance during what is an incredibly difficult time. We thank everyone for their patience as we move through the horrible stages of this flooding event.

Thank you to all the workers and volunteers for doing everything they can, including the prisoners who set it up to make it as homely as possible.

NT Cattlemen's Association

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Currently the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association is hosting its annual conference in Darwin. The Northern Territory's cattle industry is a powerhouse worth billions of dollars with approximately two million head of cattle. This industry not only sustains vital jobs in rural, regional and remote areas but also creates a ripple effect of economic benefit throughout the Territory. I know how passionate you are about this industry, and you visited Indonesia last year to strengthen ties between our two countries. Could you update the House on the importance of the cattle industry in the Northern Territory?

Mr Paech: Come on. Giddy up, Minister.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja …

Mr Maley: Kick him out.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nelson …

Mr Young: Or buck him off.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly. Let us behave. The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries will be heard in silence.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I left my whips and spurs at home today. Unfortunately, I cannot do what was said. On a serious note, the cattle industry is the backbone of the bush. It provides jobs and supports our communities across the Northern Territory.

I acknowledge the hardship the recent flood events have caused to the pastoral industry across the Northern Territory. I have spoken to many people from Alice Springs, the Barkly and Katherine, and they are going through a tough time.

This week approximately 1,000 delegates came to Darwin to attend the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Conference. What a boost to the economy it will be. The people are out there working hard; they have come to the Territory and are spending their money in Darwin. This will be a boost for our economy and for those cattlemen to get together, talk and share their experiences.

This morning I went to a breakfast and congratulated six young leaders who have graduated from the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association's Future Leaders Program. I thank them for participating in the program. It was great to hear them talk about what they had dealt with in the last year or so. The cattle industry is in great hands.

In 2025 the live export industry recorded its strongest performance in over a decade, enforcing its critical role as an economic driver in the Northern Territory. This industry is worth $1bn. They exported over 447,000 cows last year; that is an 18% increase from the year before. That shows the cattle industry is going ahead in leaps and bounds.

The conference will be a celebration of the Northern Territory beef people, their landscape and their cattle. Industries carry such a weight in shaping the Territory's future. They will get over this flood event, move forward and continue to thrive in their communities and families. I have personally been to many stations and have lived on cattle stations, and I know the feeling of family they have. Everyone comes together for birthdays and Christmas. That feeling of family is hard to explain—I am getting goosebumps now, thinking about it. That is what the cattle industry does: the people support themselves, each other and the Northern Territory.

This government, led by Lia Finocchiaro, is supporting the cattle industry, as we know how important it is to the backbone of the economy and the family we call the Territory.

NT Floods – Jilkminggan

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday the Member for Katherine spoke about visiting the residents of Jilkminggan who are currently living in tents in Mataranka because evacuation shelters are well over capacity and no other accommodation option has been provided. The Member for Katherine said that Jilkminggan residents were, 'Happy living in the tents'. I can confirm that living outside in a tent in wet weather, with a possible cyclone bearing down, is not making Jilk people happy. The road to Jilkminggan is still too weather-affected for people to go home. What is your government doing in the medium and longer term to ensure that the people of Jilkminggan will have somewhere decent to stay that is not in tents exposed to the elements?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I think what the Leader of the Opposition has described is the imperfect situation that just about every Territorian is living in now. We all wish that none of this weather was happening, that no-one was evacuated and that a cyclone was not heading our way, but that is not our reality.

We would love for people from Jilk to be able to go home, and I expressed this to the women at the Northern Land Council meeting this morning. That is what everyone wants to do. It does not matter if you are from

Nauiyu, Beswick or Katherine; everyone wants to go home. We would love for the people from Jilk to go home, but they cannot just yet.

Many different plans are being put in place. Salt Creek bridge has been brought back online; no-one was expecting that to be broken, and it has now been fixed. Now Donkey Flat is presenting the next set of challenges. We have to work through this in the best way we can. Originally the people from Jilk and Mataranka used shelters, which meant everyone had to look after themselves and bring their own food, blankets and pillows. They were transferred to an evacuation centre, which means the Department of Children and Families is providing all the support. People in Jilk have received their immediate relief funding payments.

Opposition Leader, it is easy to point out the imperfect, but it is much more difficult to come up with a different solution. Other than doing everything we can to get people home, I am not sure what you expect. To try to change the characterisation of what the Member for Katherine …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Do not interrupt me because I am now turning the blowtorch on you, Opposition Leader.

Ms UIBO: Standing Order 110; I agree with everything the Chief Minister is saying. I am specifically asking whether there are medium and long-term plans for the people of Jilk if they cannot return home due to the pending weather.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I have been saying that we are trying to get people from Jilk home. As I was about to say, the mischaracterisation of what the Member for Katherine said is unfair, particularly given the environment we are in. The Member for Katherine's home has been impacted for the third time in as many decades. What she was trying to say—which is true for us who visited the evacuation centres, including you—is that people understand the evacuation centre is not a home. It is not perfect, but people are grateful for the …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; specifically, is there a long-term plan for the people of Jilk if they cannot return home?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: People in evacuation centres Territory-wide are understanding of the situation. They want to go home. We have provided information, food, clothing, shelter and entertainment—everything we possibly can. When we said that people are happy—of course no-one is happy to have their home flooded and demolished and to be evacuated, but they are extremely understanding that this is the situation.

The long-term plan, Opposition Leader, is for people to go home.

Tourism Economy Investment

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

Can the minister update Territorians on how the recent private sector activity reflects strengthening confidence in the Northern Territory economy? How is the government creating the right conditions for investment, job creation and business expansion across the visitor economy? How does this growing confidence support the government's broader plan to rebuild our economy and deliver growth, certainty and security for Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina and I know what is going on across the Territory. Many tourism businesses in the regions, in Katherine, across the Top End and in Central Australia are going through a tough time. We are doing everything we can to support them throughout this horrible journey all Territorians are going through.

In our year of growth, certainty and security, we have to get on with the job of making sure the Territory is the place people want to visit. Over the recent months we have seen an uptick in private investment in the Northern Territory from people with national and global footprints. We are finally seeing cranes in the sky again after some big developments, and big players are coming to the marketplace.

I wanted to tell Territorians about a couple of those, one being Journey Beyond, which is already investing in the Northern Territory. It has The Ghan, Outback Spirit, Darwin Harbour Cruises and just bought Voyages Tourism Australia located at Uluru. It also recently acquired SeaLink NT, which is an important service that a lot of Territorians love. Journey Beyond can now take that even further.

The other big name that has come to the Territory after a long time is IHG's Voco group. It will run a new hotel on Mitchell Street. The hotel is an old government office block that has been refurbished. I had the privilege of being shown around that new hotel by Sean DeSouza. It will be ready by the Dry Season. It has a restaurant and a pool. It is multistorey, with little balconies for people who want to spend longer than just one night.

It shows that investment in the Northern Territory is still happening, despite the hardship that many Territorians are going through. We want to keep sharing the positive stories because they are out there, even given the times we are having right now.

Our government will continue our trajectory for growth, certainty and security for the Northern Territory. Under Labor the Territory's economy was going backwards at a rate of knots. The previous Labor government did not look at tourism from a holistic point of view, so there was little to no private investment in tourism. We have seen that coming back in spades under our CLP government. I am proud to be the Tourism minister to keep supporting and delivering for our sector so that when we have tough times, we hang in together, get through it and come out better for it.

Road Projects

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

At a time when flooding is becoming more extreme, the need for roads investment becomes even more essential to keep communities connected and the Territory economy moving. Can you explain why you have cut hundreds of millions of dollars out of critical road and barge infrastructure projects, including sealing Central Arnhem Road; the Galiwinku, Gapuwiyak and Ramingining Barge Landing upgrades; the Marindja Road upgrade and sealing; the Phelp River crossing on Numbulwar Road; Port Keats Road; and the Stuart Highway upgrade at Pinelands? In the wake of significant road damage caused by flooding across the Territory, will you now commit to ensuring there is a pipeline of works and adequate funding for our critical roads network?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is always good to talk about what we are doing for roads. We are on track to deliver the most road seal across the Territory of any government for 10 years, and that is saying something.

The Opposition Leader talked about the program that the previous government had in place. It was all announcements and no delivery. We had to look at that program and deliver what we could with the money we had, because the previous government had $4.2bn to $4.3bn for that program, but when we came to government there was only about $350m to deliver it.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr YAN: We needed a close look at that program to work out what we could deliver with the cash available.

We will deliver the most bitumen of any government in 10 years. Only yesterday we announced the $100m floods recovery package, which will be administered by Ken Davies along with Minister Hersey. A lot of that will go to roads.

We are getting to some of the roads the Opposition Leader mentioned. We will do the road to Wadeye, but it is about getting it done over the next few years and being able to cash it properly. The problem we were left with by the previous government was that things were not funded.

We are doing stuff on the Arnhem Highway; Allan King & Sons is there doing bits and pieces. We have broken down that program into smaller packages to give …

Ms Uibo: No, they were tendered before you mob came to government.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, you asked the question. Can you just be quiet and listen to the minister, please.

Mr YAN: We broke that package into pieces to give smaller contractors better opportunities, rather than larger portions, which cut out a lot of the smaller guys.

We are delivering on roads. You only have to look at what is happening with roads across the Territory due to the weather events; the teams and our contractors are out there going above and beyond. I wish I had more teams fixing potholes, because I know the road between here and Katherine on the Stuart Highway is miserable, but our teams are stretched thin. During emergencies we are bringing in extra contractors, under parts of the Act, to fix those roads outside standard contracted periods.

Our investment in the infrastructure program for this financial year was nearly $2.2bn, and that was cashed. That was not announcements; it was cashed. We are delivering those things, and we will deliver just as much next financial year.

Education – Alternative Models

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

Not every young person thrives within the traditional four-walled classroom model, particularly in the senior years of schooling. Many students have strengths in practical trades, sport and entrepreneurship that are not always fully nurtured within conventional academic pathways. Can you inform the Assembly of the steps our CLP government is taking to expand and strengthen alternative education models that integrate trade, training, sport development and business-focused learning to ensure that students who sit outside traditional methods are meaningfully engaged, supported and equipped with real-world skills for future employment and enterprise?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago Minister Cahill and I went to McMahon Services to see the trade training program operated by SEDA College with Housing Industry Association (HIA), McMahon and Intract Australia. Demonstrated that day was what can be achieved when government backs practical job-ready education.

The program gives students the opportunity to commence the Cert II in Construction Pathways in partnership with the HIA. This partnership ensures that students gain meaningful hands-on industry experience in classrooms and with opportunities for practical hands-on learning.

It was great to see about 14 kids interacting with different organisations. McMahon has had respected large-scale construction partners involved from day one, which gives the students a genuine head start and connects them directly with employers who are instrumental in rebuilding the Territory. We need a lot of that now.

It creates clear structured pathways toward real jobs and apprenticeships upon completion of their Cert II. The program is unique, with 14 students signed up to gain a trade pathway and complete a Cert III in Business in Years 11 and 12. That is a great pathway for the SEDA students, giving a different approach to education as opposed to the mainstream method.

This means that we are not just training apprentices; we are backing future small business owners, subcontractors and employers. We are equipping young Territorians to work in the construction industry and one day run their own business with the potential to employ others.

This is what economic rebuilding looks like in practice. Our government understands that if we are serious about growing the Territory we must invest in skills, industry partnerships and our young people. We are rebuilding our economy one tradie at a time, creating local jobs, strengthening local industry and ensuring that Territory projects are built by a skilled local workforce, which we need now more than ever.

Nhulunbuy – Woolworths Closure

Mr GUYULA to CHIEF MINISTER

The cost of living in remote communities is already enormous. With Woolworths pulling out of the Gove Peninsula by the middle of 2027, what will the government do to ensure food and other essential goods do

not increase in price? How will this government ensure that residents of the Gove Peninsula do not face significant growing costs across food, flights and essential services?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I was surprised to see that Woolworths made that announcement yesterday. It is a big blow for the town of Nhulunbuy and the entire region.

It is important to note that the winding back and closure of the Rio Tinto Gove mine planned for mid-2029 has been known for a long time. Under the previous government a working group was established—including federal and Territory governments, Rirratjingu, Gumatj Corporation and others—to work through what the transition will look like. Unfortunately, that has gone incredibly slowly.

When we came to government I was briefed and realised just how pressing this timeframe was on Nhulunbuy. We escalated and picked up the tempo on that transition. I now have an assistant minister supporting me to ensure continuity in the Member for Mulka's region for that transition. I have made a number of visits there. We are focused on a good outcome for that town. The concern is that the private sector will pull away the more time ticks toward that closure. That is what we are seeing with Woolworths. I do not think we will have another Rio come in to provide the economic growth and opportunity to Nhulunbuy. Resolving these issues will need a series of opportunities, in which case we need the community to embrace that and be ready.

All that work is going well. The tempo has picked up, and Woolworths indicated it is working with ALPA or someone else to take over. We must do everything we can to maintain the population of Nhulunbuy, which means jobs and private sector investment. That is the work we are continuing to do.

Prices in remote areas are always a significant issue. That is something Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, through the federal government, Outback Stores and community stores, is looking into. It continues to be a serious issue, but our government wants a good outcome for Nhulunbuy and the surrounding communities. To do that it needs a strong private sector creating jobs and opportunities for the future.

Rubbish – Illegal Dumping

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Illegal dumping is a major environmental issue that was, frankly, ignored for far too long in the Northern Territory. It affects many electorates, including my own, but it will not be ignored under the CLP government. Since launching Operation: Don't be a dumper, there has been real progress in identifying those who do the wrong thing and in holding them accountable.

Can you update the Assembly with the latest developments on this project and how the Finocchiaro CLP government is tackling illegal dumping in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fong Lim knows that this is an issue and is actively working to clean up his electorate, as illegal dumping occurs there.

Since coming to government many people have raised with me the issue of illegal dumping around Alice Springs. I acknowledge my electorate officer, Rowie Schulz, who is in the gallery today. She works on the front line and hears from a lot of community members who report illegal dumping through our office. Illegal dumping is an eyesore; it is disrespectful, harms our environment and it spoils public spaces.

In November 2024 our government took action and launched Operation: Don't be a dumper. I am pleased to report this program has seen real results. Nearly $10,000 in fines has been issued to five people who were caught illegally dumping in our beautiful environment. It is not on, and we will fine these people. That is five people, who previously would have gone unnoticed, fined nearly $2,000 each for illegal dumping.

Under the program, cameras have been deployed in target areas to catch people in the act, deter illegal dumping in the first place and enable a rapid response to those incidents.

I have a heartwarming story about those cameras. Recently they captured people going out of their way to clean up the illegal dumping sites. These are community members who have not been asked to do this. They know what is happening around Alice Springs and are making their own efforts to drive out there and clean

up. To those people: thank you very much. You have been caught on camera; but do not worry, we will not come after you. We thank you for that work.

Multiple government departments, the local council and community organisations have been working together to make it happen. As the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, this is something I have pushed hard for that the previous Labor government did not care enough about. We are making sure that something is done.

These hefty fines are a clear reminder that this government is taking illegal dumping seriously, and it will not be tolerated under the Finocchiaro CLP government. If people do the wrong thing in the Northern Territory there will be consequences for their actions.

I have visited various places around Central Australia where illegal dumping has been a major problem, and I have seen the hard work done by contractors and agencies to clean up the mess. We thank those people for their efforts; it does not go unnoticed.

We live in such a beautiful place in the Northern Territory, and it is incumbent on all of us to keep it clean. We thank everyone who has reported illegal dumping because every bit counts, and we all need to do our bit to tackle illegal dumping.

Nhulunbuy – Woolworths Closure

Mr BROWN to CHIEF MINISTER

My question is similar to the Member for Mulka's question. The only Woolworths supermarket servicing Nhulunbuy and East Arnhem has announced it will shut its doors next year. The Gove Peninsula is home to more than 40,000 Territorians who are facing an uncertain future as Rio Tinto winds down its operations. You have committed no additional funding to the transition, and we are yet to hear a plan for the future of the region. What is your government doing to ensure stable housing, uninterrupted essential services, that the supermarket remains operating for the region and to assure residents that your government cares about the town and surrounding areas?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting that Labor, all of a sudden, has realised that the Nhulunbuy transition is happening. It speaks volumes about its inaction when it was in government …

Ms Uibo: We started it; you are the one who has dropped the ball.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The Opposition Leader can whinge to her heart's content across the Chamber. She was a minister for eight years in a government that barely moved the transition forward an inch.

I was horrified at the status of it when we came to government. That is why I immediately spoke to the Member for Wanguri—who has a close connection with Nhulunbuy—and said, 'We need to do this together because this will take an extra set of eyes'. Labor had a blindfold on.

The inertia of the committee was unbelievable; the TOs in Rirratjingu and Gumatj wanted to secure different commercial and private sector opportunities. Gumatj controls the land around the town and Rirratjingu, the township. It was going nowhere. That inertia includes the federal government.

We have completely reinvigorated that and re-empowered TOs to take control of what their future looks like. We have sat with them a number of times and told them how committed we are and that we want them to lead that outcome.

For that to happen, it is a question of timing. Every day that ticks closer to Rio closing is another day closer to commercial decisions, like Woolies leaving. We do not want to see the private sector pulling out of the town. Rirratjingu, in particular, is conscious of that. They want that to continue to be a strong commercial hub for the region. They are all over this.

We are working with Rio on a number of issues. We are consulting with the traditional owners on what can be done on Aboriginal land to make sure there continues to be jobs and opportunities for the future.

It is rich for Labor to come to the party now, given the zero work they did for so many years. It is a tragedy that we are so close to 2029, yet so little has been done. We have picked it up—like we have done with every other mess that Labor left behind—and are going as fast as we can. Ultimately, the key decision-making for this rests with the Aboriginal leaders on the ground. They know that, and we know that; we are working together.

Timor-Leste – Economic and Regional Ties

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

Strengthening international connectivity is essential to growing the Northern Territory economy, expanding tourism and deepening our regional partnerships. The Finocchiaro CLP government recognises the importance of aviation links that connect Darwin with our closest neighbours and support trade, business and people-to-people ties across the region.

The recent announcement by Aero Dili about commencing a twice-weekly service between Darwin and Dili from May this year is an encouraging development that strengthens the Territory's longstanding relationship with Timor-Leste.

Can you update the Assembly on what this new route means for the Territory and how it will strengthen economic and regional ties between Darwin and Timor-Leste?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, in the Member for Fannie Bay's community there are significant numbers of people with strong connections to Timor-Leste, including businesses and people who like a long weekend there. It is exciting for the Territory that this announcement was made.

Our ties with Timor-Leste are deep, not only due to our proximity. They are about the people-to-people relationships, the opportunities that we have shared in growing their resources and workforce and investing in their nation. Their decision speaks volumes about their confidence in where the Territory is heading and their desire to be part of the journey we are taking.

The service will commence from 24 May. Territorians will have the opportunity to, as their ambassador said, 'Discover the undiscovered'. It is a great slogan; I tried to steal it. I do not how far I will go with it, but I will give it a shot.

We will have two flights per week on aircraft that offer business-class seats. The services we have are fantastic, but this will be significant for people who want to take the next step up.

We will see that announcement creating opportunity for people to discover what Timor-Leste has to offer. Territorians who have, over the years, enjoyed building relationships with the Balinese may find that Timor-Leste and Dili offer them a less commercial experience. The opportunities in Timor-Leste are truly magnificent; there is scuba diving, snorkelling, the most magnificent scenery and an amazing and beautiful culture.

Another opportunity is in the business sector. We are working hard to build ties to support Timor-Leste—which is the youngest Asian nation; it is only 23 years old this year. It has developed such an enormous amount in that short space of time. It was recently admitted to ASEAN, which is a major achievement in a short time. That shows how significant it is as a country and how important they are to the region and us as neighbours.

I encourage everybody in this Chamber to check out those flights. As we continue to grow our economy and build certainty around what we have to offer and the security of our region, we welcome this major commitment.

Crime Statistics

J DAVIS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

People in my electorate continue to contact me saying that they do not feel safe and that the government's crime statistics do not match their lived experiences. The Productivity Commission's report also found that Territorians feel less safe than they did a year ago.

I have been asked to clarify the meaning of 'unique victim', which the government frequently uses in crime statistics. Can you explain exactly what this means? For example, if one person is assaulted multiple times in a single incident, or across multiple incidents, how is this counted? Are these crimes based on allegations or only proven offences? For crimes without an identifiable individual victim, such as drink-driving, drug offences, breaches of bail or offences against the Territory, who counts as the victim, or are these incidents excluded entirely? If they are excluded, how can Territorians be confident that these statistics accurately reflect crime trends across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Member for Johnston continues to ask us questions about crime, when she has voted against every one of our crime Bills brought to this Assembly since being elected. The people in your electorate are looking for you to come in here and fight for them on the crime they have been experiencing for a long time.

We made an election commitment to do everything in our power to reduce crime; we were elected on that basis. We came to parliament with a 17-strong membership and a mandate to make the change they want and deserve. During week one of sittings our new government brought forward a huge suite of crime-reduction policies. We have Declan's law, breach of bail returned, post-and-boast legislation and mandatory sentences for assaults on workers. I can go on. Every sitting since then we have brought forward crime legislation to make changes for Territorians. We have always said that there is so much more work to be done; that work continues. This morning, I tabled more legislation to assist with crime.

The number of victims of crime is down by 10.2% compared with under Labor. That is a huge reduction. We still have a long way to go …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. My question was specifically asking what the meaning of 'unique victim' is in the crime statistics.

Ms BOOTHBY: I will continue, because the crime statistics are calculated the same as always. We have not changed that data at all. It is the same reporting done by the same people who were under Labor—no difference. Once released, it goes straight from that system to the police website. We get that data from the police website, then I read it out in parliament. That is how it works. There has been 2,737 fewer victims of crime compared with a year ago. In Alice Springs, total offences against the person are down by 23% and residential break-ins are down by 40%. That is monumental.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. I am interested if the Attorney-General knows the answer to the question of what the definition of 'unique victim' is.

Madam SPEAKER: Specific questions are asked, but it is up to you how you answer them, minister.

Ms BOOTHBY: The Leader of the Opposition should know better. She used to be the Attorney-General when crime was out of control. In opposition we used to look at her statistics, and the ones we look at as a government have not changed. What has changed is the number of victims in the Northern Territory—2,700-odd fewer compared with under Labor.

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, Opposition Leader.

Ms BOOTHBY: The statistics show crime numbers going down across the Territory. Domestic violence is down 3%. People thought it would never go down; it is going down. We will continue to do the hard work because we put victims first. That is what Territorians expect and deserve.

NDIS Participants – Stronger Protections

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for DISABILITY

There has been much public commentary about alleged NDIS fraud in the Northern Territory and reports of predatory behaviour, particularly in remote areas. Last month the Commonwealth Fraud Fusion Taskforce, led by the Australian Federal Police, confirmed that an NDIA employee in Darwin was arrested and charged with multiple counts of fraud. Can the minister provide the Assembly with the details of how the Northern Territory Government is advocating for stronger protections for NDIS participants?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, every Territorian living with disability deserves to be safe, respected and properly supported and that includes within the NDIS. The NDIS is a Commonwealth responsibility; however, the Northern Territory Government contributes about $124m a year, which is one-third of its costs. The Territory invests heavily in a scheme it does not control, and with that comes a moral duty to intervene when Territorians are at risk. We cannot sit back whilst Territorians are exposed to predatory behaviour, exploitation or what is known as sharp practice. We have seen deeply concerning reports, including alleged fraud and predatory behaviour. It is unacceptable.

The government is actively advocating for stronger protections. I have raised these concerns directly with the Commonwealth Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Senator Jenny McAllister, and the Commissioner of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission, Louise Glanville. The commissioner is in Darwin, and I look forward to meeting with her shortly after Question Time.

I welcome the increased activity from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, including recent visits to Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, to investigate misconduct and engage directly with participants. We also acknowledge the Commonwealth's move towards stronger safeguards, including tighter registration requirements and increased penalties.

We will work with the Commonwealth, but let me be clear that more must be done. Exploitation of vulnerable Territorians, whether through inducement, coercion or misuse of funds, cannot be tolerated. I will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth minister, the commissioner, providers and our local advisory bodies to ensure that the voices of Territory participants are heard.

I say this to all Territorians: if you see something that does not look right, report it. The government will continue to stand up for people living with disability and advocate for a system that delivers the support they deserve.

Corrections – Pay Negotiations

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Our Corrections officers have one of the toughest jobs in the Territory, particularly given the overcrowding and unsafe conditions in our prisons. They deserve decent pay and conditions, yet rather than negotiating with them in good faith, your department has labelled their right to take protected action as disruptive and unacceptable. What is unacceptable is your government's refusal to properly engage with our hardworking Corrections officers. Will you come to the table and negotiate a decent deal for our Corrections staff?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we are at the table negotiating a deal. This government has put out a pay policy of 3%, and that is the starting point in negotiations. There have been ongoing negotiations, and more than 50% of the public service has already entered into a wage agreement for the next four years.

This Corrections agreement remains outstanding; the Member for Gwoja is correct. We will continue to negotiate, but the Corrections union has put in a claim equating to about 11.3% per annum, or 9.9% over four years, which is above our policy. There will be continued negotiations with a view to resolving this matter.

The union notified us of industrial action. This comes at a time when there are floods across the Northern Territory. During the week, I said that we will be sending prisoners to Katherine to help with the cleanup and that they will be accompanied by four prison officers. These prison officers do a great job. This strike—industrial action—will affect the entire community because one of the first things to be cancelled will be the work parties. In Alice Springs, the work parties filled sandbags and collected debris around the Todd River. They have gone to Katherine to help.

We are trying to negotiate a fair pay deal across the Northern Territory for all public servants. We will continue to negotiate in good faith, but we ask the union to do the same. We ask it to think about whether this is the correct time for industrial action, noting that the Territory is in the grips of an unprecedented weather event. Unfortunately, there is another one coming. The Chief Minister spoke about another cyclone heading towards the Northern Territory, maybe into Katherine and the Barkly. This is the time to come together as a community, and that is what we ask the union to do—think about the whole of the Northern Territory.

We will continue to negotiate, but our offer is 3%. We will negotiate in good faith because we want to resolve this. We understand that the prison officers do a great job. They are well trained.

We have 250-odd new officers this year. We brought in G4S because the previous Labor government neglected the prison officers. It left them short-staffed and did not invest in the prison system, which led to overcrowding. We all know the chaos with having prisoners in watch houses, which the previous Labor government put in place. Hundreds of people were crammed into watch houses. We fixed that; we brought in G4S to help with transport, health visits and court visits. We know how important it is for Corrections officers to have the resources needed to do their job correctly.

Corrections – Pay Negotiations – Supplementary Question

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Do you support your Corrections officers taking their planned protected action?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I support our Corrections officers. That is why we funded them way beyond what the previous Labor government did. That is why we have made sure the infrastructure is up to standard and brought Berrimah back online. We have a plan, which we will release, for a work camp in Katherine. There will be approximately 200 prisoners helping the community.

We will continue to continue to support the prison officers and make sure that …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was direct to the minister: do you support your Corrections officers taking planned protected action?

Mr MALEY: What I support is them—that is their right to do what they want to do. So long as it is lawful strike action, they can do what they want.

Our government will continue to negotiate in good faith and support prison officers because we know the important work they do. We have to look at the big picture across the Northern Territory. We have just gotten past a unique weather event, and a new one is on its way. We will continue to support the Territory, no matter where you are.

Healthcare – Central Australia

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for HEALTH

The CLP government is working to improve the lives of all Territorians regardless of where they live. Access to quality healthcare is vital to making regional areas more liveable and attractive for families, workers and businesses. That includes Central Australia. Strong health services mean communities are healthier, more resilient and better supported. Whether it is timely treatment, local specialists or better facilities, investing in regional healthcare strengthens communities and ensures people do not have to choose between health and where they live. Can you update Territorians on our strong focus on better healthcare in Central Australia?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there are a lot of healthcare workers in the Member for Casuarina's electorate, and he is supporting and working with them every day of the week.

The Finocchiaro CLP government has boosted frontline healthcare in Central Australia by delivering new lung function machines worth about $100,000 at Alice Springs Hospital. I recently visited the hospital to check out these new machines and see how they will help boost healthcare in Central Australia. The new lung function machines include a plethysmograph, which has numerous integrated diagnostic testing capabilities, and a fractional exhaled nitric oxide (FeNO) breathing device. The machines equip Alice Springs Hospital with state-of-the-art lung-testing technology, giving clinicians faster and more detailed diagnostic information for people with respiratory conditions.

As part of our year of growth, certainty and security, our government is delivering healthcare certainty for Central Australian residents with better health infrastructure. The new equipment means that the Alice Springs Hospital lung function team can now provide a broader range of respiratory tests that were not

previously available. More testing means earlier detection, earlier treatment and better care for Territorians with respiratory conditions. Territorians with suspected airway conditions, such as asthma, can now undertake airway hypersensitivity testing in the Territory instead of being referred interstate or having to pay for private services. This will save Territorians' time and money.

The plethysmograph is a critical machine which ensures Territory respiratory healthcare practices are in line with other states and territories.

Another important addition is the FeNO breathing device which can measure the level of inflammation in a patient's airways. Testing on this device is quick, simple and non-invasive and can support an asthma diagnosis when other tests are inconclusive. That portable device can be used for bed-bound patients and will be used in communities to determine environmental differences that may impact airways.

This latest investment in better healthcare equipment follows on from the new hybrid operating theatre, which we opened last year at Alice Springs Hospital. The $8.6m surgical suite combines a traditional operating theatre with high-end medical imaging technology. The hybrid operating theatre increased the range of surgical procedures available in Central Australia, allowing more patients to access high-quality care closer to home and loved ones. This is great news for Central Australia.

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

MOTION
Recognising Territory Emergency Service Workers

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I move that this Assembly acknowledges the vital contribution of emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants and frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members to their communities in the Northern Territory, especially during periods of response to and recovery from natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods, bushfires and other significant emergency events.

I thank the Assembly for allowing us to speak on this important motion. We have seen significant weather events across most of the Northern Territory from Central Australia a few weeks ago through to the Barkly and into the Top End in the Katherine region, Douglas Daly, Palumpa, Daly River and a few of the homelands out that way. More recently we saw the flooding at Darwin River.

We need to recognise the role that our emergency services have played—our emergency services workers, volunteers, Aboriginal organisations, police and humanitarian organisations. Many people have come up from down south, giving their time to help the victims of this flood, including those who have been displaced from their communities. I have spoken to a few people who are working at Foskey Pavilion and Marrara.

It has been heartening to see the community come together. A number of people have been displaced, including more than 500 in my electorate alone. I know there are many in the Member for Katherine's electorate who have also lost everything in their homes, including the Member for Katherine herself. None of us in this House wish upon anyone that they lose their belongings or have damage to their house. When I was in Darwin River last week I met with people who had been impacted by the floods, some just had the clothes on their back.

I have said many times in here that a review is needed. I know the government has flagged that there will be a review once this weather event is over. There is more to come, with a cyclone tracking from Queensland heading towards East Arnhem Land and potentially heading to the Katherine catchment. We are all concerned about this because we know the impact a cyclone can have on the communities in Groote Eylandt and East Arnhem Land. With the sheer amount of rain that can occur in the Katherine catchment, we know that water will flow to the Daly region as well. Those waters may impact the community again or keep flood levels high, which all of us in this House are quite concerned about.

When this is all over and the review happens, we need to look at how we can strengthen our emergency response. With the sheer scale of this weather event, our emergency services, police and volunteers have been stretched. Many of those people and organisations have reached out and told me their stories about how they are feeling stretched and fatigued. We heard some of those concerns in Darwin River. The Member for Goyder, the Deputy Chief Minister and the Chief Minister were there and heard the stories of people having to wait up to four or five hours before they got a response.

The people of Darwin River are not blaming the emergency services; they understand the scale of this event. However, they question why the ADF was not called in and why the Northern Territory Government did not request further support from the federal government. At the end of the day, it is about people's safety, no matter where they are from.

At Darwin River there was a pregnant lady with her young kid who had to wade through water and then swim across a creek into her house. I have seen the devastation that happened there. When I was there and she was telling me the stories I tried to picture myself in her shoes to understand how it would feel—the anxiety and not knowing when Darwin River was rising. Behind her house is Darwin River and at the front near her driveway is a creek. The runoff from the road goes into that creek and back into Darwin River, so it is almost locked in. I believe the Deputy Chief Minister went to that house to look at the damage.

It would have been horrifying not knowing when you will get help. The neighbour from across the road went over to check out what was going on. It was his friend's place—Matty's place. He did not realise that they were there. He helped to get people out from that area.

There needs to be a review of why text messages were not sent out to give people a warning. In the past, text messages were sent saying, 'Localised flooding in your area. Warning. You should be alert.' The issue in Darwin River was that no-one was aware or saw it coming. Nobody I have spoken to from that area could see it coming.

We are seeing the community coming together. Everyone is helping each other out—no matter what side of politics they are on. We have seen the volunteers at Darwin River Tavern alongside the Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigade helping and collecting donations. They have been inundated with donations. The community spirit is alive and well there. They are at capacity; they are receiving many donations of clothing, baby formula and cleaning products. People are even offering whitegoods and furniture.

We are all helping out. My office and I are centralising a spot for people donating fridges, freezers, lounges, TVs or some of the larger items people do not need right now. They can call my office, and we will put it in the system with their details including phone number, the item they have, whether they can hold on to that item, and whether they can drop off the item. That will give us an understanding of what people are willing to donate. We will get in contact with them once we know what the residents of Darwin River, Daly River, Palumpa and some of the pastoralists at Douglas Daly need.

I talk about not worrying about people's political stripes. The Member for Goyder has shared that on his Facebook page, and I thank him for that. I reached out to the Deputy Chief Minister, but I have not heard back yet. Litchfield Councillor Kris Civitarese has also shared it on his page. He ran against me at the last election, but we have put that aside. It is about the people in the rural area, the Douglas Daly pastoral area, Daly River and Palumpa.

People are coming together, wanting to help each other out as Territorians do. We have taken that workload off the volunteers to ensure that when the time is right, we can reach out. I know that plenty of people with couches have come through to my office, so we will see how we can get those to the people who need them in the next few weeks.

People are going through a lot in Darwin River. They are the first people to start cleaning up in my electorate. I know they have also started in Katherine. People are having to go through insurance claims, and some of the claims are quite tricky. A couple of people have talked to me about how insurance companies look at flooding, whether it is from the river or from rainwater. It is tricky when, on top of that, you have a dam nearby that has overflown.

There has been an expansion of that dam, so I think the government needs to look at how it may have impacted the flooding event there—that is what a lot of people are telling me in Darwin River—and how the insurance claims will be dealt with individually. I think it may get quite technical with what is considered flooding and whether that flooding came from the river or rain off the land. There are some tricky situations that may occur. I hope that insurance companies will work in good faith with people to ensure the claims go through because they have lost everything and they do not need the extra stress of dealing with insurance companies. They just want to get on with their lives, like everyone else who has been impacted by this flood.

A couple of weeks ago we saw the flooding event in Palumpa. I have spoken to a few old people there who were quite concerned about what had occurred. There will be a huge cleanup in Palumpa; the water rose quickly and split it into two. There is an area near the floodplain, the swamp plain near Palumpa, and the water has come into that area of town. To give people a picture, the flooding is where all the service providers

are—the schools, the clinic, the West Daly Regional Council office, the Thamarrurr Development Corporation office that runs the CDP, and the local shop. The people who work for those service providers live on that side of town as well, and their houses have been inundated with water and damaged.

The power station is also on that side. The Treasurer said earlier that it is still inundated with water, and Power and Water staff are looking at when they can get back in to put the power online. The power being cut off has also cut the Telstra tower, which goes down the line to Wadeye. There is no Telstra service in Wadeye.

This flooding event has not only had a huge impact on Palumpa itself but also affected Wadeye. I ask the government to look into that. I have spoken to Telstra a few times about this issue because community safety is at risk in Wadeye without any Telstra service. If you have an issue and need to call the police, you cannot do that. If you have a health issue and you urgently need to call 000, you cannot. It is affecting the way businesses operate and how people access power with their prepaid cards.

Many people in Wadeye have spoken to me about the impact on their power at home. What does it mean if people cannot keep their lights on because Telstra is out? With the prepaid system you go online and pay your power to keep it on. Right now, people cannot go online to update their power. They have to go to the shop, but the shop is only open for a certain amount of time. It is not open 24 hours a day and is closed on Sundays. If you run out of power on a Sunday and have bought fresh food, you will lose it. There are vulnerable and old people in Wadeye who need to store medication in their fridge but cannot because they are unable to top up their power.

After this event I hope the Treasurer looks into how we can better ensure connectivity in the region for communities like Wadeye, Palumpa, Peppimenarti and Daly River so people can do the basics. There are many homelands around the Palumpa region. The police have been doing a great job ensuring food security. When there are issues they touch base with people, but we need the government to do a coordinated approach and go to each of the homelands to understand their needs.

Last week many communities started to run out of food. The shop at Emu Point ran out of food. The Mayor, Terry Sams, called me—he lives in Emu Point—and said the shop was down to its bare minimum. There are a lot of people at Emu Point, and they need food there quite quickly. During a usual Wet Season the runways can get planes in, but because of the sheer amount of rain the airport is too boggy to land a small plane. They have to helicopter in a lot of the food.

Terry Sams was not just worried about his community of Emu Point; he was calling all the homelands in the area and checking on Merrepen, Woodycupaldiya and Uminyuluk where there were also food security issues. In Nemarluk one person had to be helicoptered out because the water had risen so quickly, and there was no food security. In Uminyuluk an old man was also helicoptered out because of his health; he is diabetic. It was disappointing last week when the Deputy Chief Minister said that the West Daly Mayor, Terry Sams, was ‘incorrect’. That is what he said; we have it quoted on the *Hansard.*

We need to start listening more to our homelands. They are the people on the ground who understand what is happening in their community. When people say there are food security issues we need to listen, act and have a coordinated approach.

When I spoke to Terry Sams about what had occurred with those comments he was quite upset, as you would be. The first thing he said to me—I wish the Deputy Chief Minister was there to hear it—was, ‘Why are we getting treated like this? We’re all human. We have just got to look after each other; it doesn’t matter where you’re from.’ They were the exact words he said to me over the phone. If people are in need, we just look after each other.

We talked about people in Katherine, and he asked how they were going; he was worried about them. He talked to me about people in Daly River and the homelands around the West Daly region because there are a lot of properties on the edge of those rivers. He knows that river system well. Terry is a man of integrity who cares and is worried for all people. He was informing me what was going on in those homelands to keep me up to date.

A few weeks ago in Daly River, for the second time this year, we have seen a flood, and people were evacuated. I believe they were at Foskey Pavilion for close to three weeks. They then went back home, and a lot of the flood assistance payments were put out. I think there were only two or three houses that had flooding inside of the house. It was not so bad—just a cleanup of the house—and then people could replace their whitegoods, like fridges, freezers and such. The community was getting back to normal and back to

business. Then, only a couple of weeks later, the waters started to rise again because of the Katherine catchment and the sheer amount of water that comes down that river.

We need to look at why people were not evacuated earlier. It took more than 24 hours to even start the evacuation. My understanding is that the evacuation centres in Darwin were not stood up—the government sat on its hands and waited 24 hours. That needs to be clarified within the review, because it is not about whether the evacuation centres were stood up or not; it is about getting people to safety first. Get people to Darwin. People understand it takes time, with logistics and coordination, to get an evacuation centre set up, but you get people to safety first; that is what should have happened.

From what the residents were telling me, the police officer was also trying to coordinate the evacuation from the ground and work with Darwin. From what the organisations there were saying, it was just too big of a job for him. I thank him for all his work. He worked tirelessly to get people to safety, but he needed extra support and the government to react a lot quicker to get people out. Then 24 hours later we saw a number of helicopters go in—which was great, and people had a bit of hope—but there were still 70 to 80 people left behind in Daly River because the weather system hit in the evening, and they had to stop the runs as it was getting dark.

People from Nauiyu (Daly River) community had to wade through water to get in a small tinny and be ferried back and forth across to Five Mile Creek camp, which is not far from Wooliana Road. People were taken up to Woolianna School to stay overnight, then the following day people were helicoptered from Woolianna to Darwin. That should never have occurred. Again, why was the ADF not called in to get one of those big helicopters that go in once or twice and get people out all at once. That should all be part of the review.

If there is an issue with the Northern Territory Government having to go to the federal government to ask for that, these governments need to look at their process. If the Northern Territory Government has issues with the federal government members, it needs to talk to them and tighten up those processes to get quicker responses. That is all we are asking for. I hope that would be part of the review to ensure the safety of people comes first and that we can respond to events in a timely manner.

I have spoken to a few of the pastoralists in Douglas Daly who have been quite concerned about the water levels. A lot of people have moved their livestock to higher ground, but many people have lost their crops, particularly hay crops, fencing and bores. It will be a huge cleanup and cost to them. I support the people in Douglas Daly. We are waiting for the waters to recede to see what damage has been done.

Demi from Elizabeth Downs Station near Daly River called me on Monday to say they also had food security issues. It ended up being managed with a food load drop via a helicopter, which then took her pregnant sister to the maternity services in Katherine. They were thankful for that. Sometimes we get caught up in the larger areas, but there are pastoralists who are isolated, and we need to check in on them and make sure they are doing okay.

I thank all our emergency services personnel, police, volunteers and people from Aboriginal organisations who helped with the evacuation and who continue to help, whether it be at an evacuation centre, cleaning up or just checking in on people who have lost everything. Last Friday police were at Darwin River doing assessments on homes and checking how people are going.

I forgot to mention earlier the amazing work that Lorelle and Kaz are doing at the Darwin River Tavern …

Mr Mackay: Hear, hear!

Mr YOUNG: Thank you. I hear that from the Member for Goyder who has the neighbouring electorate.

They are not only sorting through a lot of the donations; they are the ear for people who have lost everything. It has taken a huge emotional toll on all of us, particularly the Member for Katherine because her house has been inundated with water. A lot of people are coming to see Kaz and Lorelle to collect food, clothing, baby formula or cleaning products. They also act as counsellors for people who have lost everything. I am bringing this up with the government now: we need counselling sessions for the families who have lost everything and for people like Kaz and Lorelle to check in on them because there is a lot of weight on their shoulders.

I am sure that many people across the Northern Territory are feeling that. For example, many people from the Green River Aboriginal Corporation are showing up to Foskey Pavilion every day, sitting down having a cuppa, talking to people and checking in to see how they are. People in Daly River and Palumpa, with

Thamarrurr Development Corporation workers, and people at the evacuation centres do not know what is next.

I thank the Chief Minister for answering my question about the next steps. It was great to hear that, over the next day or two, there will be announcements about alternative accommodation. People are not sure where they will be over the next two to three months, and that uncertainty worries them. It brings on anxiety and disrupts your life when you do not know when or if you will go home and what damage has been done to your home.

On top of that is the emotional toll it takes when you see the images of your community under water and you do not know where your pets are. My understanding is that they are being looked after, but many people have been unable to see their pets for quite some time. There is a welfare group looking after many dogs and other animals there, but it still worries people.

I acknowledge the vital contribution of our emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants, frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members for coming together in a time of need and showing that Territory spirit and support we have seen across the Top End.

A point of order, Madam Speaker! I move an extension of time to continue my remarks.

Motion agreed to.

Mr YOUNG: It is heartening to see the level of support, but we are not out of it yet. There is a cyclone tracking from Queensland across the gulf towards Groote Eylandt. We all hope it tracks out to sea and stays there because we do not need that further disruption. It is widespread across Queensland too. My heart goes out to the people in Queensland, our neighbouring state. It is a huge system.

I look forward to hearing all the contributions from everyone in this House. I also thank everyone who is giving a hand to the Territorians who have lost so much.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, it is important to acknowledge the work of the emergency services, volunteers and all the people who walk towards danger and protect people like me and those in the community.

Our emergency services, police, fire and rescue, emergency, volunteer units, SES, bushfires—all those specialist teams—play a key role in protecting Territorians and keeping the Territory safe.

I also acknowledge the broader groups across our community—the Salvation Army and local sporting clubs—and Territorians who volunteer to help the community. The Member for Katherine was speaking on this because she has seen it firsthand. People came to Alice Springs. Corrections dropped prisoners out in work parties to help. It is great to acknowledge the work of all those people.

I have said many times that my father was a policeman. I have seen their work and how committed he was to it. Friends that I play sport with and go fishing with are also police officers. They make a commitment—they go over and above—to protect Territorians. I give another big shout-out to them.

Sometimes I do not agree with the Member for Johnston, but last week she was talking about Territorians having safe workplaces. She was right. She said things like:

> *Territorians have a right to expect their elected representatives to uphold the highest standards of behaviour. They expect us to debate … disagree, scrutinise … and argue passionately …*
>
> *…*
>
> *Territorians expect strong debate in this Chamber, but they also expect the same standards of behaviour here that they would expect in any other workplace in the Northern Territory.*
>
> *…*
>
> *Territorians deserve a parliament that reflects the best of our community—respectful, accountable and focused on the job that we were elected to do.*

I reflect on how the Member for Johnston takes the high moral ground about how we should do all things perfectly and how she is an elected member and represents her community. It seems she has a short memory.

On 27 February there was a protest outside. The member talks about what I should do and my behaviour and says that people are watching. People are watching all members inside and outside of this parliament. She should hang her head in shame for going outside, resisting police and actively blocking police cars.

My father was a police officer. He would come home and tell stories of how they were trying to do their job and had members of the public—in this case it was a member of parliament—resisting, pushing back and arguing with police.

I table a couple of photos so that people who are watching can see for themselves. The first is a series of photos of the Member for Johnston pushing back against a police officer with someone else in a green shirt—I do not know who that is. You can see that the member is resisting police—they are my words—but I am encouraging people who are listening to look at these photos. This is an embarrassment; she should act the way she talks about …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. This is irrelevant to the debate. Additionally, it is false information.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence! I do not see that it is relevant to the debate, but you have plenty of time to make it relevant. If you do not, then that is a problem.

Dr RAHMAN: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110 is relevant to questions in Question Time; it is not relevant to this area. The point of order is out of order.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not entirely the case. When you give any contribution in response to a topic of debate, the expectation is that it is relevant. Given the length of time allocated to this debate, you have plenty of time to weave it in to make it relevant. At this point, it does not seem particularly relevant, and I take your point.

Mr YOUNG: Speaking to the point of order, considering the Member for Nelson has not had much time to expand on what he is saying and is about to table a document, I ask that he consider that the document should not be tabled, when it is not relevant to this debate.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. If the minister wants to table a document that he feels relevant, he can do that under standing orders. Minister, make your points relevant or I will give someone else an opportunity to speak.

Mr MALEY: This General Business motion is about the police doing a wonderful job. They are out in the community. I saw a story in the paper of someone who was told not to walk across a flooded river and continued to do that. They then had to be rescued. This is about respect for police. If the police ask someone to do something, they may disagree but should comply. They are the police, and they are doing their job.

This photo is relevant to making sure people comply with the police if they are given an instruction. It demonstrates that the Member for Johnston pushed against a police officer. I did not hear what was said, but it is relevant because we are making sure that the police can do their job. If we do not, it puts them at harm.

Regarding the story about someone walking across the creek, the police then had to risk their own lives in a flowing river to rescue someone who did not comply with a police order. I table this document, as it is about making sure people comply with the police. You might not agree with them, but you should comply. If you think they have done something illegal, you can take action later. The message I want to put out to the Territory is that if a police officer asks you to do something, you should comply.

This photo is relevant because, clearly, the Member for Johnston did not like whatever the police officer said to her. As a member of parliament she did not comply. This photo shows that she resisted and was pushing back against police. The member takes the moral high ground, as she does on many occasions, about how she is a model citizen and does things correctly. Clearly she does not unless it reflects what she wants to do.

She moulds things to try to make herself out as a righteous person, but here she was only a month ago resisting and pushing back on police with someone in a green shirt—I do not know who that is. You can clearly make out that the Member for Johnston is not complying with the police officer. The Member for Johnston will later have the opportunity to share what the police officer said to her and why she resisted.

During this emergency, it is important that when police officers and paramedics are doing their job, day-in and day-out, please comply, because they are making sure the Territory is a better place.

The next photo I table has come from an *NT News* article. I will read out the wording underneath it:

> *Independent Justine Davis and Environment Centre NT Director Kirsty Howey blocking the NT Police after they arrested Larrakia man Eric Fejo for stepping onto the lawns outside of Parliament during the swearing in ceremony for NT Administrator David Connolly on February 27. Picture: Zizi Averill*

This is about complying with police officers. If you are asked not to go to a flood area, do not do it.

The Member for Johnston puts herself on a pedestal saying that she is the perfect representative and community person. She clearly has a short memory.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, pause please.

I am not seeing how this is particularly relevant to this topic recognising our NT Emergency Service workers. If you do not make it directly relevant within the next few minutes, I will give the call to another speaker.

Mr MALEY: I am trying to say that if you are in the community and a police or emergency officer asks you to do something, you should comply with that. If you do not think it is lawful, you can deal with it later. We support frontline workers.

The Member for Daly spoke about animal welfare. I will talk about that because they fall under the department. I went to the Territory Emergency Operations Centre and spoke to them. They are part of the rolling 24-hour roster protecting and looking after animals. I agree with the Member for Daly about not only the human loss but the countless animals that are caught up in the floods. They do not get rescued or get into helicopters—they do on occasion—the majority of the time they are left to fend for themselves during floods.

We have a dedicated group of people whose sole job is to focus on animal welfare. A memory burned in my brain is a picture of a little puppy on their desk which they had rescued. They told me that it was their motivation to come in for their 12-hour shifts.

I shout out to the people who are doing a great job and are not as recognised as the paramedics, police or firies but play a crucial role in protecting the communities and making sure that we get through these crises.

There are more than 200 people on the ground in challenging conditions. There are police, fire and rescue, emergency services, and behind them there are a lot of people—more than 100 working around the clock at the Territory Emergency Operations Centre supporting the planning, intelligence or logistics. I went there with the Chief Minister to see this large group working together. They had people from interstate and Health staff there—a range of people. They were working to get information to the incident controller so that they could make timely decisions with the relevant information. I was grateful to see them.

I again shout out to the people who are not in a uniform but are behind the scenes, like the Department of Health staff. I spoke to them, and they were giving information to the police to help make decisions. The animal welfare and emergency services teams were there. The Department of Children and Families staff were there. There was a range of people. They are the unsung heroes, so I acknowledge them.

There were people from Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria demonstrating strength and cooperation across all the jurisdictions, coming together in these times of flood. We have to note that other places in Australia are having their own weather events; we are not alone.

We had a number of events this year including the cyclone at the beginning of the Wet Season, then the two events in Alice Springs. Another rain event is coming towards Katherine.

This is a whole-of-community effort, so I thank people for doing what they do and coming to help us. This is the Territory spirit, people stepping up when it matters, and there is a whole range of volunteer units working day-in and day-out.

The Member for Goyder and I went to a training exercise with the Darwin canine search and rescue team at Howard Springs. We were directed to go into the pine forest and hide ourselves, then the people with dogs came to find us. That training is crucial because, in a real-life situation where someone has been lost or flooded, these are the volunteers who will get the call to rescue them. I was found almost immediately. The poor Member for Goyder spent 25 minutes there—maybe he does not smell as much.

Mr Mackay: An hour-and-a-half.

Mr MALEY: An hour-and-a-half in the swamp. I told them not to find him, actually; he was all right there by himself.

We put this canine group to the test, and it was successful. It is about the training. That is another set of volunteers, the unsung heroes, who do the work and are ready to be called upon at any time. They were called out straight after us and found someone who was lost in Darwin.

These are the groups that fly under the radar. I highlight the groups who are not in photos in the paper doing the rescues. Without these people behind them, the police and emergency services simply cannot do their job. I thank them for what they do.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Dr Siswo Pramono, the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, and the Consul of the Republic of Indonesia in Darwin, Mr Bagus Kobarsyih. Welcome to Parliament House. It is a privilege to have you here this afternoon.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, my Indonesian is rusty, but *selemat malam* or *selamat sore*.

Mrs Carlson: Roll your ‘r’.

Mr PAECH: I should roll my ‘r’—thank you, Member for Wanguri.

I speak to the amendment, which I note has been circulated. Recognising our Territory emergency services workers is incredibly important. With the recent weather events we have seen across the length and breadth of the Territory since October, our emergency services workers have been doing an incredible job. I do not think that there is a part of the Territory which has not required significant work by emergency services workers.

When we talk about emergency services workers we are using a broad definition. It acknowledges the hardworking Northern Territory Police—not just the general constables, but also the Aboriginal liaison officers and detectives. Every person in the force has been working during these challenging times, doing a fantastic job, and will continue across the Territory. I know from my experience as a local member that it is the local police who often get the first call from community members seeking information about what needs to be done and if there is any assistance being offered. It is an important job they do.

Other remote emergency services officers include our healthcare professionals in the bush clinics. They not only do the hard work of caring for people every day; they have mobilised people and services during this time of hardship with severe natural weather disasters wreaking havoc across the Territory. We acknowledge the incredible work they do, along with our educators who stood up in the middle of the night to relocate people, make sure people were safe and to ensure that the school infrastructure was being looked after.

I shout out to all Northern Territory volunteers for their amazing achievements and willingness to step up every day to volunteer. Recently we have seen that in the Katherine region with volunteers standing up to give a hand to a mate, a neighbour or someone they do not even know. That is the true spirit of the Territory. We have seen that in the Darwin River area with people stepping up and helping. Across the bush, people have been coming forward and offering their services.

People have been helping through Central Australia, whether it is with the cleanup or the aftermath. I have even seen, in my hometown of Alice Springs, people volunteering to support the council. Things tend to grow quickly during the Wet Season with the humidity, so it has been great to see people volunteering, helping tend to the verges and cleaning up the debris across every Territory town and community.

I highlight the phenomenal efforts of our public servants during these natural disasters. They do an amazing job every day. They are doing the hard work. I spoke to a few public servants on the weekend who were working 12-hour shifts on the response teams. They were knackered—poor buggers—but they were showing up every day because they care about fellow Territorians, making a positive difference and providing high-quality care.

We should be proud of our public service doing a great job, whether it is Territory Families staff who are leading the recovery efforts, Police, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet staff or the critical goods team—I am looking at the Member for Port Darwin; I think that sits with TBAR now. They are making sure remote communities and regional centres have access to critical foods and essential services, which is incredibly important.

Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development staff are doing a mammoth job. I have heard from them that they are getting out when it is safe to do the assessment work for transitioning people back to their homes.

Across the Northern Territory public service there is significant work happening, and I thank everyone for the work they are doing. It is noticed, and we are all thankful.

The motion also looks at humanitarian support organisations, local businesses and community members. I do not think I have heard of a single organisation in a flood-affected area that has not been offering support or been out trying to help. Whether it is one of the amazing Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, land councils, local businesses, the shops or the council, they are all out there doing an incredible job.

We are experiencing an extreme event, and we need to take a moment to acknowledge the difficulty they are all going through and respect that.

There is a Category 5 cyclone heading for Queensland, which is one of the strongest cyclones that the Bureau of Meteorology has seen in about 40 years. Once that crosses land and ends up in the Gulf of Carpentaria it could re-intensify before it makes landfall on Territory soil. I offer my support and thanks to all the recovery and emergency management teams. They are all doing a brilliant job. Having to have to gear up and anticipate this is an added pressure for them. The Bureau of Meteorology will soon start predicting the flood and cyclone pathway, and that will be important for us to look at and speak to everyone about.

I give a shout-out and acknowledgement to the Aboriginal Interpreter Service across the Territory. I have seen firsthand this week that the government is starting to use the Aboriginal Interpreter Service for Secure NT messaging. It was done in Western Arrernte, Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara and Luritja, advising people about the events in Central Australia causing those large-scale rainfalls in isolation.

The rain over the weekend has left about 23 remote communities isolated. I acknowledge the hard work that has been done there by the critical goods team. I have been in contact with the Chief Minister, checking in—I am thankful for that work—to make sure that when something comes up, it is raised with and addressed by the critical goods team. Charter flights are going to remote communities and dropping off a couple of hundred pallets of food to keep people well fed with plenty of tucker. They are working with the health centres to do that.

People across the Territory are frustrated. I understand that; we have all experienced that at some point. There are great teams such as the Infrastructure NT team that do Territory road updates. They do an amazing job. It is challenging when we cannot get to particular parts of the Territory and see the road conditions to update the Road Report. Safety comes first for everyone. We must make sure our public servants are always safe and that we are not putting them in harm's way.

Everyone in the Chamber has spoken about the work moving forward during this emergency; there is significant work happening. We are preparing for a potential cyclone to make landfall on Territory soil in the imminent future. This is not meant to scare people. I remind everyone to have cyclone kits ready and to make sure we have all the supplies ready to work through that.

We have spoken about organisations, emergency services teams and local councils. The three local councils in the Gwoja electorate—MacDonnell Regional Council, Central Desert Regional Council and Victoria Daly Regional Council—have done a phenomenal job in responding to the floods and working with the NT Government and the Commonwealth to support and stand up operations.

Flooding is no stranger to Gwoja; we have experienced large-scale floods in Pigeon Hole (Nitjpurru), Daguragu, Kalkarindji, Yarralin and Lajamanu. Recently we had communities such as Kintore, Docker River, Nyirripi, Papunya and Haasts Bluff cut off for long periods of time. These teams are doing significant work, and I am incredibly thankful for that.

I have heard stories of locals opening their homes to people in the Katherine region who have lost their homes, offering them a bed, time to shower or a cup of tea. Families from across the bush have opened their doors to surrounding communities experiencing this extreme flooding and said, 'You are more than welcome to come stay with us and seek some support'. As I said yesterday, that is the Territory we all know and love. The minute something negative is going on, our fellow Territorians open the door, welcome people in and plan to overcome the situation. That is what we are seeing unfold. As the Chief Minister said, we are in the emergency stage of many events in communities across the Territory and are heading into the recovery stage.

The broad definition of 'emergency services workers' in this motion encapsulates so many people. Hardworking Corrections staff have stood up operations as part of the emergency management response. We have seen people setting up Foskey Pavilion at the showgrounds, getting that infrastructure ready. The Member for Katherine spoke about a team heading to Katherine to help with efforts there. This important work is happening across the Territory, and it is moments like these when we are reminded that 'community' is not just a word; it is real action, and it means something when we see it all come together.

This presents an opportunity to look at how we work with Telstra to improve connectivity. Some of their lines cross rivers and culvert crossings that have been washed away. We have to acknowledge that this will take a long time; it will not be an easy project. Once the waters subside, the infrastructure teams can get back to doing road assessments and the housing crews can assess housing operations. Then we will understand the sheer volume of work before us.

It is a big task that we need to continue working on together. I give a shout-out to the local people in Central Australia—I am sure it is the same in Katherine—who took the opportunity to help with animal welfare, particularly in the bush. When we evacuate, we often do not have the capacity or capability to evacuate people's pets. We need to look at how to do that better.

Many people in Katherine and Alice Springs have been feeding animals separated from their owners. Animal shelters across the Territory have done a tremendous job during this time. Some community groups are calling for donations of dog food so that there is plenty of tucker for people's pets when we do food drops to communities. It can be quite traumatic to be separated from your animal companions.

There is a lot of work to be done. I do not think anyone in the Territory is unaffected by the sheer volume and magnitude of these events. My heart is with the people on the East Arnhem coast as they prepare for a cyclone watch in the next few days. It is important to highlight that through the work of the previous government and current government, with the remote housing program, homes in remote communities are now built to withstand a Category 5 weather event.

Flooding in the electorate of Gwoja is not uncommon; we experience it often. When Pigeon Hole (Nitjpurru), Kalkarindji and Daguragu were flooded, it was a mammoth effort. We brought people to the showgrounds and Foskey. We did the work to help them stand it up.

No system is perfect; there is always room for improvement. What I saw during that time, and in the last few months, was the sheer commitment and passion of emergency services workers, the general community and the public service. I do not imagine the poor buggers have had much sleep over the last few weeks; a few of them have probably been running on Red Bull. It is a challenging time, and they are doing a fantastic job; the people in the public service always do. That work is important. I thank them. The Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services; the ADF; SES; Red Cross; and departments of Children and Families; Housing; and Education, are all doing an incredible job to respond to these issues.

A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move an extension of time to continue my remarks.

Motion agreed to.

Mr PAECH: I acknowledge the Power and Water crew. They are a good crew who have been across the Territory and responded to the issues at Darwin River Dam. They worked around the clock to get that system up and running. They will be doing the hard work when we move to the recovery stage in communities to get the sewerage systems, bores and power systems up and running. It is important work. The Power and Water crew have done a great job.

The firies have also been involved. This has been a good opportunity to come together as a community.

We have seen a lot of local champions, particularly in the Katherine region. Trent de With gave important updates. People in Darwin River, Daly River, Palumpa and the Centre have been doing the hard work.

The Secure NT website had messaging in local languages—Western Arrernte, Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara and Luritja. That was well received; I spoke to constituents after I received the alert. The Chief Minister had let me know that big storms were heading that way, and I started talking to family. We then said to people, 'If you do not need to travel, do not travel'. A good reminder for people is, 'If the river is running, do not cross it because you will have emergency services teams deployed from another area to save you, and it is completely preventable. Do not cross the rivers if they are running. If you want to be a hero, that is great, but do not be a hero when we are going through these events and need our emergency services workers responding to unavoidable situations.'

We are working through it. It is a good time to give everyone an update, acknowledge all the stories and thank everyone who has been involved and done the hard work. The local police officers in the teams that were stood up in the north and south—reporting to the EOC—are doing a great job. They have been very responsive. Whenever I had an issue I flagged it with the Chief. Amazing police officers have reached out to say that they are on to it and to thank me for the update, and vice versa, so it is working.

I am sure if this parliament could stop the weather we would send away this possible cyclone, but none of us can control Mother Nature. The weather is unpredictably unpredictable. We just brace for it, support one another and get through this time of difficulty. Once the storms are through and the clear skies pop out we will rise and do the good work. We will show the rest of the country what that true-blue Territory spirit looks like.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to contribute to this General Business day motion brought forward by the Deputy Opposition Leader. Well done to him for recognising the hard work and vital contributions of all our emergency services workers. As the Member for Gwoja said, that definition is incredibly broad, especially when we are having the largest-scale flooding event in the Territory's history.

I am proud to be a Territorian and have the privilege of being not only the Chief Minister, but also the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and bushfires. My responsibilities directly support the hundreds of people who have provided the most incredible and heroic support to Territorians, no matter where they live. It has been a comprehensive response. Although some people, unfortunately, want to nitpick and pretend there is an obvious perfect solution—that every emergency service professional, police officer and the government have missed—there is not.

This is a time when everyone is coming together. We have seen extraordinary things happen. Katherine Hospital was able to evacuate all 32 of its patients and stand up an ED at the St John facility in the industrial area of Katherine. We saw people like Trent de With, a much-loved Katherine local boy—I call him a local boy, but we are the same age; we are grown up now, but always feel like we are local girls and boys—keeping his community up to date in the best possible way.

We saw the heroism of Senior Constable Ben Parfitt with the support of John Armstrong, the helicopter pilot who landed a chopper on the roof of a car three times in the middle of a flooded river. That is right—not just once, but three times. It was extraordinary. When I spoke to Ben and John they said, 'You know, it is just what you do; no big deal.' I told them they were heroes and that it was amazing. I said, 'What you have done is incredible', and their humble response was that we would all do that. To be the minister is the most incredible honour, and it is a privilege to work with people like these Territorians.

There are NTES volunteers across the Territory like Ron Green, who did a daring evacuation of a man and his dog when their home was overcome by floodwaters. We had the incredible Ben Hockey in Katherine mobilising 600 people to provide sandbags. We have Maurice Harland, I spoke to him—there was footage in the media yesterday of him in neck-deep waters at Donkey Flats. These are incredible acts of bravery. There

are Emily Griffiths and Lachlan Mikic, the paramedics who delivered baby Venice in the middle of the floodwaters. Beautiful Venice, aptly named at a time like this.

It goes on and on. Even Jason Scadden from Town & Country Butchers and Mel Doyle from Bluehole Prime Cuts came together. Town & Country was still underwater but had all that meat, so they formed a great partnership and opened the doors. They were run off their feet. People were so happy to get in and purchase meat.

We have seen the Red Cross and Salvos flying in from around the country providing important support. Wurli Wulunyung has done an amazing job. We have all the teachers—when we closed three schools in Katherine, a lot of people do not realise that the teachers scurried home to quickly make sure their house was okay, then came straight back and ran the shelters.

I spoke with a teacher on my first visit to Katherine, prior to the flooding, she said, 'My hubby is asking if I am coming home. He is saying we have to look after our house.' She told him, 'No, I have to be here supporting my community'.

As I have been going to Foskey, Marrara and around the Territory, the number of public servants putting up their hands from different agencies and corners of the Territory to say, 'Yes, give me a blue bib. I am here to support', has genuinely been incredible.

Chris Rowlands, Joshua Duncombe and Wade Hohn supplied boats for Florina Road. We have had ongoing acts of bravery and gestures of people doing the most incredible job.

It is not over. We have Cyclone Narelle in Queensland. If she would like to go somewhere else, that would be fine with all of us, but it does not look that way. Our teams are in full-swing preparation for whatever that event might look like.

I know for Territorians it seems imminent, but this is a weather situation that is evolving by the hour. A lot of different plans are being worked through to make sure we have it covered.

I had a terrific opportunity to meet with the women's committee of the Northern Land Council this morning. It was open to questions. I sat for 45 minutes to hear their concerns and answer questions. It was terrific to see the preparedness on community and awareness about the cyclone. I just saw Anindilyakwa Land Council publishing information, reminding people to be prepared and have three days' worth of water, food, blankets and clothing, a radio with a battery—all the important assets we need to keep ourselves and families as safe as possible during these incredible weather events.

On top of everything happening regarding the response, we have had nearly 1,500 rapid assessments of homes undertaken whilst I was in Darwin River visiting flood-affected people. I saw four different police teams assessing homes to better understand the impact on the ground and provide the requisite response and support.

We have ADF personnel in Katherine and 20 highly specialised emergency services management personnel from New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. I had the opportunity to meet most of them. They have been rotating shifts to provide valuable support to our emergency operation centre. We are incredibly grateful for that.

When I was at Marrara, visiting the community of Palumpa, the Salvos from Western Australia were there. We took a picture together and I sent it to Premier Roger Cook saying, 'Thank you very much for sending us your Salvos. They are doing an amazing job.'

We have had multiple teams in our emergency operations centre for many weeks. We have expanded that centre; we had to move some police units elsewhere. That is how extensive the scale of this operation is and how hard people are working. I thank each of them for the incredible dedication that they bring to this job and for their diligence and care. The preservation of life is above everything else.

We still have approximately 600 people in evacuation centres Territory-wide; a lot is being done to move people into the next stage. Every person we talk to just wants to go home; we can somewhat support that, depending on each unique situation.

Regarding the Opposition Leader's point during Question Time, fortunately in Jilkminggan houses were not inundated but the area is cut off at Donkey Flat. We have to watch that river system and, as soon as we can, we will get people home. It is our priority and the community's priority, so that is what we want to deliver.

It has been good working with the Members for Gwoja and Daly to share and resolve issues. That partnership has been important both ways. That is exactly how situations like this should be handled. There is no politics when it comes to emergency management and disasters; it is about making sure that everyone is safe and as comfortable as possible, keeping people informed and working through the plan for the next stage. Every day in the Territory there is a new sink thrown into the mix; as if it is not enough already, a new issue or storm will arise.

Yesterday I announced $100m for the flood recovery fund. This is important as it gives certainty to all Territorians, no matter where they live. We are committed to rebuilding and have allocated oversight of that money to the expertise of Ken Davies PSM, led by Minister Jo Hersey who is also a flood victim. We will make sure that funding hits the ground where it is needed the most—roads, bridges and other key infrastructure. That is where the $100m commitment will go, and it will make a big difference to people's lives.

We have a lot of programs in the works. There is a lot of pre-planning to make sure a jurisdiction is resilient in an emergency. We are proud to invest in agencies which deliver this support. We are expecting the delivery of two new flood rescue boats this year; that will expand our fleet.

We are looking closely, as part of our major appliance program, at the different types of tankers needed for the NT Fire and Rescue Service. Bushfires NT has three grassfire units coming early this year so that we are ready for the Dry Season, which, given the volume of rain, you can expect to be serious.

There are people being amazing every day like Bev Shuker. Her place was cut off, but not inundated, within days of the Darwin River flood. I rang Bev to check in and see how she was going; she was at the Bushfires—she is the captain of the local Bushfires NT committee—with all the team. People who had been flood impacted were there, not worrying about their homes and cleaning up, but worrying about preparing for bushfire season—if that does not say it all.

I give a big shout-out to Tom and Amanda. I was at their house with the Member for Goyder and the Deputy Chief Minister looking at the extensive damage. They are already planning for bushfire season; on Sunday they were at their Bushfires Council meeting.

I said to Bev, 'I do not want to interrupt you, but please give everyone the biggest shout-out. You are all doing an amazing job.'

This season started back in November with Cyclone Fina; we have been on quite the roll, but everyone in the Territory can be proud. Let us not forget the dozens of Power and Water workers who were at the dam. If you were to tell me there would be a flash flood that knocked out Darwin's water supply, you could blow me over with a feather, but that happened. Our Power and Water teams were incredible. The Treasurer was there in a four-wheel drive, getting out to the coalface, to see the impact firsthand and what that would mean for Territorians.

Those fellas got that backup generator firing. There were work crews building roads to bring in new generators. The sheer scale and mobilisation of that cannot be underestimated; it has been unbelievable. The important public messaging, as the Member for Gwoja said—the updates on Road Report NT, the Department of Health's boil water alerts and health warning reports, Secure NT being a dependable source of true information, and the Bureau of Meteorology alerts, support and information—it has been an enormous machine.

I thank every person who played their part in delivering that. Thank you never seems like enough, but for the people on the ground it means something. The conversations with the people I have spoken to, the true local heroes—it has been an amazing effort, and that will continue. I give my deepest heartfelt thanks as a Territorian, as your minister and as the Chief Minister. You have done an incredible job.

We are not out of the woods yet, but together we are stronger. Just like every other challenge that life has thrown at Territorians, we will come back from this stronger and will do it together. That is most important. I thank the Deputy Opposition Leader for bringing this motion and wholeheartedly support it.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Deputy Opposition Leader for bringing this General Business motion acknowledging the vital contribution of the emergency services workers, volunteer units, public servants, frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members to their communities and the Northern Territory, especially during periods of response to and recovery from natural disasters such as cyclones, floods and bushfires or other significant emergency events.

It has been quite the year for significant emergency events. We have had our fair share, and I think everyone in the Chamber can attest to the fact that we have seen enough rain. I know there is more on the way this weekend; I hope it decides to do a U-turn and go somewhere else, because I for one have had enough. I will not say what I really think about Cyclone Narelle.

Our government supports this motion to recognise our emergency services workers, volunteers, public servants, support organisations, local businesses and community members. In Katherine we have seen those people stand tall. Whether they are government department representatives, businesspeople or community members, they have done an extraordinary job over the last week or so in the Katherine electorate. I spoke at length yesterday to thank them, but now I will add to the long list of local legends.

We have faced several severe weather and flooding events this Wet Season. From Cyclone Fina in November last year to flooding in Central Australia—I have never known the Todd to flow so frequently in such a short amount of time—and the floods in Katherine, Beswick, Mataranka and Daly River, it has been one of the wettest Wet Seasons I can remember.

Before the Katherine flood came, residents were bunkering down in their homes and sheltering. When the waters rose, many people began helping with the rescues.

We had 500 people or so in the Katherine shelters; those shelters were at Katherine High School, MacFarlane Primary School and Casuarina Street Primary School. The Education department workers in those shelters did a fantastic job, along with the Children and Families support staff. Many other community organisations also provided support. At Casuarina Street Primary School there was a little op shop set up; it had different times for seeing children's or adult's clothing. The staff did a great job of supporting people in the shelter.

At the high school was the amazing ALO Ethan Woods-Alum. Ethan is a great, outgoing—I would say he is, maybe he thinks he is not—and community-minded person who is the best person for the Aboriginal liaison officer role at Katherine High School. Ethan did a tremendous amount of work. He was on the loudspeaker when we had disaster relief payments—more than 1,000 people were at the high school on the first day—directing traffic, as only Ethan could.

We saw emergency services rescuing vulnerable people. The Chief Minister spoke about the emergency rescue by John Armstrong, a local guy with a very steady steer of his helicopter, who happened to be flying around and saw a couple with their dog stranded in the crossing on Vic Highway. Annie Hesse and Ron Green from SES were called in, and Ben Parfitt and Jason Pottenger were the police in attendance. We saw the patience and expertise of Ben, the policeman who stood on the car roof and had to smash the windows to get the dog out—which would have been terrified in floodwaters—and the steady steer of John who landed on the Prado not once, but three times, to rescue the two adults and then Ben with the dog. I saw a video that the Member for Port Darwin shared yesterday of Ben reunited with that dog, and it was incredible. That dog jumped all over him like he was his long-lost best friend. Dogs have a good memory, and I think he was grateful for Ben to have rescued him.

We have also seen emergency service workers in Katherine, including Dave Travers from SES, Karl Kratschmer, Annie Hesse and Ron Green, who is a volunteer. Ron's young son Taitt is still in high school. The dedication and commitment of Taitt and of the whole Green family is incredible. Whether it be responding with emergency services, cadets at the RAAF base or with the ambulance, this family is embedded in our community. Ron is a teacher at St Joseph's Catholic College, and the Green family goes over and above in responding and being amazing community members in Katherine. That is what makes our community great—those long-term Territorians who pull together when the chips are down and put their best foot forward.

We have had many people out filling sandbags. It is fitting that Ben Hockey was on the front page of the *NT News* the other day. Ben has had so many calls from people. Even today, he messaged me because people are concerned about the weather events coming this weekend. They are preparing and making sure we have enough sandbags and volunteers to fill them. Ben has a business of his own that he has gone back to run, but throughout the flood, the volunteering and work that he did—with a team of numerous volunteers—was remarkable. I give a big shout-out to Ben and every one of those people who worked with Ben during the flooding.

Residents have evacuated from communities like Palumpa, Jilkminggan and Daly River. I spoke the other day about how I went to Mataranka to speak to Jilkminggan residents. Their situation is far from perfect, and they are far from home, but they are comfortable, well fed and they understand that as soon as they can get back across the Salt Creek bridge and the Donkey Flat crossing, they will be home.

It is a timely reminder to let people know: if it is flooded, forget it. Just yesterday on that Donkey Flat stretch there was a rescue effort for someone who was driving through floodwater. They put in harm's way not only themselves but also the rescuers and police.

There were 164 police, 38 NT Fire and Rescue and 32 NT Emergency Service personnel in the community of Katherine responding, supporting people through flood evacuations and helping people escape floodwaters.

There were people flying from Darwin to Katherine. Some of those people were emergency services personnel coming to change over shifts and give reprieve to NT Government staff working in shelters. The airport road and the Stuart Highway were flooded. The police helped them through the flooded roads in their high vehicles.

I went out one evening to do a welfare check on some people in Katherine, and I went through Bicentennial Road and Victoria Highway which were flooded. I could not believe that water was roaring across those roads like a river; it was incredible. We were going into town to do welfare checks on seniors who were in their houses by themselves—their carers could not get to them—just to make sure that they were safe. It was great to go in and reassure them that they are not alone and that people are looking out for them.

Over this time, many staff from the Western Australian, New South Wales and Victorian emergency service organisations came to support the Territory. That is fantastic when we have such a big emergency from the top to the bottom of the Territory and require emergency responses on a day-to-day basis.

The amazing ambulance officers Emily Griffiths and Lachlan Mikic drove through the flooded Bicentennial Road to get to Anastasia, the young lady who went into early labour. Her baby—I cannot remember how many weeks premature—Venice was born in the temporary emergency department at the ambulance station; it was amazing. They were then flown by CareFlight to Darwin.

I give a big shout-out to the staff who worked in the makeshift emergency department at the ambulance centre. Whether they were health staff or security staff, they all worked extremely well under trying conditions within a small area. They just made it work and made the best of the situation we were all dealt. I thank those people.

Renae Daniel from Katherine Hospital, although her house was not flooded, she could not get home. When she still could, she whipped home to get some clothing and stayed in town for the entire time, away from her family.

Paul Francis, the founder of the Humpty Dumpty Foundation, flew to Katherine last Thursday for a very important person in our community, who passed away in a tragic accident, Bob Holt. For as long as I have been in Katherine—36 years—Bob has been there. I am sure he has been there since the late 1960s. His kids were born and grew up there.

Bob was quite the entrepreneur in Katherine over many years and was known for his generosity. In the early days, for example, if you were in Aussie's Bistro in Katherine, having lunch with a group of friends and you tried to pay the bill they would say, 'No, that is already paid for'. It was not just me and my husband; it was also other people we knew. If Bob was somewhere for lunch, whether it be the Katherine Club or the golfie, he would pay for people's lunches just because he could. That was the kind of extremely generous man that Bob was.

He also supported the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. What he did over that time was incredibly generous, and he wanted all of the money he made in Katherine to stay in Katherine. That money went to Katherine Hospital. His last donation was $1m; hospital staff were overwhelmed with his generosity, and it has made such a difference.

Paul had been asked to deliver a eulogy at the celebration of Bob's life. Everyone who knew Bob would know that Bob had the last laugh, because he was never one for fanfare. He did not want to have a celebration of life, a funeral or anything like that. His celebration of life was planned for the Saturday morning when we were all evacuating and our houses were inundated with floodwaters. It was called off on the Friday. If Bob was looking down at everyone, he would be thinking it was perfect and exactly the way he wanted it to be.

While Paul was in town, he had an emergency medical episode of his own. He had to reach out to Renae Daniel from the hospital, who was staying at the same hotel, to ask her to support him and call the ambulance. Paul was then airlifted by CareFlight out of Katherine. He could not believe the support and services that were available, but he acknowledged just how difficult and trying the circumstances were for the Health staff who work in the Darwin emergency department and throughout the hospital. His message

for people is to be more patient with and kind to frontline staff, and I reiterate that. He sang the praises of the St John Ambulance service and CareFlight people who had to navigate flooded streets to reach him and transfer him to Darwin.

I came across many amazing businesspeople over that short time. George and Anu have owned Katherine Street Food for only 18 months. Their business was flooded, and they lost $15,000 to $20,000 worth of food. The power went out and all their pizza cartons went mouldy; they had to replace everything to get back up and going. They did not have insurance. Even when I went to support them once they reopened—I bought pizzas for the hospital staff when the hospital opened, and for the police staff who worked hard throughout that flooding period—they still wanted to give a discount for that. I said, 'Absolutely not. I am paying for that.' The generosity of businesses to give back to the community is incredible.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mrs HERSEY: Karl Kratschmer from Katherine SES was rescuing people. He even rescued a little joey at one point. Many pets were stressed out during the flood; my own two dogs looked stressed as the water came up.

There were neighbours checking on people's pets when they could not get back to their homes. Laura Kimber from Casuarina Street Primary School posted on her socials that her new neighbour, who she did not know all that well, offered to check on her house and pets to make sure they were okay whilst she tended to the shelter at the school. This is all whilst her own house was being flooded. That reiterates the amazing support and strength of our community in Katherine. It is something we are proud of.

As the minister for OCPE and Public Service, I am proud of the workforce that has stood up shelters and supported residents in those shelters such as Foskey Pavilion in Darwin. They are evacuating residents from Nauiyu. Whether it is Stephen Hill and Laura Lymer running the shelter at Beswick, Telka at Mataranka School, Nick Lovering at Katherine High School, Nicolle Gadd at Casuarina Street Primary School or Philip Russell at MacFarlane Primary School, all those public servants—the Children and Families workers and everyone who came in—have done such an amazing job. These times of need really bring out the best in people.

I give a big shout-out to a few more people who have gone above and beyond in our community over the last couple of weeks, including the One Set team and the Katherine Game Fishing Club for ferrying residents over two flooded sections of Florina Road and moving them between the creeks in buggies, cars or whatever. I thank Alison and Jake from the Katherine Club, who did the meals for police, NTES and the St John's temporary emergency department. I thank Ben Hockey and the team from Hockey's Northern Services and Andrew and Cassie Russell-Pell from Allied Pickfords.

Trent de With found his niche with his amazing community commentary through the flood. He is a great advocate for Katherine, not only in promoting tourism through his Rod & Rifle fishing shop, but also just as a great community person. He and David Reed are members of the Katherine Community Projects Association. That group does a fantastic job throughout the year to support our community, whether it be the Christmas lights, lighting up the springs or events on the railway bridge. The Katherine Community Projects Association really does a fantastic job.

I thank Bec and Sarah and Alex Poulton, community members who volunteered to support everyone when they were flooding. I thank the Health staff who worked tirelessly under Renae Daniel to get the hospital up and running in such a short amount of time and the cleaners who cleaned out that hospital ready for everyone to go back in. It is now at full capacity again.

Thank you to Chris from Rowlands Quarries, Joshua Duncombe and Wade Hohn, for their tinnies on Florina Road; Andrew and Jenny McAllan from the Heritage church; Anthony Barford and Sandra Mortimer from the Salvation Army; and Niall and Michelle Gibson, the Flying Padre, who supported people in the shelters.

Thanks to Telka, the Principal of Mataranka School, and Barb from Children and Families in Tennant Creek who were in Mataranka supporting people. Barb from the team in Tennant Creek was fantastic. There were also staff from Alice Springs Children and Families supporting them.

It was great to touch base with Toni Kutschki from Roper River Transport, have a conversation and see how they are going. Her son, Kain, had been taking amazing drone footage over the Roper River area, Salt Creek bridge and Donkey Flat. She sent me footage to put on my social media. Thank you to Michael Kutschki who was working at the supermarket. A big shout-out goes to Judy Kutschki who has recently achieved 50 years in Mataranka with her business. The strength of these people staying in these little communities is incredible. It is what keeps the Territory ticking and makes our communities that much stronger and better.

People from Daly River are in Foskey Pavilion and people from Palumpa are at Marrara. We have cleared out of the Katherine shelter now. Mataranka Primary School still has 88 people from Jilkminggan, and in the town hall there are 72 people from Jilkminggan. I give a big shout-out to the staff from Roper Gulf Regional Council—David the CEO and Luke and Cindy Haddow—for supporting the Roper Gulf staff to look after people in the community.

I thank the ladies from Jilkminggan who cooked up a storm before the extra food services came in did a great job. Thank you to Stevie, a guy who drives the school bus at Jilkminggan and works at Sunrise afterwards. He then does other volunteering. He is such a great, strong community member. He said that he is originally from Borroloola many years ago. He is a strong advocate and local person on the ground at Jilkminggan. Whilst their homes were not flooded, they are all waiting extremely patiently to go home but were understanding and appreciative of the check of Salt Creek bridge. Its integrity is good; it is just the pavement that needs work. They were appreciative of the food that was dropped in to make sure their dogs are well looked after.

I express my sincere gratitude to every volunteer and staff member across NTFES for their extraordinary efforts during the flooding events affecting not only the Big Rivers area, but also Central Australia and the Top End. The Territory Emergency Operations Centre continues to operate at a high tempo, and we know that we are not out of the woods yet.

I hope that Narelle finds somewhere else to go and wreak havoc because we do not need her here.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Daly for bringing on this important motion, which he amended. They were important amendments because he needed to expand the coverage of it. The motion is:

> *That this Assembly acknowledges the vital contribution of emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants and frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members to their communities and the Northern Territory, especially during periods of response to and recovery from natural disasters such as cyclones, floods and bushfires or other significant emergency events.*

Haven't we had our share of natural disasters in recent times? We have had cyclones and the flooding event from the Daly, and now it has come back again in a bigger and worse way. It has been across the Territory including in Central Australia—everywhere. We have had heavy rains in the Top End, although we probably have not suffered so much in Darwin to the extent of others, but everyone across the Territory has been impacted by this. We have to thank so many people across the Territory.

As I have said before, I have a personal interest in a lot of this, particularly given my son is a paramedic—a first responder. His partner is a CareFlight nurse too. I have two first responders close to me who get involved, and I fully respect their normal everyday work. First responders—be they police, ambulance or fire brigade—also step up in these emergency situations, so I thank them.

We all have due respect for our first responders, and if we do not, we should. I find that in emergency situations, people from all walks of life rise to the challenge of helping other Territorians, and they come out of the woodwork to do so. They do not blow their trumpets; they automatically get up and say they will pitch in and help. That inspires me.

Our resilience and the way we put politics aside and come together to say, 'This is a need to help our fellow human beings' is what makes us feel good about being a Territorian. That is inspiring.

The Member for Barkly mentioned in one of his speeches—I will give an example from the weekend. Many people know Tejinder Singh from the Sikh Family Food Van. When I first came to parliament, I took the acting Deputy Speaker, the Member for Wanguri, and Member for Barkly out to help Tejinder feed the vulnerable people around Karama and Malak.

We saw how it did not matter who was there; it had nothing to do with race. If people were vulnerable and hungry, Tejinder would give them good, freshly cooked, free food, water and sometimes a bit of banana cake.

He has been doing that for about 15 or 16 years. He has been recognised by federal governments, Territory governments of different persuasions and local government. I have seen him involved in awards for volunteer of the year. He once again stood up for this. In the earlier Daly flood, the one before this emergency, I went and helped him pack food. We went to Foskey Pavilion at that time and helped deliver fresh hot food. I acknowledge that I saw the Member for Daly and Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, and I think just prior Minister Cahill was there as well. She was leaving as I was arriving. We went to help deliver food.

This time it was even bigger; he stepped up again and said, in addition to what he normally does, 'I will do runs to Foskey Pavilion as well as to Marrara'. This required more food and a lot more contributions and so on, so he reached out. I can publicly say I was willing to contribute out of my electorate allowance, and I put in $1,000 to help him. I also reached out to the private sector to come and join us, and they did. You do not have to do everything by government; use the whole community.

One of my colleagues from Practical Safety Australia put in at least $500, and another colleague of mine did not put in cash but bought a heap of those little juices, or poppers, and helped pack the food. They were cooking early on a Saturday morning and had big food containers with a lovely curry and rice. When they pack the food, they have to pack it in containers, and it has to be hygienic with everything at temperature. The Health department obviously does not want bad food going out. He meets all those criteria.

It is a labour-intensive job putting the rice and everything in the containers, then sealing it and getting it all packed. On the Saturday we went out. I ran into the Minister for Health who was there at the same time. We delivered food; I believe he delivered 345 hot meals last Saturday between the two evacuation centres, from Foskey to Marrara. That is a big effort; it shows that when people come together and use the private sector as well as the community to help, that is the way. That inspires me. I give a big shout-out to them.

I was there on the weekend with Minister Edgington who was thanking the government staff from his own agency of Housing and Local Government, the Department of Children and Families and a range of people. Tejinder does not just feed the evacuees; he also offered food to the volunteers there. There were the volunteers from the Red Cross—we met a range of them, and they enjoyed getting that hot food. We met Dave from Bendigo, who volunteered his time and came up with the Red Cross.

We also saw the Salvation Army in full force doing a lot of things. There was a range of community groups—Wilson Security, all of them—working together. It is about pitching in and working together.

I also noticed the minister for Education talk about the schools that had stepped up to help some of the kids at the evacuation centres, trying to give them a bit of a normal life by going back to school. One of those schools was Karama, so I thank them for pitching in as well.

We are not just talking about floods; I go back to cyclone cleanups. I remember with Cyclone Fina, walking down the road, and there were trees all across the roads. Neighbours were getting together and saying, 'We cannot afford to wait for emergency services to come along. We will get out there with our chainsaws and clear the roads, which frees up our emergency services to do other things they need to attend to.' That is when the community comes together. They work together for a common good.

I heard the Member for Gwoja's speech. I thought that was a fantastic speech. He covered the right areas, pitched it right and gave thanks to all the right people. I have been impressed with the Member for Gwoja over the last week or two. I do not know what has happened; there has been a bit of a transformation, but I have to give him credit.

He raised an important issue in one of his discussions this week when he was looking at the follow-on impacts of these disasters like floods: what will be the impact on insurance premiums? I thought that was good. We need to think about that because insurance premiums will go up for the most vulnerable people and those hit by the worst of it. I encourage the insurance industry to say, 'Hang on, do not come down too hard on these people'. Yes, we have to be more resilient. We may have to use the infrastructure fund to make our communities more resilient and take the pressure off those insurance premiums. I thought that was a good issue, and I acknowledge it.

I think it was the Member for Daly who asked the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure for an update on the progress of these remote roads. It may have been the Member for Gwoja. He got a fantastic answer: 'This is where we are with Santa Teresa, and this is where we are with this'. That is what we needed. It was

the Member for Gwoja; I do not want to give everything to the Member for Daly. I think we need more of this type of questioning because the community wants to hear these facts.

The Member for Daly raised a good question of the minister for public Housing. He asked, 'What about rent relief for public housing tenants in flood affected areas?' The minister said, 'Yes, we are looking at it straightaway. We are doing it.' These are positive questions. If you want to see something really sensible from Question Time, then these are the type of questions we need. I welcome them.

I wish the other opposition members might take a leaf out of that book. They will get there eventually.

I thank everyone involved, all Territorians, because it is times like this when you park it, come together and step up. It is the unsung heroes who come out of the woodwork. They are the ones who modestly—they do not even tell you what they are doing, they just do it. I particularly thank the volunteer groups; people like Tejinder Singh and Sikh Family Food Van. That is an example of what I think is true charity.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, during this unprecedented level of natural disaster and flooding we are truly seeing the best of people. We are seeing members of the community come together and rally around each other. There is no better example of this than the Darwin rural area, Darwin River Tavern, where a donation room was set up. I pay credit to Lorelle, Kaz, Allie the manager of Darwin River Tavern, and all the volunteers and people who have donated everything from toilet paper and hygiene packs to plastic tubs, and a wide variety of clothes for those who have lost everything.

When I visited the recovery centre with the Chief Minister and the Member for Nelson, we helped staff from AAOK Lakes Resorts & Caravan Park donating linen and bedding, and doing their part to support the rural community in this tough time. The room was filled with donations of kids' toys, blankets, clothing and everything you might need to help those who have lost everything in these floods.

The Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigade has been helping to coordinate donations, checking in on people and making sure the rural people are safe. They deserve to be commended.

I acknowledge the Member for Daly and the staff in the Daly electorate office in Berry Springs who are helping to coordinate the larger items of donations such as whitegoods and mattresses. They have become a point of contact for people in need of replacement furniture to get by while they wait for insurance, if they have it. For those who want to do good and help their community, if they have a spare mattress, bed frame or couch, they are making sure those goods end up with the people who need them.

The Chief Minister, the Member for Nelson and I visited people who were flooded in Darwin River. We heard stories of how quickly the water rose. We met with Wayne and Charmaine from Berry Springs Pet Meat who showed us where the Darwin River flows next their property. Wayne recalled that he had lunch, and an hour later when he came back the water was lapping at the gardens. They were lucky in the sense there was no loss of life or animals. However, they sustained substantial damage to their property, their house, the granny flat that Wayne's father lives in—a 94-year-old man who has lost much of what he had—and stock, as their freezers flooded.

The community rallied behind them—as with many other Territorians who were flooded across the Territory—to make sure they felt supported. People were volunteering to help clean up the mess. As we travelled around, we visited Tom and Matt, and other residents in the rural area. They told us stories of people getting in contact, offering to help. Although there are many proud residents in the rural area who do not like asking for help, at times like this it is important we all come together.

I have spoken with countless people affected by the floods in the Top End—in Bees Creek, Humpty Doo, Elizabeth Valley, Acacia and Noonamah as well as Berry Springs and Darwin River. The entirety of the rural area has not experienced a flood event like this in quite some time. I have been a rural boy for most of my life and I cannot recall a Wet Season quite like this. We had an early cyclone in November, which saturated the ground and I do not believe it has had the chance to dry out since. All the water that is coming down in storms—and potentially with this new cyclone coming from Queensland in a week's time—has nowhere to go but run off.

I give a special shout-out to Litchfield Council and Councillor Kris Civitarese for sharing information and making sure flood-affected victims can dump mattresses, whitegoods and other large items at the tip for free until mid-April. Litchfield Council is doing its part, and its crews are out on the ground—much like the DLI contractors are—repairing our roads. They are doing a tremendous job.

When the Darwin River Dam pump station was inundated, public servants were out there that evening trying to get it back online. The Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure went there to see firsthand what was going on and to make sure every possible lever could be pulled. They were successful in getting the Darwin River pump station back up and running to make sure the townsfolk who do not have bores could drink water again.

I also give a shout-out to the public servants and Red Cross volunteers who were at Bushfires NT over the weekend—I believe they are there today as well—helping people access the emergency relief payments, giving them a shoulder to cry on and a chance to tell their stories. It was quite emotional going there on the weekend with the Member for Nelson to talk to the residents who have lost everything and learn how grateful they are for the support they are receiving.

This year will be a big fire season. First comes the rain, then comes the growth, grass and gamba. When we have a Wet Season like this it means a lot of the areas that the volunteer bushfire crews would like to burn early in the season will be inaccessible for much of the next couple of months. We will end up with huge fuel loads across the rural area and the Top End, as well as down towards Alice Springs—which is green at the moment—and across the Barkly, Katherine and Daly regions. Tremendous fires are likely to affect the Territory.

I give a shout-out to the volunteer bushfire brigades. I had the privilege of going to their AGMs recently. I give special recognition to the Acacia Hills Volunteer Bushfire Brigade and its outgoing captain, David Wills, for his exceptional leadership and to the retiring committee members who have given their time and tireless efforts which yielded outstanding results for the brigade and the Acacia Hills community.

The new captain is Kim Fox, the interim treasurer is Sheree Mulreany and the interim secretary is Deb Kakoschke. When I say ‘interim’ these people have put up their hand to continue. They would very much like to focus on their own lives and step down from these committees, but they know that no-one is quite ready to step up to the plate. They are making sure the paperwork continues and the great work of the committee is supported. The public officer is Gary Kohlman, a fantastic individual. The general committee members are Chad Marriot, Kim Worthington, Charles Vance and Vicki Foster.

Another great brigade that will protect the rural area this Dry Season is the Elizabeth Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. This is the first time in 40 years that the brigade welcomes a new captain, with Di Tynan having served in that role for four decades. There are no words to adequately articulate the dedication and effort that Di has given the brigade and the wider Elizabeth Valley community. Taking the brigade from a single-trailer operation to what it is today has required tireless advocacy and hard yakka.

Di has helped protect rural communities during bushfires and other emergencies, organising volunteers, working with landowners on early season mitigation burns and mentoring new brigade members, particularly younger volunteers. She has also supported residents during cyclones and flooding. She has been blowing up my phone the last few days to make sure that all the rural residents she knows have been affected by the flooding can access support. Di has played a key role in fundraising and community activities that strengthened the brigade’s capabilities.

For Di the most rewarding part of the role has been mentoring young people and watching them grow into confident firefighters. Di will continue to volunteer as a fire warden and on the fire front and support the new committee and brigade members.

The new captain is Jake Porkorny; deputy captain, Ryan McVitty; treasurer, Ben Hardwick; secretary, Brigid Robertson; public officer, Rachel Pearce; and general committee members, Paul Porkorny, Michelle Nicolson, Susan Statham and Matthew Worthington. Well done to all those people in the Elizabeth Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade who will be making sure that all residents are safe throughout the Dry Season.

I also shout out to the Point Stuart Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, which encapsulates a large geographical area around Point Stuart. The Point Stuart Volunteer Bushfire Brigade held its AGM at the Point Stuart Wilderness Lodge, and it is one of the few AGMs that I can convince my fiancée, Mel, to come to with me. It is always a great time with great people, and it is a lovely drive there. The captain is Rod; deputy captain, Max; treasurer, Bernadette; secretary, Sarah; public officer, Donna; and general committee members, Allie, Patrick, Katharine and Gav.

Next-door to Point Stuart Volunteer Bushfire Brigade is the Marrakai Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. I was at its AGM two weeks ago, when the flooding was hitting Katherine. Captain Gav got stuck—he was coming back from Kununurra—in Katherine for the weekend before the roads opened again. He was down there doing his best to help the people of Katherine. The deputy captain is Robert; treasurer, Bee; secretary, Brad; public officer, Lorelle; and general committee members, Sandy, Roger and Glenn.

I quickly mention the Virginia/Bees Creek Volunteer Fire Brigade which hosted an Awards Recognition Night last night, whilst I was stuck in this Chamber. I give a special shout-out to Claire from the brigade, who received her National Medal for 15 years of dedicated service last night and recognition for her deployment to assist with the 2022–23 New South Wales floods. Congratulations also to Tilly and Chris who were recognised for their contributions during the New South Wales flood response.

While we are on the topic of praising our volunteers, emergency services personnel and those who respond, I give a special shout-out to the Top End K9 search and rescue dog training team. The Member for Nelson and I recently volunteered to be fake lost and then found by the dogs. Search and rescue dog trainers need to rotate volunteers for the dogs to find so that they are looking for a scent, not one particular person's scent. It is interesting work and important that people volunteer to be found by these dogs.

The Member for Nelson and I were allocated a section of the bush to get lost in. I did a much better job at hiding than the Member for Nelson; it took 20 minutes to find him whilst it took an hour-and-a-half to find me. The team uses apps so that you do not really get lost; I could see the dogs going everywhere in the search area, except for where I was. I sat there watching TikToks on my phone with my headphones on. It was a pleasant day sitting in the rain and waiting for the dogs to find me. Kirsten Beames and her pup managed to find me.

Just a few days later, we heard that the SAR K9 team located a 69-year-old lady who went missing off Channel Island Road, so it works, and it is important.

If anyone would like to go lie down in the pine forest for a couple of hours, I am more than happy to help coordinate some volunteering. With explosives dogs or cadaver dogs, you can hide scents, but for search and rescue dogs looking for someone who is still alive, they are looking for a breath or a scent you cannot replicate using technology. It was worthwhile and they were successful in their program.

I also acknowledge, not just in the rural area but the across the Territory, there has been an amazing standup of public servants and volunteers. From the floods in Alice Springs—your home town, Madam Speaker—to Katherine, Daly River, Palumpa and across the western side of the Territory, the public servants who volunteered put on the blue hi-vis and got to work. They have done an incredible job. My understanding is that there has been zero loss of life despite these unprecedented weather events, which is a testament to their capabilities and community spirit toward making sure no-one is left behind. That is worth celebrating.

It is a shame that property, houses and other things have been damaged, but you can replace a couch and a house; you cannot replace people. It is important to acknowledge that no-one has been left behind. Even in Darwin River, neighbours were checking on neighbours, friends were checking on friends. People were driving out, risking their own wellbeing to make sure elderly residents could get to safety; that is important.

The level of support we have seen from local businesses across the Territory in housing people and making sure they have supplies—the donations have been incredible. Just the other day I was talking to a man from a company. He volunteered to do some mosquito spraying and pest control around Foskey Pavilion. He was also trying to find a contact to go help, free of charge, with some of the pest mitigation needed in communities inundated with water. Everyone came together as proud Territorians to make sure we look after each other.

We have heard the story and seen the footage of the police sergeant rescuing not only the people in a flooded vehicle that had gone off-track, but also their dog. I have no idea how you get a dog out of a flooded car and onto the roof without losing the dog, but that was incredible to see. I pay full respect to the pilot of that chopper, who had a fantastic radio interview. When he was asked on the ABC, 'How do you land a helicopter in a flood on a vehicle?' He said, 'It is no different from landing in the middle of the field; just don't touch the water.'

The spirit of the community coming together is what makes the Territory such a special place. I do not know anyone in the Territory who does not know someone affected by these recent weather events. Not one Territorian is watching this cyclone come across from Queensland and thinking that we need a bit more rain this Wet Season.

I pay credit to the fantastic emergency services workers, volunteers, public servants, frontline workers, humanitarian support organisations, local businesses and community members, who have all come together in this difficult time for the Territory.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the extraordinary Territorians who stand on the front line of crisis: our emergency services workers, volunteers, public servants, humanitarian organisations, local

businesses and community members. We can sit in this parliament and talk about it all we want, but the real work is happening out there. I cannot express enough how much I thank anybody on the ground, lending a hand to support us during this crisis.

I thank the Member for Daly for raising this important motion at this appropriate time.

Together, all emergency response crews form the backbone of our response and recovery during the toughest of times. We are again seeing how vital their efforts are across the Northern Territory; widespread flooding has impacted many communities. Like the Member for Goyder just said, I do not know anybody who has not been affected by it. Roads are cut, families are displaced and countless residents are undertaking the slow and difficult process of cleaning up, repairing damage and rebuilding—some are yet to get home to do that.

As we watch the horizon for a possible cyclone in the coming weeks, our Territory's resilience will be tested and, once again, Territorians will rise to meet the challenge. Our emergency and frontline workers are already stretched. The coordination, long hours and difficult decisions that they face take professional skill and personal sacrifice. I know this firsthand having supported local emergency responses in the past; I assisted during the emergency flood response in 2023 at the former quarantine facility in Howard Springs.

I have seen the pressure that these situations place on our staff—the emotional weight, the exhaustion, and the impact it has on their families at home. They do not do it for recognition, but because they deeply care about the people they serve. To our members of the emergency services, police, fire and the SES: your courage in the face of danger and your commitment to keeping others safe is extraordinary.

The Member for Goyder was talking about the canine search and rescue teams; I acknowledge the work they do. When there is a weather event, such as rain, it makes it hard for the dogs to do their job. When it is raining it creates an additional layer of difficulty for the dogs; they cannot always smell the scent because it gets washed away quickly. For the dogs to locate the Members for Goyder and Nelson in that weather was good work. As many know in this Chamber, my husband is in the police force and was previously a dog operations officer (dog handler). I have seen many videos of him acting as the training target for attack dogs, running away from them in his police uniform as they chase him down. I know the work the trainers do; I appreciate their work, as well as the volunteers who support those crews in their training.

The emergency services crews work in the heat or the rain, often in the dark, with little rest and even less thanks. They know that lives depend on the work that they do. They embody professionalism and courage in the truest forms, and they embody what it is to be a Territorian.

Our volunteers deserve equal praise. In many regional and remote communities, it is the local SES units, the bushfire brigades or St John Ambulance crews who are first on the ground. They might be a neighbour, a small business owner or a teacher, but when the call comes, they show up. They do so without pay, without expectation and often at great personal cost. Their contribution is the lifeblood of the rural emergency responses. Like many in this Chamber have already said tonight: if it is flooded, forget it. Please, members of the public, do not put our emergency services or response crews at risk by crossing flooded roads, rivers, bridges or anything.

Behind the scenes our public servants are also there with frontline staff, and they carry a critical load. The coordination centres, logistics teams, educators and community officers who organise evacuations, distribute information and provide welfare support are the glue that holds our emergency system together. When shelters open it is often these same staff members finishing their day jobs and jumping straight into night shifts to help our most vulnerable. They are comforting children, supporting families and maintaining calm amid the chaos.

Humanitarian and community organisations such as Red Cross, Salvation Army and Territory Families staff are the next wave of support ensuring that, once immediate danger has passed, people still have somewhere to sleep, something to eat and somebody to talk to. They help Territorians begin the difficult process of recovery and resilience.

We also owe thanks—many have talked about this tonight—to local businesses that step up. They donate food, offer equipment and open their doors as safe hubs. They keep our communities connected. Their quick action helps with not only the practicalities of a response but also restoring a sense of normalcy and hope. The everyday heroes are community members who knock on a neighbour's door to check on them, clear drains before the floodwaters come, lend a hand at the local evacuation centre, fill sandbags or simply offer

a word of kindness and represent the heart of the Territory. It is their spirit of cooperation and compassion that turns a disaster response into a community effort.

Recognising these workers and volunteers is more than just expressing gratitude; it is about acknowledging the real weight of what they do—the time away from loved ones, the emotional toll and the resilience required to keep going in the face of repeated crises.

It is also about ensuring that, as a government, we continue to invest in training, equipment, mental health support and community preparedness so that every Territorian—professional or volunteer—feels supported as we face an increasingly unpredictable climate.

As flooding continues to disrupt lives and as another potential cyclone looms, we must remind ourselves that the strength of the Northern Territory does not lie in its infrastructure or its institutions; it lies in its people. Time and again Territorians have shown that when challenges come, we respond with courage, compassion and cooperation.

I pay tribute to every worker, volunteer and community member who has given their time, skills and heart to keeping the Territory safe. I thank their families for the sacrifices they make. I reiterate my deep respect for the dedication that drives them. The work they do is not just service; it is an act of love for their communities and for the Northern Territory. For that, I thank them.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I too thank the Member for Daly for bringing this important General Business motion to the House.

In times of need and struggle is when we see the best of the Territory. People from all walks of life are turning up and helping, whether in Katherine, Daly or Darwin River. We saw it a couple of months ago when Cyclone Fina was at our doorstep. The vital contribution from the emergency workers and volunteers has been extraordinary.

I take a moment to reflect on the situation they go into—seeing the devastation and meeting the people who have lost everything; they are difficult circumstances to work in. Our frontline responders and local volunteers—as we heard about today—were cooking up barbecues, bringing water, helping with shelters and chatting with people. There were a couple of counsellors onsite and Red Cross. I thank them for turning up.

In November there was an early Wet Season cyclone. I thank the Chief Minister for acting swiftly in coming to the Tiwi Islands to talk to people about the uncertainty. There was a power cut there. We do not have an SES group on the ground, just the police, local members and shire workers. Everyone banded together to cut and remove trees from roadways or to help put up fences. At that time, I saw that the Member for Blain was cutting trees down at Moulden—my sister lives in that electorate.

People from all walks of life turn up and help, even in some of the most difficult and dangerous conditions; that is what makes the Territory a great place. The Member for Katherine was deeply affected. To turn up this week is a big feat. As we heard in her speech, it is a difficult time for her.

We have an unprecedented Wet Season, and we are unsure of what will happen in the next couple of weeks. I thank the ministers for going to Canberra and fighting for funding for the Territory. I do not envy that job. We are all now on watch. We have a few big weeks coming up due to the Wet. I wish them good luck and offer our help. If you need anything come and see me in my electorate, in Jabiru, and I will point you in the right direction and get the SES teams on the ground to help.

The Mary River in the Member for Goyder's electorate heads into my electorate. It was flooded, and that was being pushed out from the Katherine and Daly floods. People had trouble getting back home for a couple of days. That was the grand final weekend. A couple of teams from Jabiru were playing in the grand final so they had to take the back road. They were uncertain what that Pine Creek back road would be like; there was a couple of roads there that were a bit dodgy.

I give a shout-out to the local businesses. I think the guy from Katherine Rod & Rifle is becoming an internet sensation—a hero. He was riding down the streets and videoing on his bike, giving a real-life timeline and story on what was happening in that town, which helped a lot.

I give a shout-out to the principals who are staying in the schools. Was it in your electorate, Member for Arnhem, there was a principal who stayed back to watch the water rise and give …

Ms Uibo: At Wugularr (Beswick).

Mr BROWN: At Wugularr—which is hard, especially when the family is not there.

People are lending their boats to get to and from certain points—that is personal equipment. People are using personal chainsaws and their own equipment to help out in the community. I thank them.

I give a shout-out to the hospital staff and healthcare workers. These are difficult times and, hopefully, the hospital at Katherine stays safe in the next few weeks.

I give a shout-out to those who are visiting the shelters in Darwin. The Member for Karama was there a few times with colleagues. Like I stated earlier, the mental health impacts and worry for their home communities—especially for those at Daly River who do not know what they are going back to—make it difficult to sit down for a chat and put a smile on someone's face. This is when Territorians come together. It does not matter if people are from different electorates or different walks of life; everyone turns up to say g'day.

In moments like these, we are reminded that community is not just a word; it is action. It is compassion, and it is people choosing to show up for each other.

We are not out of the woods yet, with Cyclone Narelle predicted to come to the Territory. I am giving a word of caution to get people prepared for the week ahead, especially those living in the gulf and the line it is going through. It looks like it will go through the Roper and Katherine areas—I hope that is not the case—when it crosses the top of Queensland on the weekend.

Although there have been recovery efforts, many communities are still uncertain about the timeline of when they are going back home. Those staying in shelters know that everyone is doing the best they can. Hopefully in the not-so-distant future, the water will have gone out to sea and run off so that people can go back home. Hopefully the roads are good and that makes it quicker for people to get home to their community and families, because this is the worst—most of us have lived in the Territory a while—Wet Season flooding, at least that I have ever seen.

A big shout-out goes to all the people turning up throughout the Territory—whether it be in Tiwi Islands, West Arnhem, Daly, Katherine, Darwin River—and to all the SES crews turning up every day and helping.

Mr CHARLS (People, Sport and Culture): Madam Speaker, I support the motion acknowledging the vital contribution of emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants and frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members for their contributions to the Northern Territory, especially during periods of response to and recovery from natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods and bushfires or other significant emergency events.

Over recent weeks Territorians have once again witnessed the extraordinary commitment of those on the frontline during times of crisis. Since February the Territory has faced a series of severe weather events, with impacts stretching from Central Australia through the Daly region and into the Top End.

Prolonged monsoonal conditions and multiple systems have led to widespread flooding, community evacuations and significant disruptions across regions. Throughout this period our emergency service personnel and volunteers have worked tirelessly—often in difficult and unpredictable conditions—to support communities. They have prepared and distributed sandbags, conducted flood rescues, protected critical infrastructure and assisted with evacuations from communities, including Daly River, Palumpa and Jilkminggan. They have done so with professionalism, resilience and a deep sense of duty to the people of the Northern Territory.

This effort has also been supported by interstate personnel from Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, whose contributions have strengthened the Territory's capacity to respond to a prolonged and complex emergency.

This response highlights that emergency management in the Territory is a whole-of-government effort. Behind every frontline responder is a network of public servants, support staff and agencies working together to ensure communities are safe, supported and able to recover.

I acknowledge the contribution of my Department of People, Sport and Culture. Across Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin, Department of People, Sport and Culture staff have played a vital role in supporting evacuation centres, assisting with emergency payments, coordinating programs for children and young

people and ensuring facilities and community assets have remained safe and operational. This work is often less visible, but it is essential to the wellbeing of communities during times of disruption.

I give my sincere thanks to the Department of People, Sport and Culture team, led by CEO, Sam Livesley, and general manager, Deborah Butler. I thank the staff who have contributed, including William Kossack; Stevie Afamasaga; Parvina de Beer; Michael Hayward; Karla Goodman; Katie Knappstein; Anish Niraula; Christine Turner; Jen Hart; Nathan McDonald; Hiruni Hettiarachchi; Jasmine McDine; Melanie Boxall; Semina Pekmezovic; Rachel Willis; Maycee Clemmens; Shannon Macskimin; Emma Neave; Beau Puczkowski; Ricci McDonald; and Destini Papalii. Your work has made a meaningful difference to communities across the Territory.

The department also handed over use of the Marrara Indoor Stadium to the coordinating lead agency, Department of Children and Families, as an evacuation centre, supporting its establishment and ensuring ongoing facility management with staff on call to respond to any operational needs.

I acknowledge that the use of the Marrara Indoor Stadium as an evacuation centre has an impact on regular users, including sporting organisations, school programs and community groups. The department is working closely with all affected organisations to identify alternative venues where possible and to minimise disruption. However, some activities—particularly those requiring specialised facilities—are more difficult to relocate. I thank those organisations for their patience and cooperation during this time. The department is working with the lead agency managing the evacuation centre to respond to concerns and ensure impacts on users are minimised wherever possible.

As Member for Sanderson, this is an issue I will be monitoring closely, as safety should be the community's number one priority.

This situation also highlights a broader point that goes to the heart of supporting our emergency services. Maintaining our public infrastructure, including emergency and community facilities, is critical to ensuring an effective response.

Facilities such as evacuation centres, community venues and operational hubs play a vital role during emergencies. Their readiness, maintenance and adaptability directly impact our ability to respond quickly and safely.

This is not just about bricks and mortar; it is about capability. It is about ensuring that when emergencies occur, our personnel have access to facilities that are fit for purpose and able to support immediate response and community recovery.

We are also seeing this in how we manage other public assets during this period. Part of that response included last week's water restrictions. Even though they were brief, it included a huge response across a number of facilities to shut down sprinkler systems and turn off drinking systems and water bubblers. It affected recreation areas such as water parks. Waterslides and wet play areas at the Leanyer and Palmerston water parks were temporarily closed, with the lagoon pools staying open.

Thankfully, there was minimal interruption, and these facilities were back online in a reasonably short period. In an emergency response, these were all practical measures to support water conservation efforts while maintaining safe access to facilities where possible.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate the breadth of the response effort—frontline services, public sector support and the management of critical infrastructure, all working together. While this motion rightly recognises our emergency service workers and volunteers, it also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the broader system that supports them.

To all those who have contributed on the front line, behind the scenes and across our public sector, I thank you. Your professionalism, resilience and commitment continue to make a real difference to communities across the Northern Territory.

I reflect on my own community, the electorate of Sanderson, where many community members are working in the public system and volunteering in many organisations. I thank them for all their efforts during this time, stepping up and supporting the community.

I give a shout-out to AFLNT for giving free tickets to many residents displaced from communities around Darwin, giving them an opportunity to be part of the NT AFL grand final.

I acknowledge Red Cross and other volunteer organisations who are supporting the displaced residents during this time.

Lastly, I acknowledge NT Health, where I used to work. In times of crisis like this, when communities are displaced and there are more people in Darwin, health staff experience a significant surge in the emergency department presentations, which normally impacts their operations. I thank all hospital and healthcare staff for the extraordinary work you are doing on the ground and in providing the extra support the community needs.

This is a challenging time when alcohol-fuelled violence and other things occur as well. I thank NT Health and emergency staff for prioritising and providing all the support needed for clients presenting to the hospital.

I thank mental health team members—I was part of the mental health crisis team (MHAT)—this is a time when they get a surge in phone calls seeking support. The team does extraordinary work to provide additional support after-hours and during extended hours for people going through difficult times.

I thank all the community mental health clinicians providing support in the impacted communities, especially the Darwin remote community mental health team who travel to many communities to provide support to those who cannot travel. They coordinate support from Darwin, working with remote community centres to reduce hospital presentations, which can be a challenge to Health staff members.

I thank the Member for Daly for bringing this motion to this Chamber.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Daly for bringing this motion.

I thank all the emergency workers across the NT and in the Mulka region. There were ongoing emergencies across the Territory that have required the courage and support of emergency support workers, volunteers, community members who have also come to the rescue, organisations and businesses that have assisted and the elders and leaders of the communities impacted. I thank everyone for their ongoing and continued efforts during the floods and in evacuation centres.

There are many people displaced in Darwin. I feel for those people being away from home for so long with nothing from their homes. I urge the government to ensure people are treated with the utmost care during this very stressful time and that the elders and leaders of these communities are consulted on the best ways to help their communities. People from these communities must be involved in what is happening to them.

We have all seen the pictures of Daly River and the devastation in this community. I urge members of the Darwin community when you see these people around Darwin, say hello with a warm smile to let them know you care for their current situation.

Even in times when we have no weather emergencies, there are always events that require the support of police, paramedics and emergency support workers. I thank the people of the NT who do these jobs daily, particularly those in the Mulka electorate. In our remote locations, this job can be difficult when trying to reach people who are not close to medical services and who speak other languages. There are amazing emergency workers who work cross-culturally in these spaces to bring calm and support to those people facing an emergency or even tragedies.

I also use this opportunity to talk about the need for greater government support for emergency workers in remote communities. I have raised, many times, the need for a better system for emergency patient retrieval from homeland towns. When a local incident controller is not from the community, they must work in partnership with that community's elders and leaders. That is crucial when working with Aboriginal communities.

More weather events are coming and people are tired. The government must consider what can be done to look after emergency support workers and communities to alleviate pressure during these times; how do we look after the people who look after us? The government needs to ensure we are looking after these people.

Again, I give thanks to everyone out there. Let us ensure that we all look after each other and work together for the betterment of our communities and their safety.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I was planning to speak only to recognise the incredible work of our first responders, but I feel that I must briefly address some of the comments made by the Deputy Chief Minister about me this afternoon.

To interrupt this motion about recognising the incredible work of emergency service workers and attack my person is completely inappropriate. This is the same kind of behaviour that the Deputy Chief Minister joined his fellow members in condemning just last week when I brought forward a motion to address time-wasting personal attacks in this Chamber. When politicians do not want to talk policy they go personal, and that is exactly what the Deputy Chief Minister is doing.

Let us remember what that protest was about—an issue that I am bizarrely prevented from talking about in this Chamber. That is what the Deputy Chief Minister does not want to talk about.

I respect the work that police do. At that protest I was standing with community members exercising their democratic right to protest. My job as a representative is to show up, listen and stand with the people I represent.

I will not be bullied into questioning my respect for police and will not allow this to distract me from this motion. I will leave my comments there because this motion is not about a protest a month ago; it is about recognising the courage, dedication and incredible work of our Northern Territory emergency service workers.

I thank the Member for Daly for bringing on this motion and join with everyone in this Chamber to thank every person across the Territory who has stepped forward during the unprecedented flooding that we are experiencing.

In these past weeks we have seen our communities facing fear, uncertainty, displacement and yet, in the middle of it all, Territorians have been looking after one another with extraordinary courage and compassion. Whether you were officially deployed or simply a caring neighbour, your actions, kindness and willingness to give something of yourself to help someone else has mattered and is something that none of us will ever forget. In times of crisis we know, as we have heard in this Chamber, that we see the true character of a place. What we have seen over the past few weeks is the Territory at its best—resourceful, determined, generous and fiercely protective of one another.

To those people who have travelled vast distances on short notice and often with limited resources to protect the communities that depend on you, I thank you. I can only imagine how gruelling it has been. I have heard from some of you, and I know that many of you have worked through exhaustion, worry for your own families and the heartbreak of seeing others lose so much. You should not have had to push yourselves so far, and I am sorry it has been so tough. I hope that in the days ahead you can rest, breathe and recover, even though there is still so much work ahead of you.

I especially acknowledge the Northern Territory Emergency Service volunteers who, time and again, give up their evenings, weekends and precious moments with family to respond to emergencies so that others can be safe. Your service is humbling.

To the now ADF personnel, our police officers, Bushfires NT crews and St John Ambulance workers, your strength and calm amid chaos has brought comfort and stability to many.

To the people who dropped everything to support emergency shelters, help roll out relief payments and care for families who had to flee their homes with almost nothing, your humanity makes a huge difference.

At times like this the exact lines of our electorate boundaries feel unimportant—we are all in this together, but I give a particular thankyou to all the amazing volunteers from Johnston. If there is anything we can do to support you from our office, please let us know.

Thank you to everyone helping those dealing with the fallout of these floods: our doctors; nurses; social workers; mental health teams; homelessness support workers; Larrakia Nation; Katherine Community Night Patrol; Kalano Community Association; Victoria Daly Regional Council; Katherine Medicare Mental Health Centre; Strongbala Minds Walk-In Talk-In Space; and every other organisation providing care, comfort and dignity in this moment of upheaval. We know that you are holding people at a time when they desperately need your steady hands.

Thank you to the teams working quietly but tirelessly behind the scenes, filling the gaps, taking on extra shifts and holding the fort so that their colleagues can respond on the ground. You are part of this response effort too, and your support is what makes all of this possible.

To the many people across the community who have reached out and asked how you can help and what people need, thank you for your patience as we reached out to service providers and government to find out

how you can help. Thank you for your offers of donations, for recognising that recovery does not end when the waters go down and that people will need support for weeks and months ahead and for being willing to stand with people on that journey.

A special thankyou goes to Soriah, who sent me a message wanting to donate her favourite toys to the children in the shelter. When she heard they did not have mattresses she offered her own bed. That is what community looks like and what it means to care for one another.

We often talk about the strength of our community in times of crisis, but what we have seen is more than strength; it is connection, generosity and people choosing repeatedly to show up for one another. To everyone who has stepped forward during this disaster, I thank you for your resilience, your sacrifice and your compassion.

The floods are testing us, and we know that there is more to come, but they have also reminded us who we are; we are a community that comes together and looks after one another and because of that we are stronger, safer and kinder.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Daly for bringing on this motion. I know that sometimes there is argy-bargy back and forth, but this is truly a bipartisan motion that I am glad we can all get behind, especially at this time in this House.

I start by reading the motion, which is that this Assembly acknowledges the vital contribution of emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants and frontline workers, humanitarian and support organisations, local businesses and community members.

Community members might be last on that list, but from what we have seen recently through the flooding in Daly and around the Territory recently, community members are often some of the most impactful people to step up. There are everyday Territorians who show that spirit and ask, ‘How can I help?’ Legends like Trent de With from Katherine Rod & Rifle, who kept the community, the country and the world up to date with what was happening in Katherine.

I do not know about you Madam Speaker, but I was glued to my phone every time a new video came out. I wanted to see the latest update on what was happening in Katherine, how the flood was going and how high it was getting. I was amazed by some of the vision Trent put up, such as the Katherine River flowing down the Stuart Highway, past the Member for Katherine’s electorate office. The whole road underwater—the design of those levees held back the flood until it overtopped the banks.

I was impressed by some of the one-way valves on the flood drains. They were cleverly designed so that under normal circumstances, they lift and the water flows to the river, but in situations like this where the river rises and floods and threatens the town, those check valves slam shut and prevent water from flowing backwards into town. I am sure there will be more to say about how those levees performed and how they can potentially be strengthened overtime.

Thank you to all the people in Katherine. I thank the emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants, frontline workers, businesses and the community members around Katherine, Daly, West Daly through Peppimenarti and the other communities who helped. I feel for the members of those communities, who are currently staying in Foskey and Marrara Stadium and other places around town whilst they wait to find out what happened to their house.

The vision of Daly River (Nauiyu) showing flood waters lapping against roofs was terrifying. I cannot imagine how those people feel, thinking about going home and knowing everything they have is inundated and potentially lost.

We saw the hero NT cop vision that captured the Territory and the nation. There is a saying, ‘Heroes are not made; they are called forth in the hour.’ That was a situation where, in the face of an unprecedented emergency, people were performing acts of daily heroism and service. They stepped up and were able to do something amazing. Senior Constable Ben Parfitt escorted 27 schoolchildren from a caravan park that was waist-deep in water when Katherine was inundated by flood levels not seen since the 1990s. Then he was involved in rescuing a couple and their German shepherd from the roof of a four-wheel drive. That vision has gone viral and is famous around the world.

The high schoolers and their teachers were without power, water or food, as their camping weekend suddenly turned into a rescue mission. Parfitt and his search and rescue colleagues ferried them out in boats to a makeshift school shelter. He said:

> *That 24-hour period was worse than the worst-case scenario the Bureau of Meteorology had predicted …*
>
> *Ninety per cent of rescues were people getting stuck in their dwellings that had become cut off. We were doing boat rescues with 12 animals in one boat. We even assisted a cow—literally took it by its horns as it was swimming.*

Heli-Muster NT usually helps farmers muster cattle by air, but it temporarily transformed into an emergency service over the week of the floods, ferrying supplies and evacuating stranded families and animals. I had the good fortune to witness those R22 chopper pilots mustering cattle and I tell you what—those guys have skills. You would think they are not long for this world the way they throw those choppers around, but they are absolute masters, and they know what they are doing. This is a great example of the skills these pilots have gained by mustering cattle across this wide brown land and how they can apply those skills to save people when you least expect it.

One family was at the remote Munbililla campgrounds, about 300 kilometres east of Katherine, with their four German shepherds when they were cut off by rapidly rising floodwaters on the Wednesday. The couple, their 22-year-old daughter and their pets were helicoptered out by Heli-Muster after police got them to drier land.

The same day, Heli-Muster's pilot John Armstrong helped police rescue a couple and their German shepherd from a four-wheel drive that had become stranded in raging floodwaters on a creek crossing west of Katherine. John Armstrong said that the couple were standing on the road guardrail, which the car had been jammed up against, and were hanging on to the roof rack of their Prado. He said:

> *I just flew out and hovered…and Ben reached out and helped the first lady in. She wasn't the most mobile, but she did pretty well, and then we went back for the second fella*

It was not until they landed that a policeman came up and said:

> *Hey, we have a problem. We have to go back and get the dog.*

Parfitt, who had rescued the schoolchildren on the weekend, helped concoct a plan to ferry the dog, called Seven, to safety. The officer was dropped onto the roof of the vehicle and the helicopter moved away to avoid scaring the dog with the noise. He said:

> *It was an amazing dog; it was frightened but it could tell I was trying to help it. I introduced myself, gave it a quick pat, and it licked my hand.*

He then smashed the window furthest from the dog and cleared the glass so that it could hop out. He said:

> *It was a bit of a struggle trying to persuade the dog to basically jump into my arms so I could put him on the roof, but then I jumped on top of the car, lay on top of him and John put the helicopter right next to me … he got his front paws in, and then he was in.*

Thank you, Ben Parfitt and John Armstrong. That is an amazing example of ordinary people stepping up when extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary actions. They are true heroes.

Community member Ben Hockey, what a legend. He owns a landscaping business in Katherine. He spent the week volunteering around the clock, initially delivering sandbags to residents, permitted by police to enter flood zones and wade through waist-deep water to houses.

He has also been assisting with the cleanup. He said:

> *Some people have lost absolutely everything …*
>
> *I'm 6ft 1in [185cm], we had one local electronics business that had 6ft 2in [of] water going through his house, and all the properties around him. The payments by the federal government are amazing, but they won't be enough.*

Hockey's days consist of entering flood-affected homes, sheds and buildings and pulling whatever is not salvageable onto the street to be picked up by the council. Then he does pressure washing and disinfects slicks of mud and debris. He says:

> *A lot of the people's houses we're going to, they're putting on a brave face, but you look into their eyes and can see so many are destroyed and don't know what to do next … Do you give up? Do you leave town? Or do you stick it out and start again? Properties and resources can be replaced, but the mental effects of natural disasters can last a lifetime.*

Thank you, Ben Hockey, for all your help in responding to the Katherine flood.

I honour a member of our fire service who I have known for a long time. I congratulate Station Officer Yva Woerle as the inaugural recipient of the NT Fire and Emergency Service Women in Fire and Emergency Services Award.

Yva and her sister lived in Batchelor next door to my best mate when I was a kid, so I know them quite well from many years ago. Yva is a legend and has been serving as a firefighter for more than 10 years. Yva began her career in 2015 and has served across Darwin command at stations throughout the region as a leading firefighter and acting station officer. She has also undertaken roles in Jabiru and Tennant Creek as a relief station officer and senior station officer. Yva was promoted to station officer with the Training and Development Command in October 2025 and is currently based at Berrimah Fire Station where she performs the recruit course coordinator role. As a highly experienced trainer and assessor, Yva provided training for wildlife, road crash rescues and pump operations to recruits, volunteers and auxiliaries for many years.

Respected for her integrity, compassion and professionalism, Yva is known for supporting the wellbeing and safety of her crew, particularly during the most challenging incidents. Her leadership continues to empower female members from their first day in the service and reinforces that they are valued and capable of excelling within NT Fire and Emergency Services. Yva has become the first recipient of the prestigious award recognising an individual who has made a significant contribution to supporting, advancing and promoting women within the agency. Her work in establishing the Female Firefighter Network has seen it challenge perceptions in a traditionally male-dominated environment and advocate for improved working conditions. Congratulations Yva, well done.

While I am on the topic of congratulating women in the fire services, I give my admiration for the Adelaide River volunteer fire brigade which recently celebrated 50 years of existence. When it started, it was—I will not say manned—'womanned' by an all-women fire brigade that operated when the men worked away on the stations. They finally received their official recognition recently in Adelaide River.

The inaugural members of the brigade were Michelle Taylor (Cortes), Maureen DeRon, Denise Davidson, Debbie DeRon, Susan Hogan and Captain Maureen Roebuck.

What initially started as a volunteer fire brigade has etched its name into history as the Adelaide River station becomes one of the first to host an-all women's fire brigade. In a ceremony on Thursday 5 March 2026 of about 100 people, the NT Fire and Emergency Services formally recognised an all-women's brigade that made up the Adelaide River station in the 1970s. Some of the women from the historic brigade attended the event and stood by as the new plaque cementing their hard work was unveiled. Maureen Anne O'Leary, 79, was one of the women in the brigade who was recognised. She said:

> *I think it's just absolutely wonderful, I feel really welcome and I'm so happy to catch up with people*
>
> *…*
>
> *It's amazing, I'm really honoured.*

When asked about what being a volunteer firefighter was like back in the 1970s, Maureen said that it was a bit more casual back then. As a member of a volunteer fire brigade, I can say that is definitely true. In the old days you would just rock up, jump in a truck and fight fires. You probably needed a bit of endorsement to be able to set fire to ground, but you could fight fires just by rocking up. Now, you cannot get in the truck without having to do an online course and sign your life away. There seems to be a lot more paperwork and activities required to offset public liability now than back in the old days.

Maureen said:

We just got together because there wasn't a lot of men in the town, they worked away on stations and the roads.

She said that it was good to have women doing what the men normally do, like firefighting.

We're just as good at it …

Maureen said that her love story started at the fire station, where she met her partner who was building the shed the fire station would eventually operate out of.

I ended up travelling the rest of Australia with him for the next 30 to 40 years.

The recognition comes decades after the brigade was headed by Captain Maureen Roebuck. However, it was the leadership of the current captain of the Adelaide River fire brigade, Neil Macdonald, that got the recognition underway. He said:

We've been working to get this done over three years …

Mr Macdonald said that Maureen Roebuck's daughter, Tracy, got in touch with Chief Fire Officer Stephen Sewell about getting this all-women brigade recognised. It is through the work of relatives and friends that the information came flooding in. He said:

The information that we've gotten over the last fortnight date back right to the start …

Since the onslaught of information, Mr Macdonald said they have been able to locate the fire truck the women had used, which is now in Darwin.

Commissioner of the NTFES, Andrew Warton said that he is proud of the acknowledgment:

This is one of those days when, no matter what level you're at or what role you have in this organisation, you feel proud to come out and see a community

From current serving volunteers to past volunteers and more particularly those that were foundational in actually forming this brigade back in the early 1970s.

Mr Warton said that this recognition came at the perfect time as International Women's Day was just coming up. The celebration was held just before International Women's Day. He said:

The formation of this brigade by an all women's team is just living proof that leadership knows no boundaries.

Recognising that women play a critical role in fire and emergency services and whatever we can do to encourage that leadership we will do.

The Batchelor community has farewelled a great community member. It marked the end of a significant chapter in local history on 16 March 2026, when Mick McElwee and his family handed over the reins of the Litchfield Outback Resort to new owners.

For many years Mick and his wife, the late Janet McElwee, have been more than just business owners; they have been valued supporters of the community. Their generosity and willingness to lend a helping hand have been deeply appreciated by many local groups and residents.

One such example is their support of COTA Coomalie seniors, to whom they kindly donated the use of the resort's event room for morning tea speaker gatherings, asking only that the group cover the cost of the morning tea. This simple yet meaningful gesture helped bring people together, strengthening community spirit and connection.

On behalf of the Coomalie community, we extend our sincere thanks to Mick, the late Janet, and their family for their kindness, support and contribution to Batchelor over the years. Their efforts have left a lasting mark on the community, and they will always be remembered as an important part of the town's story. We wish Mick happiness as he moves forward into the next chapter.

Thank you, Mick and the late Janet McElwee, for your support and generosity. You will not be forgotten. Thank you very much, Mick.

I see that the Leader of the Opposition has a contribution. On that note, I will sit down and leave time for other people.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Blain who had a whole minute left, so it is generous of him to provide me with the opportunity to make a contribution to this important motion brought on by the Deputy Opposition Leader.

I thank my colleague for the amended motion we are talking to. It has been one of the few times we have almost all been on the same page. I think the expansion of the amendment to emergency service workers, volunteer units, public servants, frontline workers, humanitarian support organisations, local businesses and community members has been welcomed. It sounds like all the contributions thus far were in agreement with the amended motion.

In recent weeks Territorians have once again seen the very best of who we are. As floodwaters rose across parts of the Top End so did the courage, commitment and quiet determination of our emergency services. From SES volunteers working through the night to police officers coordinating evacuations and shelters, and the firefighters, paramedics, Defence personnel and local council crews on the ground, these are people who did not wait to be asked. They do not look for recognition; they simply show up. They show up in the worst conditions at all hours and often at real risk to themselves. We have seen powerful examples of that service in action over the past few weeks.

Ozzie Daylight and Cecilia Lake from Jilkminggan community ferried carload after carload of residents across dangerous floodwaters to safety.

Stephen Hill from Wugularr School and Telka Zotz-Wilson from Mataranka School stepped beyond their classrooms and their principal roles, opening the school doors as evacuation centres and shelters to support those affected in the communities they work in, know and love.

Trent de With in Katherine from Rod & Rifle TackleWorld became a trusted source of information for so many, providing updates from above Katherine—capturing the impact of homes and livelihoods, reminding people that they were not alone—as well as from the flood-ridden streets on his bicycle with his brother Brendan. Trent said:

… we'll be here ready for you …

Don't worry about that, you've got a community behind you.

That is the Territory spirit, strength and camaraderie, even between complete strangers.

In the Territory we know that when disaster strikes, the tyranny of distance means that help is not just around the corner. In many of our remote communities that reality is even sharper. Flooding cuts off roads, isolates families and disrupts supply chains, healthcare and communication. It affects people's lives, livelihoods and livestock. But even then, when the waters rise and the roads disappear, Territorians do not stand still.

Alongside them, our emergency services are steady, professional and relentless. This is what true community service looks like in the Northern Territory, not for headlines or praise, but because this is what you do when your community needs you. To every volunteer, frontline worker and Territorian who lent a hand in a time of need, thank you. Your work has kept people safe, your efforts held our communities together in distressing times and your service reflects the best of the Territory spirit.

Many questions about communication have come up regarding the weather experienced. There has been a short amount of warning in many parts of the Territory, starting with flash flooding in Central Australia. Amazing and heroic events occurred, particularly the rescue of a woman from the floodwaters of the Todd River. Moving up to the Barkly, there has been severe stress on our roads and rail network, with families and communities cut off in that beautiful part of the Territory. In my region, Big Rivers—from the east to the centre and the west—we have seen the devastation of huge volumes of water and what happens when people only have a short time to be evacuated and leave their communities. Many remain uncertain.

One of the ways I support the work of the people across our emergency services, volunteers and organisations we are recognising today is by suggesting some constructive ways forward. I hope that the

government will listen, support, act and build in the feedback for the next event we are expecting with the looming cyclone across the gulf.

I refer to telecommunications. We have heard from many people across the Northern Territory, particularly our pastoralists, that they had little or no time to get their livestock to higher ground or to open or cut gates so that livestock had a chance to escape the floods.

During the global COVID pandemic, sometimes to the point of exhaustion, telecommunications and regular contact from the government was one of the measured and routine parts of life. There were alerts on mobile phones, registered calls to landlines as well as daily, if not multiple-per-day, stand-ups by the then Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and Health minister to provide updates to the whole of the Northern Territory. They were across TV, radio, social media, email and every form of communication you can think of. It really matters.

This type of warning could support emergency service workers and volunteers by giving them extra moments to ensure that they, their families and their homes are safe. That may provide a small amount of comfort when they are busy supporting the community in a time of need.

I have spoken with people in my electorate, those evacuees from Jilkminggan community, who are now displaced and staying in the township at Mataranka. I would love to see constructive work regarding local SES training. Through the government's $100m flood budget, I would love to see some proactiveness, not just the remedial work which we know will have to happen. We keep hearing that $100m will not go a long way, but it is something, of course.

I would like to show that our Labor opposition is constructive. I have heard directly from people in my electorate who want things planned better in the future, as much as possible. Providing some of that flood funding for local emergency services training will also help with empowering communities, supporting our beef and agricultural businesses and involving industry in our town and city centres. It would go a long way to support community volunteers who have stepped up and to enhance the opportunity for community members and businesses to be prepared and work collectively.

I acknowledge the police and emergency services workers who have worked across all those different regions I mentioned with preparedness and provided information. We have heard many stories of harrowing rescues. Thank goodness that thus far we have not had a single loss of human life throughout these severe weather events across the Northern Territory.

I welcome any work the government would lead, based on that suggestion from my team and I, for local SES training to occur and to use some of those funds to spread that community spirit across the NT. Noting that we also have the opposite end of severe weather in the Territory—hot weather and fires—it would be pertinent to have more people trained in SES.

I honour and acknowledge that many business men and women are supporting volunteering efforts. Many names and businesses have been mentioned already in the Chamber, so I will not repeat all the stories. Those people have worked across our communities and served the common interest of the Territory rather than themselves.

Some business and tourism grants would support flood disaster recovery, particularly for those small and medium businesses that have worked to support each other, but not necessarily thought about themselves and what the impact on their businesses will be now and into this year. Tourism businesses are looking at the start of the tourist season. Officially this starts on 1 April, so how can we support them to get back to be ready to grow and stabilise the Territory's economy each year? We could provide some business and tourism grants for those flood-affected businesses across the Territory.

There are some big-picture items which will not necessarily fit within the $100m disaster relief funds that the NTG announced yesterday. It would be great to hear from the CLP government where the big projects such as the community cyclone shelter projects are at. There is the Borroloola Cyclone shelter in the great electorate of Barkly, which I remind the Member for Barkly was a former Labor project. For a township the size of Borroloola to have that investment in the cyclone shelter and community space—which is now completed—will make a big difference, particularly leading into this weekend and next week, when there is uncertainty about Cyclone Narelle coming across Queensland into the gulf.

That investment needs to be in strategic locations. One of the next two on the list which would be great to hear about from the government—as long as it does not cut this important infrastructure—is Yirrkala in

north-east Arnhem. That area very much needs a cyclone shelter. Quite a few years ago we saw the effects of a cyclone in the north-east Arnhem region. Restoration took many years. The other cyclone shelter is needed in the Member for Arafura's electorate in Maningrida, which is one of the largest Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. Wadeye and Maningrida both have roughly 3,000 people and are perhaps bigger than Tennant Creek. Those members can argue about the population.

Mr Guyula interjecting.

Ms UIBO: The Member for Mulka is reminding me that the infrastructure spend and investment in housing is important to support businesses and houses to be elevated, so that they are not low-lying when floods occur.

Cyclone shelters are needed in some of those very isolated places—like the island that Milingimbi sits on—to protect people and allow them to stay in community in efficient and safe cyclone shelters or evacuation centres.

It would be great to hear the updates on those communities in desperate need, as that investment would really make a difference.

I would be so bold as to say that there is a project that is not on the list, but I would be happy if the CLP takes it on and claim it as its own. I was in Katherine over the weekend speaking to people across the different networks that I often liaise with and discussing a Big Rivers evacuation centre built on the high ground of Katherine, perhaps in the industrial area in Katherine East. It would be a purpose-built evacuation and multipurpose centre in Katherine to service Big Rivers.

In the past, community members evacuated from places in the Member for Gwoja's area—Kalkarindji, Pigeon Hole and Lajamanu—have been moved either to Darwin or Katherine.

My constituents from Jilkminggan are camping in tents, with only a few people in classrooms and the Town Hall. There is uncertainty about the weather this weekend. I was just on the phone to a constituent from Mulggan Town Camp in Mataranka who asked, 'What will happen with this weather? Will people be safe if they are in those tents? I remember last time when the cyclone came across, and we got the big wind and rain in Mulggan and Mataranka.' The cyclone was not even there; it had turned into a rain depression by then.

I remember that same rain depression coming in over Katherine—I remember it distinctly as it was my birthday, which is next week, so almost exactly a few years ago—and it was one of the biggest storms that I have ever experienced in my 40 years of living. That rain depression came in and hit Borroloola. It was due to go over Groote Eylandt, but it started to swing south. Groote was the hardest hit of my south-east Arnhem communities.

Numbulwar community was completely evacuated because, at the time, it was anticipated that it would be a Category 5 cyclone. None of the houses on the coastal areas of south-east or north-east Arnhem are coded for that; they are coded for Category 4 or less. Everyone in Numbulwar was evacuated by road because it was a low Wet Season and Numbulwar Road happened to be opened, fortuitously. I would still love the minister for Infrastructure to look at building the Phelp River crossing to stop that isolation.

Where do people go? At that time Numbulwar mob went to the Katherine Showgrounds and then that huge, big rain depression—that wild violent storm—came in, and all the tents set up by the Army and the Air Force completely blew out, so people had to run into the sheds for shelter. The Jilkminggan mob currently in Mataranka are in little camping tents, not pegged down, and I doubt there is enough room for everyone to stand in the town hall if they are not looked at now.

I have written to and requested a briefing with the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister so I can be supportive and constructive in answering any questions and concerns that I am hearing from parts of the Arnhem electorate in anticipation for the pre-cyclone planning.

We are trying to be constructive. I know the CLP government budget is coming up soon. Maybe you can claim that great idea from me and invest in a Big Rivers evacuation centre in the industrial area, the high side of Katherine, to service the whole Big Rivers region. We know there is a lot of pressure in Darwin on the two evacuation centres, with Palumpa and Daly River mob being housed unfortunately for an unknown time; we acknowledge that.

In times of distress, our volunteers and emergency service workers do not just pack up their desks, walk out and say it is too hard; they stay with us, look after us and commit themselves to the community spirit that the Territory is so fiercely protective of. They stick with it, stand there and put in the hard yards to support fellow Territorians and visitors alike.

I had some questions today about workers in some of those flood-affected businesses, in towns and communities affected by floods, who are unable to access the emergency disaster relief. They are there working as backpackers or seasonal workers. Are they still able to access the disaster relief? That is one of the questions I am still following up. They are not all from my electorate; they are often from the Katherine region, but I will endeavour to get as many questions to the government as possible because it is important to recognise when people are going through hard times and to help our amazing service workers and community members.

Mr YOUNG: 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.

Ms UIBO: It is such an important motion and one of few that have had strong bipartisan support. When we talk about the processes of what we have been through, we have seen those stories through Cyclone Marcus, Cyclone Trevor, and Cyclone Fina in November last year.

I also acknowledge the work of our Aboriginal rangers, who are often navigating some of the most difficult country in some of the fiercest conditions in the Northern Territory. If there was some coordination—I heard in Katherine there was some frustration because there were rangers ready to help and support with food and transport when some of the roads were being officially closed. I am hearing all this second hand, but I am putting it out there because it would be great to see these communications tidied up and all these incidences addressed if they did happen. The threat of being on an officially closed road—obviously roads are closed for people's safety, but people who know the country are being told that they will be fined if they travel and drop off food to people who need it, particularly in some of our homelands.

It will be important to see the learnings of the recent flooding—that is still impacting the Territory—leading to a stronger working relationship between official government services and our Aboriginal ranger groups. They are well placed to support community emergency services. In some of the communities I represent the rangers are often the biggest employer of the communities or homelands. Often people who are out working on country are used to those extreme weather conditions. I think there is a missing piece there.

Perhaps there could be a memorandum of understanding between the NT Government and our four land councils to implement specific training and support to ensure that there are resources out on country as much as in town and the city, and for rangers to be part of—in some places they are—those local emergency committee meetings. They are called LECs, and they task each organisation and group. Specifically, there could be a constructive or more formal process of an MOU for rangers and government to work in partnership during those emergency declarations, severe weather events and incidents.

We know the Territory spirit has been in full display, particularly this month. We have neighbours looking after neighbours, people checking in on each other and families sharing meals together, offering to help one another and standing together.

It is in moments like this that we are reminded community is not just a word; it is action, compassion and people choosing to show up for each other. Stepping into times of crisis, we have seen that Territory spirit grow. That is not something new for us in the NT; it is something that is deeply rooted in who we are.

We know from the bushfires of 2023, the recent floods and cyclones, and all of the severe weather events in between, that people across the Territory will show up and stand up for each other.

Recovery efforts are already underway. I give my sincere thanks, appreciation and acknowledgement of emergency service workers and all the volunteers and community members doing infrastructure checks, and of Power and Water for making sure it is safe for people to return home.

It was mentioned that the houses in Jilkminggan are in relatively good condition and not necessarily flooded out, which is great news to hear. Guess what? That is because the former Labor government invested into those Jilkminggan houses and the old, shitty tin houses were all demolished. They were built up above the

minor and medium flood level zone. That is where investment in the bush, as much as town, makes a difference for that resilience; it allows people to return home quicker if they have to leave their community.

When I was at Kalkarindji a few years ago—you could probably give me the correct measurements, Member for Gwoja—the houses were high up close to…

Mr Paech: It is 1.5 to 1.7 metres.

Ms UIBO: Thank you, Member for Gwoja; I knew you would know. The homes are higher up. I am 167 centimetres—two centimetres above average, even though my husband does not believe that 165 is average. The high-level homes were built at Kalkarindji because of the regular flooding.

That investment in infrastructure, architecture, planning, design and community input makes a difference when it comes to community resilience—making sure that we have culverts, bridges and strong and safe sealed roads.

The Member for Mulka has spoken about the next item a lot—our aerodromes and airstrips, particularly for homelands in the north-east Arnhem pocket, as well as other parts of the Northern Territory. Severe weather or even normal Wet Season can prevent people from travelling, cause uncertainty and anxiety about food security and stop doctors and nurses from visiting remote homelands where there is no residential medical officer. It can affect education. Some schools have fly-in, fly-out teachers or need support for local assistant teachers. All these areas come as a package. They are integrated as part of the Territory's north, but that does not mean the government can shirk its responsibility to invest in all parts of the Territory. It has to make sure it is a government for all Territorians, not just some.

I thank the organisations that have been involved, particularly in my electorate: the Northern Territory Police; Fire and Emergency Services; and the Australian Defence Force.

A week-and-a-bit after asking whether the ADF would be asked to provide support, they are finally ready. A big thankyou goes to all of my constituents at Tindal RAAF Base in the Arnhem electorate for stepping up. Many had already volunteered as civilians. They were not allowed to do so as Defence members until the NT Government requested support from the federal government. Now they can do their duties as proud ADF members. Thank you to everyone who has stepped up.

I thank our volunteer and paid SES members; the Red Cross; the departments of Children and Families, Housing, Education and Health; Power and Water Corporation, particularly for the pump repairs; and the many different non-government organisations, particularly those at the evacuation centres here in Darwin. I know they have other services too. I thank them for making sure we have the extra support and wraparound services needed.

I thank our local government sector, including the regional councils and municipal town councils. I give a huge shout-out to Roper Gulf Regional Council in my area. Thank you for stepping up in difficult and trying times; you have done your best. Roper Gulf Regional Council members provided support to Jilkminggan community members. They did not even think about the bill; they just knew they needed to help support people. They recognised that there are 400 people out of their community in two small and over-capacity shelters. They said, 'We will support them by paying for food, and we will worry about the bill later on'.

I wish the NTG had done that with the ADF. We could have had the ADF supporting flood recovery and evacuation. Those personnel are trained for all this work. Next time, a quicker response in that area would go a long way to support and comfort people in times of need.

Mr YOUNG (Daly)(in reply): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank everyone in the Chamber who contributed to this debate. I acknowledge that the Member for Barkly wanted to make a contribution as well, but we have run out of time.

It is great to see everyone from both sides of the Chamber speak about the contributions made by the emergency services, volunteer units, public servants, frontline workers, humanitarian workers, local businesses and community members. Most of us contributed directly to that.

It is disappointing that the Deputy Chief Minister did not speak directly to that and tried to attack one member in this House. We need to remember what this motion was put forward for; it was for the emergency services and our volunteer workers.

Thank you, everyone. I thank the Member for Goyder for his contribution to the Darwin River community; I know they appreciate it. I thank all members.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge one of the Northern Territory's greatest sporting figures, Bill Dempsey.

In doing so, I am taking inspiration from an original piece of work, that I will acknowledge shortly, entitled: Bill Dempsey, The Greatest Buffalo.

This was not written as a speech or as a media profile. It was originally prepared as a nomination for the inaugural Northern Territory Hall of Champions. It was written in 1993 by local journalist Dave Nason, a larger-than-life character that we lost too young in 2011. I believe Dave may have had some assistance from another magician with words, Kevin Naughton.

It took until 1997 when the concept of the NT Hall of Champions was finally unveiled and Bill Dempsey was inducted as one of the inaugural 10 members. The Hall of Champions marked an important moment in the Territory's sporting history and established a permanent honour to recognise athletes who had achieved at the highest levels of their sport. For most footballers, 100 senior games is a milestone. Very good footballers reach 200, but 300 games is the mark of a true champion.

Darwin-born and bred, Bill Dempsey surpassed even that, playing 343 games with West Perth across 17 years from 1960 to 1976. It remains the second highest record in WAFL history. For the final four seasons, Bill captained the club, leading with distinction and earning the respect of all who played with and against him.

Bill's story begins in 1943 at Birdum, south of Larrimah. During the war, he was evacuated to Victor Harbor in South Australia, before returning to Darwin in 1946 and growing up in the Retta Dixon Home. As a young athlete, his first love was basketball. At just 16 years of age, he represented the Northern Territory at the 1959 national championships in Adelaide along with the legendary Michael Ah Matt. Whilst basketball was his early passion, football would become his legacy. His move to Western Australia marked the beginning of an extraordinary career spanning 17 years.

At West Perth, Bill was part of three premierships: 1969, 1971 and 1975—the last as captain. To demonstrate his prowess, when he was awarded the club's Best and Fairest in 1966, he also cleaned up all the major media awards including the first car ever offered in WA as a major prize. Bill also played 14 state games for Western Australia, including as vice-captain.

Importantly, despite his success interstate, Bill never lost his connection to the Northern Territory. He returned regularly to Darwin during the Wet Season to play with the Buffaloes, adding close to 100 NTFL games and contributing to one of the most dominant eras in local football. Those who witnessed his career here still speak of his presence, leadership, and the contests that helped define Territory football. Bill's clashes in the ruck with the great St Marys and South Adelaide player David Kantilla are particularly remembered.

The accolades bestowed on Bill across his career and beyond were unmatched. In 1975 Bill was awarded an MBE for services to football. He is recognised in the Western Australian Football Hall of Fame, the Australian Football Hall of Fame and the Indigenous Team of the Century. In 2022 he was humbled by being named as the Sir Doug Nicholls honouree.

As is now tradition, when we attend the NT Sports Awards in a couple of weeks' time and add more names to the Hall of Champions list, we will have another opportunity to remember Bill.

Bill Dempsey's life truly represents something far greater than awards. He was a Territory man who rose from humble beginnings, pursued opportunity and became one of the finest footballers this country has produced. Tonight I take the opportunity to recognise Bill Dempsey—a champion of the game, a proud Territorian and, as that original nomination piece so fittingly describes him, the greatest Buffalo.

In keeping with the AFL theme, I finish tonight reflecting on the fantastic finish to the NTFL season, which saw Nightcliff run away as winners over St Mary's in the Men's Premier League. Former Geelong star, Brandan Parfitt, took home the Chaney Medal for Best on Ground.

The NTFL Women's grand final was a much closer affair, and this was the second year in a row that it came down to the wire. The PINT Queen Ants, led by their four-time Women's League Best and Fairest winner, Jasmyn Hewett, came from behind to take the premiership.

As a proud PINT member who is also patron, you could not wipe the smile off the Member for Fannie Bay's face.

I feel for Nightcliff, as they went through the year undefeated. It is the second year in a row they have lost by less than a kick. I am told that the Nightcliff men winning the competition might have made up for it.

Earlier in the day, it was a real nail-biter when Banks narrowly defeated Nightcliff in the Men's Premier League Reserve by one point. These were the main games on the day as the ground was waterlogged and other games had been rescheduled to Gardens Oval the night before.

I congratulate AFL NT for the turnout on Saturday. To Chairman Sean Bowden and CEO Sam Gibson, well done on the day.

It was a fantastic event. I was joined at the footy by the Chief Minister, the minister for Asian Relations, the Minister for Health—who was also recognised by Sean Bowden as one of the best and longest-serving umpires in the Northern Territory—and the Members for Casuarina and Fannie Bay.

I congratulate all the hardworking clubs, volunteers, umpires, coaching staff and especially players on the season.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening I recognise something that does not always get the attention it deserves in this Chamber—the strength, talent and success of Territory artists and musicians.

Across the Northern Territory we are seeing an incredible wave of creativity, from remote communities to national stages. Take 'Drifting Clouds' for example, led by Terry Guyula, the Member for Mulka's nephew's son from the north-east Arnhem Land. They performed at the Bush Bands Bash in 2024 and are now supported through the office of Arts NT. They have gone from strength to strength, recently signing a publishing deal with Sony. They are now set to perform at Vivid in Sydney, singing songs of strength, culture, country and the Territory. That is a powerful story—from the community stage to one of the biggest platforms in the country.

We are also now talking about Winanjjikari from Tennant Creek continuing to create real opportunities. Their ongoing partnership with WOMADelaide has seen young Territorian's travel to Adelaide, granting them experience, building skills and seen them representing their culture on a national stage.

A little closer to home, stories like Witiyana Marika—who featured in *Australian Story* this week—remind us of the deep cultural leadership and legacy that underpins Territory music.

In the face of challenge, Territory artists continue to show determination. The James Range Band quite literally pushed through floodwaters in Utju and Alice Springs to make it to Melbourne for their shows because that is what Territory musicians do; they show up, perform, sing songs of country and play with passion, love and commitment.

We also stand on the shoulders of pioneers. Warren H Williams, the first Indigenous musician nominated for a Golden Guitar, helped pave the way for so many other artists we see today. I will say it—he should have won the Golden Guitar.

In Alice Springs we are seeing real investment in the future of music. Sing Hum Studios has recently secured, through Creative Australia's Record Label Development Scheme, to build pathways for local artists to record, produce and share their music with the world. Artists like Emily Wurramara, who continues to grow her national profile with new music on the horizon and audiences across Australia, connecting her voice with her songs, stories and connection to culture.

These are not isolated stories, they are part of a bigger picture: the Territory—where music is strong, culture is alive and artists are not just surviving but thriving.

We cannot take it for granted. Behind every one of these success stories is support from community, organisations and investment programs like the Bush Bands Bash. Our local music centres are crucial in making sure such talent from the bush gets the opportunity it deserves. When the Territory's artists succeed, they do not just represent themselves; they carry their communities, languages and stories with them. That is something this parliament should always be proud of.

I raise serious concerns that I have been asked by my constituents to pass on. I raise concerns from a resident in Yuendumu, Ms Dixon, who is currently living in a house that the government is ignoring. Ms Dixon has repeatedly contacted Territory Housing to report urgent and dangerous issues with her home, including a leaking roof, a broken evaporative air conditioner that is leaking and no hot water. Most concerning of all, she has experienced electric shocks from the property on two separate occasions. Despite raising these issues multiple times, she is still waiting for action. These are not minor maintenance issues; they are serious safety risks. No-one should be living in a home where they are at risk of being electrocuted.

This situation is unacceptable. I call on the CLP and Territory Housing to urgently attend to these repairs and provide a clear timeframe for when the work will be carried out. Given the severity of the conditions, I also ask that immediate consideration be given to relocating Ms Dixon to safe and adequate accommodation while these issues are addressed.

People in remote communities deserve safe functional conditions in their homes that do not put their health and safety at risk. These are important issues.

I make it clear that Ms Dixon has repeatedly reported these issues to Housing and, up until today, she still has not had a response. It is not adequate.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I talk about our beautiful migratory shorebirds as a proud patron of the annual Darwin–Garramilla Shorebird Festival ahead of this Saturday's event where we will farewell them on their long journey home from Darwin Harbour.

Imagine a bird's-eye view of Darwin Harbour; shades of green mark the variety of mangrove trees that border the blue and murky brown water, lapping the soft mud that surrounds the mangroves. Beyond the mangroves you see the bare earth of sand, mud and soft salt marsh—a type of vegetation that is designed to cope in salty environments. Bordering the harbour edges are buildings and homes, but it is in the bare earth amongst the mangroves that your eye is caught. Amongst this, we see life—invertebrates such as shellfish, and birds.

These birds—known as shorebirds—are specialised to live in coastal environments on beaches, rocky reefs, salt marsh, mangroves and the muddy edges. These birds are the ultimate endurance athletes, migrating between global poles and calling the Southern Hemisphere home for up to seven months of the year.

Globally, shorebirds are highly threatened because of changes to landscapes and environments across many jurisdictions. The shorebirds we see in Australia migrate in what is known as the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, with 37 species of migratory shorebirds travelling to Australia every year. Shorebirds in this flyway have been declining faster than any other group of shorebirds across the world. This is largely due to the loss or destruction of coastal environments and wetlands.

In Australia the biggest threat to shorebirds is coastal development and disturbance. Because of this habitat loss and other compounding threats, multiple species have declined over several decades. Today 15 migratory shorebirds are listed under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This is a national shame. These are species that have been taking this journey, migrating across the world, for millennia. It is the rapid and unsustainable development of the coastal environment that has had the greatest impact on them. This is both a global and local issue. What we do locally will have an impact across the world.

Darwin Harbour is home to thousands of these migratory shorebirds. They live on our beaches and in amongst the mangroves. They move with the tide, feeding at low tide and resting at high tide. Darwin Harbour is a special place for shorebirds with 35 different species of migratory shorebirds recorded. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many species of shorebirds on our doorstep. Australia is a critical refuge for these birds.

The northern Australian coastline is a stopping and refuelling area for shorebirds, and it is also a destination for many of these birds. Many species are highly faithful to areas in Australia. In Darwin Harbour, for instance, researchers have found a variety of species and individuals returning to the exact same beaches and mudflats in the harbour year after year.

In Darwin Harbour alone, 14 species of shorebirds are on the threatened species list. This means that we have an obligation to protect these species and their habitats. We also have global obligations. Shorebirds are listed under the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and under several bilateral agreements with other countries.

What we are seeing in Darwin Harbour is not in line with the requirements for protecting threatened species and their habitats. We continue to see inappropriate development proposals that will impact on these amazing shorebirds and where they live. For example, the Middle Arm gas hub development is set to impact the habitat of species including the critically endangered far eastern curlew. On Middle Arm there are extensive habitats for many shorebirds, and it is the salt pans in amongst the lush green mangroves that are considered nationally important for the far eastern curlew. Developing coastal areas such as this and impacting on these important habitats are not actions that will help us recover a threatened species.

Further along the Darwin Harbour coastline, the development by Defence Housing Australia at Lee Point will introduce an additional 3,000 people to suburbs only two kilometres from the internationally important habitat at Lee Point Beach. This is problematic because of the potential impact of more people using this beach. This beach is one of the most important places for migratory shorebirds in Darwin Harbour. It is classified as a no-dog zone because of the presence of birds. Disturbance by dogs is a key threat, and researchers have recorded chronic levels of disturbance on this beach for close to three decades. Despite this knowledge, research and community monitoring of these threatened shorebirds, there is still not enough being done to protect these global wonders.

Darwin Harbour could be a safe haven for these shorebirds that return every year. We need to ensure that the coastal area is safe and healthy for these birds to feed and rest. It is no small feat to fly 10,000 kilometres. Energy fuel reserves cannot be wasted on flying from disturbances on beaches or retreating away from areas that were once reliable.

Despite these challenges, there is a dedicated and passionate community of volunteers in Darwin who visit monitoring sites across the harbour every month. They count the birds and enter the data into a national monitoring database so that analysts can understand how bird populations are doing. I give a shout-out to some of these community members who are sitting in the gallery. This community of people is the backbone of our understanding of these birds at Darwin Harbour, and they have so much passion for this work and for sharing their knowledge with the community.

The volunteer organisation BirdLife Top End coordinates this shorebird monitoring program as well as all community engagement activities on shorebirds in Darwin Harbour. This weekend BirdLife Top End and their community will say farewell to the shorebirds as they depart for their annual migration to the breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere. I am delighted to be a patron of the annual Darwin–Garramilla Shorebird Festival, which happens when the birds come back in September. I am also delighted to hear that my incoming colleague, Ed Smelt, the new Member for Nightcliff, will join us for this celebration of the shorebirds this weekend at Nightcliff. I invite everyone in this Chamber to see these amazing birds that grace us with their presence and then head off on their 10,000-kilometre incredible journey.

We are so lucky to have these beautiful birds come here. I call on this government to recognise its obligations to protect these threatened shorebirds and the coastal environments, and to listen to the community of people who want shorebird protection embedded in the decision-making of Darwin Harbour. We owe it to future generations to ensure these global wonders can return to Darwin for years to come.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the Member for Johnston's contribution regarding BirdLife Top End and the event that is happening this Saturday. For those who do not know, I am a bit of a birder myself; I go out birding to take the stress away,. My favourite bird is the dollarbird; there is something unique about them. They sit on top of a tree, and you get your binoculars out and watch them looking for bugs. I also like the hooded parrot in Pine Creek, which is endemic to that area. I will be reaching out to BirdLife Top End and maybe invite them to come to the other side of Darwin Harbour at Wagait Beach where I live. I usually go birding over that side. There is an amazing number of birds over there from magpie geese, ducks and you name it; it is all there.

On a serious note, I want to address the situation that is happening in Wadeye. Telecommunications have been down for over two weeks, and we have seen the real impact this is having on the community and community safety, such as people not being able to connect to their power because there is an online system—a prepaid system—for the power system there. A lot of our old and vulnerable people who store their medication in the refrigerator cannot do that without power. If people have health issues, they cannot

call the clinic or 000 to get assistance. It is a real serious concern, and it is breach of basic human rights that we should have no matter where we live.

I am calling on the Northern Territory Government and Telstra to get together and come up with a contingency plan for Wadeye. Wadeye is one of the largest Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, and we should not be seeing telecommunication power outages in a community such as this. It is not good enough. It is having an impact on staff at the clinic, operations at Thamarrurr Development Corporation and people's welfare when they are having to travel to put in their work hours as they cannot put them in online.

I am calling on the Northern Territory Government to get together with Telstra and work through options. They could set up more Starlink so there is some sort of telecommunications for the residents of Wadeye. I understand the issues; I have spoken to the Telstra NT General Manager himself. We know a flooding event is happening across the West Daly region. The power system in Palumpa is flooded, and that affects the line to Wadeye.

We need to come up with another solution for a community as large as Wadeye. It is a similar size to Tennant Creek. Imagine if Tennant Creek had been out for two or three weeks. This is the second time it has happened in a matter of a couple of months.

There were many people at the St Mary's versus Nightcliff NTFL grand final last Saturday night. I want to give a special shout-out to the AFLNT team, who I spoke to earlier this week; they donated 500 tickets for people affected by the floods, including evacuated Palumpa and Daly River residents. People from those communities were thrilled to have some peace of mind and enjoyed the footy without worry or anxiety about what was happening back in their community.

I went to the footy on Saturday night and saw several members from across the Chamber. It was an excellent night. It was wonderful to see families from Daly River and Palumpa enjoying the night at footy, and you could see that they were not stressed at all; they were just enjoying the footy like everyone else, and it was a relief to take their minds off the flooding event occurring in their community. I give a huge shout-out to AFLNT for donating those 500 tickets.

I also give a shout-out to the welfare team at Foskey Pavilion and Marrara for helping to coordinate how people would get to the game. Buses were organised for people from Foskey Pavilion who were staying out at the Darwin Showgrounds, to bring people in and to get them home safely.

I give a huge thank you to AFLNT, and I look forward to working with you on such initiatives in the future.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I honour the Country Women's Association of the Northern Territory. A lot of people do not know what it does and still think that it is an organisation largely about tea and scones, but it is a lot more than that.

The objectives and governance of the CWA seek to improve the conditions of life for women and families in the NT, provide community services, participate in and support our town and district schemes for cultural and welfare projects and, moreover, to be non-party-political, non-sectarian and a not-for-profit organisation.

Particularly in our rural and remote communities, the CWA has sought to improve the welfare and circumstances of women and children by bringing people together, improving their lives and providing better educational opportunities. It seeks to reduce the drift of population to cities by improving health, education and communication services in the outback.

The first branch of the CWA in the Northern Territory goes back a long way to 1930 at Rankin River. The Darwin branch was established later in 1937, with the CWA of the Northern Territory being established in 1960. Before 1960 the branches that used to exist in the lower part of the Territory were formed under the CWA Association of South Australia, and those in the Top End were formed under the CWA of Queensland.

We had previous branches across the Territory in Batchelor, Mount Bundy, Jabiru, Pine Creek, Victoria River Downs, Elliott, Warrego, Ali Curung and even in Amoonguna. Now in 2026, there are still six branches left, and they are in Alice Springs, Darwin, Groote Eylandt, Litchfield, Katherine and Tennant Creek. The Tennant Creek branch will celebrate its 90th anniversary this year, and I am reliably informed by the Member for Barkly that it is the repository of fantastic arts and crafts, which is all headquartered safely in the Tennant Creek offices.

The actual headquarters of the CWA these days is in Fong Lim, in Bishop Street, Woolner. It has a lovely building there. What does the CWA do in that building? Quite a lot and quite charitable work. In line with its objectives, it fundraises and donates back to the community to support a lot of like-minded organisations. Many of you in this room have talked organisations and enterprises that the CWA raises money for, such as Aged Care secret Santa; Alzheimer's Association; Aunty's Free Feeds; CareFlight; Darwin hospice; Darwin Youth Services; Dawn House; Foodbank; Days For Girls; Doctors Without Borders; Down Syndrome Association NT; Freds Pass Rural Show; McGrath Foundation; playgroups; Australian Red Cross; Royal Darwin Show; Royal Flying Doctor Service; Ruby Gaea Darwin Centre Against Sexual Violence Inc; and many sporting organisations.

Some of us are familiar with the fundraising activities of the CWA which include things like market stalls selling jams and preserves; craft fairs; high teas; raffles; and other stalls at shows across the Territory. Many items are sold to fundraise and many of them are handmade by members through knitting, crocheting, sewing and other methods. There is also catering prepared by CWA members themselves.

Still, a lot of the CWA's work is donated. Some of its creations such as knee blankets, teddy bears, beanies and booties for premature babies are donated to hospitals on a regular basis.

The CWA also functions as a learning centre; it is not just about jams and preserves. It has a program where it looks at countries to study, and this year CWA is looking at Denmark. Its members are learning Danish embroidery and pickles, amongst other things. It is about cultural education and the promotion of cross-cultural exchange.

It was my enormous privilege to be invited recently, along with the Member for Fannie Bay, to a special event at the CWA NT offices in Fong Lim—a high tea featuring as the guest of honour the Governor-General, Her Excellency Sam Mostyn AC. It was a beautiful event. The Governor-General looked at the quilts and crochet poppies being created for remembrance of war and animals that died at war.

We all got to take a look at the 'Territory Icons in Thread' project, which CWA members have been working on in partnership with women in remote communities for some time. It culminated in the Governor-General being gifted a CWA history book from the NT which, as a neat segue to its country of study being Denmark this year, the CWA was able to gift to the Danish royals recently down south. I thought that was a nice touch.

My gratitude goes to the outgoing president, Judy Anictomatis OAM, for inviting me to that special event.

I also point out one special person who was there that day, Nancy Fuchs. She is the oldest member of the CWA in Darwin; she is 96 years old. She is so special to me because Nancy Fuchs and her husband, Peter Fuchs, were the reason my family ended up in Australia in 1971. Her husband, Peter Fuchs, was the Swiss Consul-General and an engineer and hydrologist who befriended my grandfather when he came here to work on the Snowy Mountains. After war broke out in Bangladesh, they were kind enough to take in my grandparents and their three kids, the eldest of whom was my mum. To this day we have maintained a connection with the Fuchs family. It was wonderful to see Nancy there alongside her daughters, Jackie and Ann.

Sadly, Nancy had a fall just after that event and is currently at RDH with a broken leg, so I wish her all the best. I hope you got the flowers; I shall see you sometime soon at Pearl.

There is a serious social advocacy side to the Country Women's Association; it focuses on issues facing women and families across the Territory. With that in mind, it was my privilege to be a small part of the CWA International Women's Day 2026 event, 'Balance the Scales', where it raised $6,000 for Top End Women's Legal Service, a noble cause. I was pleased to make a modest contribution to allow a table of women from Fong Lim to attend that event, who maybe otherwise would not have been able to make it.

I am grateful to Rachael Shanahan who invited me to collaborate on that event with her. We planned to hold it in my electorate office like last year, but it was too big an event and, ultimately, it got much nicer digs. I also congratulate Rachael on having recently been elected the new incoming president of the CWA NT. She will do a fantastic job and is a wonderful person in her own right.

The CWA is about a lot more than tea and scones; it is prudent to remember that. That tagline appears on its own website in jest, but as the 90-plus guests who attended the International Women's Day event on 8 March 2026 learnt from the speakers that day, the CWA continues—usually quietly and without fuss—to keep supporting women and families in the Territory. CWA members are, no doubt, doing work to help people through floods and weather events as well. I am simply not aware of the work yet, or I would call it out directly.

That is the kind of organisation it is and the work it does in earnest. The CWA does serious work, not just pickles, preserves and tea.

The Darwin branch helped families in 1930 when the Channel Island Leprosarium was up and running to look after people who would otherwise not be looked after. It is a noble organisation. In the words of Dr Valerie Asche AM, a former CWA NT patron and later president, 'Everywhere, the organisation has made lives brighter and better. It has reached out a compassionate, gentle and practical hand to help give where it has been needed. It has made Australia a better place by constantly using its influence and its resources to argue for improved conditions of life.'

Long may the CWA Northern Territory branch continue its fine work.

Ms BOOTHBY (Brennan): Madam Speaker, the Chief Minister and I attended two different events, one at Zuccoli Primary School and one at the Mother Teresa Catholic Primary School. Both are in Zuccoli, which was split in the last election. It used to be the Chief Minister's electorate, but after the last election it became half the Chief Minister's and half my electorate. We both have the opportunity to go to those local schools in Zuccoli; they are wonderful schools.

On 25 March we attended the Mother Teresa school and addressed about 20 students who are all school leaders, from grades four through to six. We had a wonderful morning tea and discussion about being leaders at school and in their community.

I feel like I warmed the kids up a little by asking a lot of questions because they then asked me a lot of questions. Then the Chief Minister came in, really pumped them up and gave them a good rah-rah talk. She is a great leader so the kids of Mother Teresa were happy about that.

Then we went to Zuccoli Primary School. It was a different setup; they had tables sprawled across a classroom with many children. They were the same ages though, from about year four to year six. They peppered us with a lot of really hard questions, which was fantastic. We were both able to tag team and talk about what it is like to be a leader.

Both of those schools and their students show we have some wonderful leaders in our future. The Territory looks bright having them there doing what they do, not only for their school but their whole school community as well.

Recently, the Rosebery Primary School held its AGM, and I congratulate the new committee for 2026. The committee will be doing a lot of hard work for the Rosebery Primary School. They are Terrance Kong, the Chairperson, a parent; Kim Goodwin, the Treasurer, a parent; Penny Seamer, the Secretary, a parent; Sofia Wilson, a parent member; Meigan Cunningham, a teacher; Megan Grant, a teacher; and Danielle Banicek, the principal.

The Member for Blain and I have attended many Rosebery Primary School councils over our time. We still like to get there when we can, but sometimes they are on during sittings which makes it tricky. We know how much work that school council does for the children of Rosebery Primary. They are a dedicated group, often involved in lots of things like school fundraisers and running the canteen. We are often there helping them out at barbecues and colour fun runs.

A couple of years ago they even slimed me, which was revolting. Only recently, they dunked the Member for Blain in the water, which was a lot of fun. That was all thanks to the school council. They really have a lot of fun at the same time as doing the important work.

It takes dedication to be on the school council; there are a lot of responsibilities and you receive training. Those parents, teachers and everybody involved over the year do a fantastic job. Good luck in 2026 to those on that Rosebery Primary council. I wish them all the best.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, it has been a huge week for sittings, and we are down five days out of the six for the March sittings.

I forewarn the CLP government that I will have a lot of questions. I want to work constructively on the pre-planning for weather events and the anticipated cyclone approaching the gulf. The current tracking on the map is directly across many of my communities in the Arnhem electorate.

I have several pages of notes. I am madly trying to write letters to the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and the relevant ministers regarding cyclone preparedness and about concerns and questions people have raised with me as the local member. These questions are about local emergency committee management—building structures that may have been identified as the community shelter/evacuation centre for particular places, for example Numbulwar. I am dutifully going through the list.

I give a big thanks to the Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Ms Rebecca Bond, who has already provided information on resourcing for medical supplies for several communities. There are nine Sunrise clinics in the Arnhem electorate; Sunrise services the majority of my electorate. I thank Ms Bond for her quick response.

I was able to get that response out to constituents who have identified concerns in particular parts of the Arnhem electorate; they worried that the clinics were running low on medical supplies. Sunrise is proactive in that space which is great.

I will be working through the list of NTG clinics that sit in that path. At the moment, there is one Miwatj Health clinic in my electorate. It is a bit further north of the anticipated path of the cyclone, if it does come to the Territory.

As we have been talking about for the last week-and-a-half in parliament, we are being proactive and responsive as much as possible. Last night I planned for the worst; if it does not become the worst then at least you have expected it in this time of uncertainty with the weather events, patterns and bizarre timing of everything.

There are people with strong cultural and spiritual beliefs as to why some of this weather is playing out as it is and why some of the country is being disturbed in particular ways. It is interesting to see that come out physically in the weather events and incidents coming thick and fast across the Northern Territory.

We spoke about roadworks and infrastructure investment at length over the last few days; that does not make it any less important. I continue to remind the government that those proactive preventative infrastructure investment pieces will make a big difference in the long run. Just because it was started under a former Labor government does not mean it has to cut the Territory road network off at the knees. Those proactive investments of sealing roads, aerodromes and small homeland airstrips are opportunities for economic development in those local and smaller parts of the Territory like our homelands. We need to think about supporting shops and ensuring small but essential items can be purchased locally, as opposed to in the big town centres or larger remote communities in the neighbouring region.

I spoke about the importance of cyclone shelters as well. This time of year we always think about it, but it would be great to see money where people's mouths are and see the updates.

There has been a phenomenal amount of work on cyclone coding for new houses. The Member for Barkly now has carriage of that important work. Infrastructure and investment in better elevated houses, block houses and higher cyclone-coded houses across the Territory will continue to make a difference. When those old houses are beyond economic repair they can either be completely replaced or, of course, have repairs and maintenance to ensure the structures are safe and sound and fit for purpose, particularly in our remote parts of the Northern Territory.

I heard from a couple of different communities about food security. Chief Minister, I will write to you with a list of some of those concerns. Again, I am trying to be constructive and proactive as local member and provide some early warning alerts because people have contacted me directly about the concerns of food security. I want to include the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Member for Barkly, in some of the correspondence. if I do not finish that tonight, it will come in tomorrow.

Places like Manyallaluk (Eva Valley) do not have a store; it is one of the remaining communities in my electorate that do not. It was isolated for a week or so. People had to rely on drops for food and essential items, particularly for babies, such as baby formula and nappies. It is 2026 that we see this. We love the Territory—it is no-one's fault the weather is doing what it is across such a vast part of the NT—but there are small places that do not always make a lot of noise, where people are concerned about their food security, safety and the ongoing investment into roads and infrastructure to support living and thriving, no matter where you are in the Northern Territory.

Good news for Ngukurr—I spoke with a community leader, and they have some extra food being flown in. Believe it or not, the 17-metre bridge at the Roper River has been flooded several times in the last few days,

as well as the Roper bridge which is 9m above the water level. There are phenomenal amounts of water across the southeast Arnhem pocket. Luckily in a big place like Ngukurr, about 11,000 people, there are two stores: the big general store and a smaller store.

Minyerri has been cut off by water for quite some time, even before all the flooding. I will get an update tomorrow morning around what people need there.

I will probably write in a series of themes so all the communities that have raised concerns are in one letter or email to the government and it can get onto that. I know there are LECs in and around Big Rivers region who have already stood up and been proactive; I appreciate that. We need to ensure local knowledge is acknowledged just as much as the trained knowledge of service providers and government departments.

Wherever I can add value Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and colleagues, I will commit to doing that. I am here to be of service to my community as the local member. Please, if you need to speak to anyone in my patch, as a local member, I will be happy to help facilitate those networks and conversations. People want to know that they are being heard and will see some action, know what the plans are, provide input and receive up-to-date information.

I look forward to having a constructive relationship, particularly around what we are seeing now.

Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island have a lot of resources in and around Groote with the mine there, but I am checking in on people there. I will be talking to some of the bigger organisations tomorrow to see if there is any way I can support them. Unfortunately, they are well versed in emergency management on Groote and Bickerton.

If there are any supplies that need to be flown or shipped in and a cyclone comes into the gulf, let us hope the big manganese ships get sent out to the deep water. We do not want the wharf getting damaged like it did a few years ago with the cyclone that fell south of Groote and caused phenomenal damage on the island.

I want to ensure any messages of concern, raised questions or suggestions are passed on constructively. I am here to do that as the local member—to help facilitate and support any work making sure people in the Arnhem electorate are not forgotten and are communicated to in a timely fashion.

I have lots of notes which I will not get to tonight, but they will be coming through to the government and organisations like the Aboriginal Medical Services, ALPA stores and outback stores. I will be working through the list, particularly addressing telecommunications, making sure we have online updates about that in the Arnhem electorate.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I honour the life and legacy of Emeritus Professor Dr MaryAnn Bin-Sallik, an extraordinary Territorian who changed the course of Indigenous education in this country and touched the lives of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Born on 2 November 1940 in the pearling town of Broome, MaryAnn was a proud Djaru woman of the east Kimberley. Her own heritage reflected a great diversity—Aboriginal, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian and European ancestry woven into a single family story. Her parents, Sallim Bin Sallik and Mary Bridget—known to many as Biddy—instilled in her the values that would guide her for her entire life.

When her family moved to Darwin in 1950 MaryAnn became part of the vibrant and multicultural community that helped shape the Territory we know today. In 1958 MaryAnn began nurse training at Darwin Hospital as the only Aboriginal student nurse in her intake. In 1961 she became the first Aboriginal person to graduate as a nurse from that institution. For the next 17 years she cared for Territorians with compassion and dignity, working in Darwin and remote communities across the Territory.

In 1975 MaryAnn joined the Aboriginal Task Force program at the South Australian Institute of Technology, becoming the first Indigenous Australian to work in the higher education sector. Whilst working full time and raising her daughters, Rokiah and Lisa, she also studied part time, completing qualifications that began a remarkable academic journey. That journey eventually took her across the world to Harvard University, where in 1989 she became the first Indigenous Australian to earn a doctorate from one of the world's most prestigious universities. As she once said, 'Real progress happens when education empowers people to shape their own futures'.

After returning to Australia, MaryAnn continued breaking new ground. She served as Dean of the College of Indigenous Education and Research at the University of South Australia and later returned to Darwin to become Ranger Chair and Dean of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Studies at Charles Darwin University.

Her influence reached well beyond universities. MaryAnn served on national advisory bodies under governments of all political persuasions and contributed to some of the most important moments in Australian history. She played a key role in the national inquiry that produced the landmark Bringing them Home Report, which documented the experiences of the stolen generations and helped the nation confront painful truths about its past.

Even after retirement she continued guiding young leaders, serving on advisory councils and supporting educational institutions across the country, including at Western Sydney University and Aboriginal Hostels Limited. Her service to the nation was recognised in 2017 when she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia, and in 2016 she was honoured as Female Elder of the Year at the NAIDOC Awards.

She was a devoted mother, a proud grandmother—known affectionately as Grandie—and a delighted great-grandmother. She spoke often of the pride she felt in her daughters, her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren.

MaryAnn's legacy cannot be measured simply by the positions she held or the awards she received. Her legacy lives in the students she mentored, the institutions she reshaped and the pathways she created for Aboriginal scholars across Australia.

On behalf of this Assembly, we extend our deepest condolences to her daughters Rokiah and Lisa, to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and the many friends, colleagues and students who were privileged to know her. May she rest in peace.

I also acknowledge and celebrate a remarkable group of young Territorians who are making our community proud with their dedication, discipline and passion for junior rodeo. This high-adrenaline sport demands exceptional talents, skill and maturity well beyond their years, and these qualities are clearly reflected in the outstanding achievements of our young competitors. Tate Carey, Kailee Rykers, Ebony McDonald and Darcy McDonald deserve our warm congratulations on being finalists at the National Junior Finals at the Australian Bushmen's Campdraft and Rodeo Association in Tamworth in January this year.

These talented young competitors have showcased impressive skill, courage and sportsmanship across their respective divisions: Tate Carey in the under-11s mini bull ride, Ebony McDonald in under-11s barrel racing, Darcy McDonald in junior bull ride and Kailee Rykers in under-18s barrel racing.

Their performances reflect their natural talent, countless hours of training, the unwavering support of their families and communities and a genuine passion for the sport. Being selected to complete is a remarkable achievement, and it provided them with an opportunity to really test their abilities. Representing the Territory at a national event is something special, and we are proud of all of them. These young riders carry with them the spirit of the Territory and really show Territory pride. They become important role models to other young Territorians who aspire to pursue their dreams for the future. To Tate, Kailee, Ebony and Darcy, congratulations on this outstanding achievement. We are proud of how you are representing the Northern Territory, and we wish you continued success.

I honour the life of Bill Dempsey, one of the Northern Territory's most respected footballers, a community role model, a champion and a trailblazer. Across Australia the AFL community is mourning the loss of a true giant of the game.

William Brian Dempsey—born on 17 March 1942 in the small railway settlement of Birdum, Northern Territory—passed away on 15 March 2026, aged 83. Bill began his football journey with the Darwin Buffaloes in the NT Football League where he quickly became known as a gifted ruckman with remarkable athleticism, determination and leadership on the field. His talent soon took him beyond the Territory, and as a young man he moved to Perth to play for the West Perth Football Club in the Western Australian Football League. Despite his success interstate, Bill never lost his connection to home. During many summers he returned to Darwin to play with the Buffaloes, proudly representing the club in 140 games. Bill remained deeply connected to the Territory football community that first nurtured his talent.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to sport, Bill Dempsey was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1976. His achievements have been honoured through his induction into the Australian Football Hall of Fame, the AFLNT Hall of Fame, the Northern Territory Hall of Champions and the Western

Australian Football Hall of Fame. Bill was also named in the Indigenous Team of the Century, recognising not only his incredible talent but also the inspiration he provided to generations of Indigenous players.

Perhaps Bill Dempsey's greatest legacy is the pathway he helped create for Northern Territory footballers. His success helped change perceptions of Territory football and open the doors for many great players who followed, including David Kantilla, Maurice Rioli, Michael McLean, Michael Long and Andrew McLeod. His influence continues today through his family, including his grandson, Malcolm Rosas Jr who now plays in the AFL.

Bill Dempsey's story is one of determination, humility and pride in where he came from. While he achieved extraordinary success on the national stage, he always remained a proud Territorian and a beloved figure within the Darwin Buffaloes and the broader football community.

I send our sincere condolences to his partner, Jeran and his family, friends and the many people whose lives he touched through his generous spirit. Bill Dempsey will be greatly missed but leaves behind an extraordinary legacy, not only in Australian football but in the hearts of Territorians who admired him.

I acknowledge a special milestone for a much-loved Territory institution: the 60th anniversary of none other than the Noonamah Tavern or, as many people like to call it, the Noonie. For six decades, this iconic pub, located about 45 kilometres south of Darwin, has been a familiar landmark for travellers on the highway and a gathering point for the rural community.

The story of the Noonamah Tavern is a truly remarkable story. It began with a couple who had a vision—Keith and Clare Best. They knew there was great potential for the site. It started as a pineapple farm with a small road sign, serving pineapple juice to passing travellers, and gradually grew into something much bigger. They do not serve much pineapple juice anymore at the Noonie. They did get Best Draught Beer in the Country a couple of years ago.

In November 1966 the Noonamah hotel opened its doors, and a local icon was born. After years passed and lifestyles changed, and the tavern evolved from a bustling weekend destination to what it is proudly today—a community hub for people in Bees Creek, Humpty Doo, Berry Springs, Acacia Hills and Noonamah.

Its events are legendary, like its rodeos each Dry Season and the world-famous Noonamah frog races held every Melbourne Cup Day. The Member for Goyder proudly took me to the frog races last year to show me the proud rural tradition. It was fantastic.

Over the years the tavern has also been incredibly generous. Its patrons have raised more than $300,000 for Variety and at least $135,000 for Veterans NT. It is a remarkable reflection of the generosity and community spirit that defines the tavern and its locals.

Under the stewardship of owner Tony Inness, the tavern continues to welcome travellers, locals and truck drivers, and offer a place to rest, share a meal and enjoy the warm Territory hospitality that has defined this venue for 60 years.

In 2021 the Noonie was awarded Best Draught Beer by the Australian Hotels Association. I went there after that to have one, and it was pretty bloody good.

To Tony and Bec, congratulations and well done on 60 years. What a great innings. We look forward to 60 more.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.