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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
Parap Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of students from Grade 6 at Parap Primary School accompanied by their teachers. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Nightcliff

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Nightcliff be granted leave of absence from the Chamber today for personal reasons.

Leave granted.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 29

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Public Information Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 29, and table the explanatory statement.

I move that the Bill be read a first time.

This Bill amends the *Public Information Act 2010* (the Act) and the relevant regulations to ensure they are both contemporary and remain effective in achieving their purpose.

Currently the Auditor-General has the oversight function under the Act. Under the *Audit Act 1995*, the Auditor-General's main functions are to provide their independent professional opinion on matters related to financial management; conduct an audit of the Treasurer's Annual Financial Statement; compliance with regulatory requirements regarding financial reporting; and comment on performance management systems in public sector entities.

One of the independent findings of the triennial 2024 Strategic Review of the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office recommended exploring an alternative body to carry out the Auditor-General's oversight function of the Act. Assessing the content of public information could compromise the Auditor-General's core responsibilities and neutrality, particularly when the Auditor-General is required to assess political bias.

In contrast the Ombudsman, as an independent body, operates through a complaint-driven model and regularly investigates public concerns about fairness in government administration. Expanding the Ombudsman's responsibility to review public information could streamline oversight, align with its existing functions and help maintain the Auditor-General's political neutrality.

Consequently, the Ombudsman is well placed to take on this important oversight function. The Bill will transfer jurisdiction of the Act from the Auditor-General to the Ombudsman. Consequential changes to the regulations will also be made to reflect the transfer of jurisdiction.

New section 6(1) in the Bill grants the Ombudsman the sole discretion in deciding whether to start, continue or discontinue a review or investigation of public information, or a complaint under the Act. This independence is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the oversight process and ensures that the Ombudsman is not subject to outside influence in carrying out its responsibilities.

Further, if a member of the Legislative Assembly asks the Ombudsman to review certain public information and the Ombudsman decides not to do so, the Ombudsman is required to notify the MLA of that decision.

As soon as practicable after the commencement of the provisions of this Bill, the Auditor-General must transfer to the Ombudsman all matters relating to the Act, including documents and evidence in the Auditor-General's possession in relation to these matters.

The Ombudsman will then have all the powers to conduct a review and complete a report of the review of public information under the Act as amended by this Bill. The exception to this is if the Auditor-General has already finalised a report, but that report has not yet been given to either the Speaker or an MLA. In this case the Ombudsman will be required to deliver the report to the Speaker or an MLA in accordance with the provisions of the Act as they were before the commencement of this Bill.

I am pleased to commend the Bill to honourable members.

Bill read a first time.

RACING AND WAGERING AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 27

Ms BOOTHBY (Racing): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 27, and table the explanatory statement.

I move that the Bill be read a first time.

This Bill amends the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024* (the Act) to validate any decision made or action taken by Thoroughbred Racing NT (TRNT) for the period 1 July 2024 to 4 April 2025 where that decision or action relates to a power or function of a race control body (RCB), including such a decision or action made or taken pursuant to a section of the Act.

The Act commenced on 1 July 2024 and replaced the *Racing and Betting Act 1983*. It was introduced by the previous government and received unanimous support across the Chamber. The Act regulates the NT racing and wagering industries and replaced legislation that had been in place for over 40 years.

In acknowledging that completely rewriting legislation is a significant piece of work and that things may be missed or overlooked, a technical review of the Act will commence on 1 July 2025. This is not intended to be a full-blown evaluation of the new legislation, but an opportunity to identify anything that was missed, or where unintended consequences have occurred.

I have been advised that several missing provisions have been identified, but only one of real significance, and that is the reason for this Bill. While there were transitional provisions included which allowed for the ongoing appointment of the members of the Racing and Wagering Commission and the Racing Appeals Tribunal, similar provisions appointing TRNT as the race control body for thoroughbred racing were overlooked during the drafting process. As soon as the issue was identified, the Department of Tourism and Hospitality took the appropriate steps to address the matter.

All those in the House would be aware of the great work that TRNT have done and continue to do for the horseracing industry in the Northern Territory. There is no question amongst the industry participants or the general public that TRNT is the industry controlling body.

However, technically when the previous government implemented the Act there was an error unchecked. Under the Act TRNT are responsible for approving race days; licensing and registering persons and animals; entering into contracts; and issuing sanctions, including monetary fines, disqualifications and suspensions. In that new legislation those transitional provisions resulted in any act taken or decision made by TRNT between 1 July 2024 and 4 April 2025 invalid, where that action or decision relates to a section of the Act.

This Bill corrects that omission by inserting a new section into the Act which will validate all TRNT decisions and actions made or taken between 1 July 2024 and 4 April 2025. I highlight the date of 4 April 2025, the day I was informed as the Racing minister of this issue and the day I immediately gazetted TRNT as the race control body for horseracing. Decisions and actions undertaken by TRNT since that date are valid.

The urgency of this Bill is tied to four stewards inquiries conducted by NRNT since 1 July last year. These amendments being introduced today will validate any of the four inquiry decisions.

One of the four inquiries is a current Supreme Court action undertaken by one of the parties affected by the decision handed down in one such inquiry. The Supreme Court has been notified of this government's decision to amend the legislation to validate TRNT actions between the 1 July 2024 and 4 April this year, and has stayed the proceedings until 17 July 2025, so it is vital that we put forward this legislation today.

The remedy to this issue is straightforward but critical to ensure continuity, certainty and legality across the Territory's racing industry.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to the honourable members.

Bill read a first time.

MOTION
Amendment to Motion on the
Committee Referral Regarding the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the motion on the committee referral regarding the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum, as agreed to by the Assembly on 14 May 2025, be amended by omitting clause (c) and inserting new clause (c):

> implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations by the former Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and the outcomes delivered to date.

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, could I ask a question about the process?

Madam SPEAKER: Certainly.

Ms UIBO: In terms of knowing when a debate is coming back, what standing order should we be prepared for and how would we get the referral in regard to notices for that in order to make sure we are aware of what is coming on and in what order?

Madam SPEAKER: Notice of the motion was given last night; you probably recall that. The motion has been agreed to. It was on the Notice Paper, and the referral has gone to the committee. That process is now concluded in terms of the business of the Assembly.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 20

Continued from 19 March 2025.

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

I also table an erratum, which is the amended explanatory statement for this particular Bill. The existing explanatory statement incorrectly refers to section 19B in the first paragraph and incorrectly refers to sections 19A and 19B in the second paragraph. These have been corrected to section 19A and sections 19B and 19C respectively.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, with a presence in nearly every city, town and community across the Territory, local government is critical in delivering adequate and sustainable public facilities and services and developing a strong and cohesive social life for its constituents.

We have heard time and again in this Assembly that gone are the days when local government solely dealt with roads, rates and rubbish. Councils have expanded into a broad range of social and economic services aimed at improving the quality of life for their residents and carry out functions that no other councils around the country provide, such as aged care, childcare and youth diversion. Local government challenges in the Territory include limited economies of scale and own-source revenue; legacy issues related to infrastructure and assets; a complex operating environment; and workforce capability limitations, especially in the bush.

The former Territory Labor government worked closely with councils and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory to deliver better outcomes for the sector and Territorians. This included:

- modernising the *Local Government Act 2019* to streamline the rules and processes for meeting procedures, financial transparency, eligibility for office, mandatory training for elected members, donations, return processes and voter enrolment

- introducing and passing the Burial and Cremation Bill 2022, alongside the subsequent Regional and Remote Burial Areas Grant Program

- funding operations and grants to councils

- developing the 2030 strategy in collaboration with LGANT

- progressing the Groote Archipelago Regional Council, a signature piece of the Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement, which came to fruition this year.

As with all its legislative efforts, the government has done minimal consultation on this Bill and had a one-week turnaround for submissions to the scrutiny committee. It is baffling that the CLP government has once again failed to consult the sector, organisations and individuals impacted by its decisions.

This legislation contains amendments that are largely supported, including:

- removing the requirement for newspaper advertising, and requiring notice of meeting agendas and minutes to be published on council websites, which does not preclude councils from continuing to use physical communications in remote communities

- empowering councils to choose between by-election and appointment for casual vacancies when general elections are imminent, which balances democratic participation with cost efficiency

- clarifying that suspended councillors forfeit remuneration and benefits, which is in line with other jurisdictions except Queensland

- requiring councils to publish general and special rates on their websites.

However, other amendments in this Bill have raised initial concerns from the sector and the opposition, especially the sweeping powers being centralised in the minister's hands. Specifically, new section 19C gives the minister the power to constitute, merge, divide, change or abolish existing local government areas. We ask the minister to consult with the sector, especially in relation to ambiguity surrounding noncompliance.

The section 28 amendment is also a concern for stakeholders because it narrows the Local Government Representation Committee's powers from determination to recommendation, resting the power of determination with the minister or Administrator. This amendment alters the representation committee's independent powers to determine local government wards, which ensured fair representation. It also removes the requirement for the minister to give public notice of determination. This amendment is particularly concerning because it was not highlighted in the minister's explanatory speech and he has failed to outline the need for this change.

It is also disappointing to see that the minister has yet to work with the local government sector to strengthen the code of conduct provisions as it has repeatedly called for. This is a massive oversight and there is no good reason for delaying this.

I also highlight amendments that lay the foundation for the CLP's supposed plan to bring back community government councils. During the NT election the CLP made commitments across remote communities that it would break up regional councils to justify its scrapping of the local decision-making policy and the treaty process. This was to try to win favour with Aboriginal Territorians in the bush. Since coming to government the CLP has not provided Territorians with plans or costings for breaking up regional councils. The CLP did not tell communities that this plan will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, which will ultimately be borne by ratepayers or Territory taxpayers.

The CLP has no intention of meeting this expensive commitment, as there is no money in the budget. We know that. It is disappointing that the CLP misled Territorians. If the CLP cannot tell us how much this will cost and what funding it will cut from other areas to support it, it is hard to believe that the CLP is serious about this. The CLP government has not consulted on this and it has not provided a plan for how it will ensure that community councils will not be set up to fail.

This is an important issue for bush communities. We strongly urge the minister to work closely with those communities before making any change. It is important to get this right.

The creation of the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council is a fantastic achievement for Anindilyakwa people, borne out of the effectiveness of our local decision-making policy in line with their aspirations. However, this achievement does not mean a return to community government councils; it is about understanding that an area like the Groote Archipelago is a distinct geographical and cultural area, so having a distinct local council makes sense. The 2024 budget provided $3m to establish the GARC, enabling the council to be community focused, well governed and, most importantly, sustainable in the long term.

De-amalgamation of the local government regime will be expensive. There are hidden costs behind the immediate establishment expenses of offices, staff recruitment and IT infrastructure. We have seen rising service costs for utilities, waste and maintenance which these smaller community councils will need to absorb. The CLP government should work with LGANT and councils to ensure that the local government sector is financially sustainable and resilient, rather than look to pull it apart.

Although scale brings capacity, we understood the need not to dilute local representation. The establishment of local authorities in 2014 created formal avenues for community input, comprising elected community members who helped guide regional priorities, infrastructure needs and cultural considerations. Small grants are allocated directly to local authorities for minor capital works and community initiatives, fostering local empowerment within the regional council framework. Structured engagement protocols embedded in council operations guarantee that community feedback informs budget setting and strategic planning. These mechanisms also help deliver the benefits of local knowledge, ensuring that community voices are heard while preserving the efficiencies of larger councils.

We acknowledge the frustrations regarding regional councils, but the CLP government should commit to making local government work in its current form. That is why the Territory Labor government worked towards a regional assembly model which would act as a front door for communities to coordinate meetings with all levels of government, including land councils, local councils, NTG departments, the Commonwealth and NGOs.

Although this legislation contains a set of technical fixes, I believe that a broader discussion is needed about how we support a local government sector that is fit for our vast and diverse Northern Territory. We need to consult with local government stakeholders to ensure that we have the most effective model of operation and a respected third arm of government. Although we understand the desire to return to small community-controlled councils, it must be done in a way that ensures the financial stability and strategic capacity of every council to ensure the delivery of good services to the community.

The Territory Labor opposition is willing to work constructively with the CLP government and local government stakeholders to ensure that the increasing demands facing modern local governments can be met because the Territory needs a strong, coordinated local government sector that can deliver services to its unique mix of urban, rural and remote population centres.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I support the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.

I previously served on the Litchfield Council, having been elected in 2021. Madam Speaker, I know that you and the Member for Gwoja served on the Alice Springs Town Council, the Member for Barkly served on the Barkly Regional Council and the Member for Karama on the City of Darwin. Local government is close to our hearts and the community. I apologise to anyone I forgot has local government experience.

We all know how important local government is to the lives of Territorians. Local government is the tier of government that people interact with the most on a day-to-day basis; it is the one closest to the people.

Local government is often the first point of contact for residents when they seek support, services or change in their communities. When they see a pothole they go to their council; when they want upgrades at their local playground they go to their council. At the library they are interacting with their council. When they see a dog roaming the streets they call the council. Whether it is maintaining the roads, providing recreational facilities or managing community events, councils have a hand in shaping the spaces in which we live, work and connect. They also determine speed limits on their local roads, which is unique to the Northern Territory.

These are not distant bureaucracies; they are the local elected members who live on our streets and the council workers we see fixing potholes or contracting it out, mowing verges and helping coordinate local disaster responses.

In the Northern Territory the importance of local government is magnified. Regional and remote communities make up a significant part of our population and geography. For many Territorians, especially those living in

the bush, the council is not just a service provider; it is a critical institution of identity, local self-determination and, in many cases, the largest employer, playing an essential role in community delivery of services.

Restoring local decision-making powers and breaking up some of the overly large regional councils that service vast and diverse populations, such as the Barkly or in the West Daly, is vital to improving outcomes and rebuilding trust. When decisions are made closer to the ground by locals for locals, they are more responsive, accountable and more likely to reflect the lived realities of those they impact. It means giving communities greater control over how their services are delivered, what services are delivered, how infrastructure is managed and how the future of those communities is shaped. It also means recognising that one model does not fit all and that small community-led councils can better serve unique local needs.

I acknowledge the work of the minister for Local Government, who brings real insight to this issue through his experience as the former proud Mayor of the Barkly Regional Council. He understands the challenges of representing communities spread out across thousands of square kilometres and the frustration that many residents feel when decisions are made far from where they live. His leadership in driving reform, backed by his firsthand experience, is helping to re-centre local government on the people it is meant to serve. I thank him for recognising the need to balance power, rebuild trust and restore genuine local decision-making to our bush communities.

Today we are just under 100 days from the next local government elections for the Northern Territory. It is a pivotal time and a chance for people to reflect on the performance of their councils, consider the challenges and opportunities in their region and have a say in who they want to represent them. These elections matter. The people elected in August will be responsible for setting the vision and priorities of their communities for the next four years, and every eligible voter in the Territory has a stake in that future.

I encourage anyone listening who shows an interest in government and their local council to consider putting up their hand for those council elections. It is disappointing to see not as many candidates as you would like on the council ballot. It is important that if people want to have a say in their council, they put up their hand and let the people have their say.

From the smallest townships to our regional hubs, local government is where democracy hits the ground. It is where the voice of the community becomes action and where accountability is most immediate. The decisions made in the council chamber, although sometimes small, directly impact the lives of their residents, whether it is deciding what kind of community hub to build, what roads to seal this year, where to prioritise community funding or even what services to offer such as waste or library services. That is why this legislation matters and why strong, modern and responsive local government frameworks are essential.

I am familiar with the *Local Government Act* due to my experiences in local government. Although I understand the reasons behind the last set of reforms that left us with this Act, there are still many issues held within. This Bill represents an important first step in modernising the Act and its supporting regulations. It aims to clarify, correct and strengthen provisions that have been shown through practical experience to be ambiguous, outdated or administratively burdensome. Although these amendments are modest in scale, they are significant in the fact that they form the first tranche in a broader program of reform that will continue later this year and through our term.

I commend the department of Local Government and my colleagues on the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for their work in engaging stakeholders, assessing submissions and ensuring the Bill achieves its objectives in a way that respects democratic principles, good governance and transparency.

One of the most notable improvements in this Bill concerns prospective councils. These are newly declared councils, often formed through boundary changes or de-amalgamations, before elections can be held to formally constitute them. In practice this has caused challenges, as we have seen in the formation of the Groote Archipelago Regional Council. Who holds responsibility for service delivery in the interim; what liabilities exist; and who is accountable?

This Bill inserts three new sections in the Act that clarify all this. Section 19A makes it clear that a person appointed to constitute a prospective council is protected from liability when acting in good faith. This protection ensures continuity of governance without exposing individuals to personal legal risk.

Section 19B requires that the existing local government council continues to perform its functions in a transitioning area until elections are held for the new council. The minister or Administrator may issue a gazette notice clarifying these arrangements if needed.

Section 19C empowers the minister or Administrator to make transitional orders, ensuring information, assets and responsibilities are transferred properly and efficiently between councils. It can often be difficult when a certain council area is being de-amalgamated because there are question such as, 'If they are going to a new council in two years, why would we fund things in that area? Why would we still invest in their roads?' This clarifies that those services need to continue so that the residents are not worse off because of council politics.

These changes are practical. They acknowledge that one size does not fit all and they allow tailored transitional arrangements to be made for each unique circumstance.

This Bill also amends section 28, which the Member for Arafura picked up on, changing the role of the Local Government Representation Committee from making determinations to making recommendations. This may sound like semantics, but it reflects a deliberate and thoughtful shift in decision-making authority.

Let me be clear: this change does not diminish the role of the committee, comprising the Electoral Commissioner, the Surveyor-General and the CEO of LGANT. The committee is generally well placed to provide expert apolitical advice on matters like ward boundaries and representation structures. Ultimately, decisions that affect electoral structures—such as whether a council should be divided into wards—should rest with an elected representative, the minister.

We have seen this committee make certain recommendations in the past regarding the ward structure in Palmerston Council and Litchfield Council that were not popular with residents. I praise the minister for Local Government for intervening for Palmerston Council because I know it would have dramatically changed the makeup of that council.

There are non-LGANT councils in the Territory. Although I am sure the committee members make unbiased decisions, it appears that councils that are not members of LGANT are not represented on the committee that determines their wards and boundaries.

This approach is also consistent with Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland where reviews are conducted by advisory bodies and the decision rests with the minister. In fact, it is only in South Australia and New South Wales that councils make these determinations. This amendment does not remove accountability; it relocates it to where it arguably belongs—with an elected official.

The next set of reforms concern electoral processes and the filling of casual vacancies. These changes respond to practical challenges experienced by councils and the Northern Territory Electoral Commission. Litchfield and Darwin Councils recently went through this process due to the vacancies created by the Member for Karama and I joining this Assembly. Also, councillors have resigned across the Territory during this term and previous terms, including more recently two in the City of Palmerston.

Section 54 is amended to better define how councils deal with casual vacancies, introducing tiered responses and clarifying the difference between what a council has to do and what a council can do. The rules will be that if there is a vacancy 18 months or more before a council election, a by-election has to occur. By-elections can be costly, especially in remote communities. If there is a vacancy six to 18 months before a council election, councils have the choice to choose between having a by-election or appointing a replacement. This will depend on the needs of the council to make sure there is representation. It clarifies that there has to be a replacement; you cannot let a seat on a council sit vacant for 18 months. If there is less than six months before the next council election, councils can either leave the position vacant or appoint somebody. This provides flexibility while maintaining democratic integrity.

Submissions pointed out that the initial drafting used the word 'may', raising concerns that councils could ignore the requirement. The scrutiny committee recommended that 'may' be replaced with 'must' in key sections to remove ambiguity. My understanding is that the minister and the government support this change. This will provide better clarity for those interpreting the Act in regard to what a council must do.

One of the more visible reforms in this Bill is the modernisation of communication requirements. This will change people's interactions with council a little and it is something that people might notice.

Under the current arrangements councils have to publish a range of notices in their local newspaper or gazette. That is fine if you live in Darwin, Alice Springs or Katherine, but it is less fine when you do not have a regular circular in your area. Let us be honest, few people get their council news from the public notices section of their newspaper or from a flyer pinned on a noticeboard.

This Bill brings the Act into the digital age by requiring councils to publish notices on their websites, not in print media. This does not take away a council's ability to publish in the newspaper its draft municipal, regional or shire plans; meeting schedules and postponements; special meetings and meetings of electors; and budgets, rates and charges and so forth. However, it means that the council has to put them on its website.

This is not a prohibition on print communication. Councils retain their discretion to publish notices in newspapers, on their noticeboards or by any other method they believe best reaches their communities, but they will no longer have to put notices in the newspaper when that was not necessarily the most appropriate method of getting information out to people. By removing this outdated legislative mandate, we are freeing councils to communicate in a way that reflects their demographic realities, resource availability and community expectations.

There are changes regarding annual reports and budgets. These technical but important changes are being made to sections 290 and 203. Councils will be required to pass resolutions when adopting general rates and budgets, ensuring transparency and traceability of these decisions. This clarification resolves prior confusion and strengthens financial governance.

Additionally, in response to sector feedback the timeframe for advertising a CEO vacancy has been extended from six weeks to eight weeks under section 169. The CEO of the agency may also grant an extension in exceptional circumstances. This recognises the complexity and importance of recruiting suitable leadership, particularly in remote councils, without unduly delaying the process. This means that instead of having to hire somebody and start the process and get it all going within six weeks, councils will have another two weeks which will allow them to look a bit further out and ensure they find a CEO who fits well with the council. This will ensure the relationship between the CEO and the council is as strong as possible and the right person for the job is found.

Section 318 has been clarified to affirm the powers of the minister to appoint an official manager in cases of serious dysfunction or persistent noncompliance. This remains a last-resort mechanism, but it is an important safeguard.

The Legislative Scrutiny Committee made seven recommendations. Recommendation 1 was to pass the Bill with amendments. Recommendation 2 was about clarifying consequences for noncompliance under section 19C. Recommendation 3 was to clarify how recommendations from the representation committee are actioned. Recommendations 4 and 5 were to replace 'may' with 'must'. Recommendations 6 and 7 were to do with the explanatory statement to make it clearer. I thank the minister for tabling the new version of the explanatory statement, which has those changes.

These were all reasonable and balanced recommendations. Although all of them have not been implemented in legislation, the government is committed to addressing their intent through administrative processes, explanatory statements and further consultation.

Looking ahead, further reforms are expected in the second tranche later this year. They will explore broader issues such as governance controllers; clearer oversight frameworks; more systematic capacity building for councils; and codes of conduct and their breaches.

The Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 is an evolution not a revolution. It listens to councils, aligns with national practice and provides a modern framework that respects autonomy and accountability.

Councils are not all the same; they vary in size, geography, culture and capacity. This Bill respects that diversity while strengthening and providing clarity on the laws that bind councils. This Bill improves how councils are established, how vacancies are filled, how decisions are made and, most importantly, how services are delivered to the people of the Northern Territory.

I thank the minister for Local Government for his leadership in bringing forward these reforms, and his commitment to strengthening local governance, listening to stakeholders across the Territory and delivering a more modern and responsible framework for councils, as is evident in the work before us.

These changes and the future reform that I am looking forward to reflect not only policy intent but also a genuine respect for the role that local government plays in the lives of Territorians, from the suburbs of Palmerston to the northern suburbs, which I do not know any of the names of; Alice Springs; the bush; the Barkly; the West Daly region; the Tiwis; and across the Territory.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak in support of the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. As the Member for Goyder already mentioned, a number of us, including my own colleagues, him, the Member for Barkly and me had the pleasure of serving on local government.

It is important to stress that local government is important. It is the third tier of our government …

Ms Uibo: Although they say it is the first tier.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Sometimes the first tier, I can accept that in some ways. It is the tier that is probably closest in touch with local residents. It gets involved in issues that are personal and close to residents and members of our community, so I am a big supporter of local government, even though I may give some criticism. We must get behind local government and make it as efficient and effective as possible.

I had the pleasure, as many people know, of serving on the City of Darwin as an elected councillor of Waters Ward for almost three years, from August 2021 to the end of June 2024, when I was obliged to resign in order to contest the Territory election. That is just a part of our process—a great process.

For the benefit of members, Waters Ward essentially covers the northern suburbs that are located in the electorates of Karama and Sanderson, including for me the suburbs of Karama and Malak. My colleague the Member for Sanderson has Anula, Wulagi, Wagaman and all those suburbs that way. These are the important northern suburbs. If I look at those two electorates—there are about eight suburbs—I see that the residents of those suburbs were ignored by the previous Labor government, especially in regard to community safety. Those residents voiced their concerns at the last Territory election.

Luckily, I had been in council and they saw me as a strong advocate for their concerns. Part of the role of councillors is to be an advocate of concerns, but the community safety issues to be solved rested with the Northern Territory Government. We are talking about policing, which is squarely an NT Government responsibility, but it had been neglected by the previous Labor government.

I was privileged to represent and serve the residents in that ward, along with my other Waters Ward colleagues. We actively went out to deliver positive outcomes for residents and be strong advocates for their concerns. I continue to do that.

I will touch on a couple of highlights which I did in conjunction with my colleagues; it was not just me. We were focused on getting outcomes.

As I have mentioned many times in this parliament—in my maiden speech and other speeches—I listened to the concerns of residents. When I was a councillor I delivered a petition on behalf of 1,168 residents calling for the establishment of a permanent police presence at the Karama Shopping Plaza. I am not talking about a $12m Nightcliff white elephant; I am talking about a police presence. I said many times that we can start with a mobile caravan and a couple of police officers and trial it for six months. I will continue to advocate for that. As I have said to my colleagues in this parliament, it is important and we need to move on it.

I was heavily involved in introducing a moratorium on council, which had this program of ripping up footpaths in Moil and other suburbs. Residents did not want these footpaths taken away, but they were told, 'We cannot keep maintaining these'. The council ripped up those pretty good footpaths, but at the same time the council was installing new footpaths—due to its warped planning—in areas where residents did not want them. We had to keep saying, 'Consult with and listen to your community'. That is the biggest problem; the minute you stop listening to the community is when you will make mistakes.

I was also involved in finally getting council to install street lighting at Boulter Road in Berrimah. My colleague the Member for Sanderson is involved because Boulter Road is now in his electorate. That was an issue whereby we had developers, but the planning was wrong. They did not put in footpaths and the council and the NT Government did not think it was not their responsibility. For years about 400 residents had a dark road at night with many opportunities for accidents, including the Indigenous residents living across the road. They said that no-one was listening to them.

When I was elected I made that a high priority. I am glad we now have street lighting, but more needs to be done with regard to footpaths and drainage. The Member for Sanderson is working with the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure, and we hope to get further outcomes in that area. Those 400 residents, and there will be more, deserve it.

Another key area I was involved in was improving local playgrounds across the ward. These were simple things such as providing better access so that people pushing prams did not have to push through grass and could go down a footpath to take their kids to play, which was simple but good for them; improved seating because the grandmas wanted to sit down and watch the kids play, as they could not climb up structures; water bubblers—you all know the heat here—for kids to fill their bottles; and basketball courts for the little playgrounds where kids can put a ball through the ring and have a really good time.

We successfully partnered with NT Police to put bollards in some of our green belt areas, including Malak, to reduce the opportunity for hoons to race cars through these areas, as they continually did, which caused danger to everyone. Sometimes they were racing off to avoid arrest. That was a great partnership.

Councils have an important role to play, but, boy, occasionally they seem to ignore the community they serve and make serious mistakes.

I mentioned this in my maiden speech. We can go through the shemozzle of the Cyclone Tracy structure that divided the community when we were trying to bring the community together. At the time, I put a motion asking that we delay the construction of this so-called, now revisited, public art structure until after the Cyclone Tracy commemoration. No, people would not listen and decided to go ahead. It divided the community, and that was a shame because the 50th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy was an important event.

I went to East Point on the weekend and saw the other tribute where we have the frangipanis and the names of some of those who were killed in the sea and so on, including a child of seven months. That is a prominent memorial, and it was opened by the Governor-General. The Chief Minister was there. What you notice when you read it is that the Mayor of Darwin is not listed, because of the controversy, I suspect. This is when you start having deaf ears.

The other issue I pick up is local government procurement. I have mentioned this many times and I will say it again. When I was Deputy CEO of the Chamber of Commerce five years ago, we were strong about promoting local procurement. We urged the NT Government to make sure it put in a local content weighting, which is 30%. Getting a procurement target is important, but how you enforce it is the key. We had to say that we were committed to local business because local businesses create local jobs and invest in local families, and that is the way we want to go. They are the heart and soul of our economy—let us make sure we understand that.

That is why I was astonished—I stood publicly against this in the open session of council—when the City of Darwin decided to reduce its local content weighting from 30% to 20% last year. The NT Government still has 30%, I understand. It beggared belief. I stood up against it and only one other councillor stood up against it. I think that was Councillor Amye Un. I called her ‘The Vision’. When all those other councillors stand for re-election—if they do—they will need to answer to the community about why they reduced the local content weighting from 30% to 20%. Do they support local business or not? They will be judged by their actions, not on their words. That action was shocking. If there is one level of government that you would think would invest in and promote local business—be it in the cities or the bush—it is local government. I will continue to advocate that the City of Darwin reverses this decision.

Another thing I was shocked about, which happened after I left, was the decision by the City of Darwin to award its recycling Trash and Treasure operation at Shoal Bay to an interstate operator—it was a not-for-profit—rather than support our local HPA (Helping People Achieve) organisation which had been operating the facility for over six years. If HPA was not doing the right thing or the operation could have been improved, the council should have worked with it and help it to improve. The council should not just dump HPA for an interstate team because it might get a little extra saving of money. Having local people working is a much better net return for the Territory and its community. I will continue to say that.

These things need to stop, and that is why I will call it out. I told the mayor that I think he has done some great things, but when you get that arrogant and ignore the community do not be surprised when people call you ‘Kon Descending’, because that is what you are. ‘Coming down the stairs’ is apparently what people call an arrogant mayor—‘Kon Descending’.

I fully support the provisions to get new councillors. When I left, the council it seemed to be in a bit of a halfway house; the council did not quite know because it happened at about that 18-month mark. The council kept getting conflicting advice that it would need to have a by-election and then two weeks later it would be told that it did not need to have a by-election. The council was confused. This Bill will clarify that.

Wards need to be represented, so you cannot have a vacancy for 18 months. That would be irresponsible. However, by-elections cost money. I remember when I came into council that one of the ward councillors, Justine Glover, after nine months resigned for personal reasons or whatever. The council needed to have a by-election. That would have cost the council about $120,000. It is not cheap, but it was only nine months into the council's term, so there was a long way to go. Under these provisions you would still have a by-election, but it gives councils clear options for what is best. We are not telling councils what to do; we are giving them the option. That is great.

The code of conduct provisions is another issue. We see plenty in the press about councillors going off the rails and doing this and that. How do we address this?

The City of Darwin had its big one, Councillor Amye Un. That has been going on for years. I was on the council with Councillor Un. Essentially, Councillor Un puts out various posts. I do not agree with all the stuff she put on Facebook and so on, but there was one time when I would say she rhetorically said, 'If you do this I will stab you in the front'. It is the old saying: I will not stab you in the back; I will stab you in the front. That simple phrase was blown out of proportion, possibly because people did not like Councillor Un and wanted to get rid of her. That is not a reason to get rid of a councillor—we get on with some people and with others we do not—they are elected people.

I cannot believe the process that it went through. There were so many referrals to LGANT that no-one knew which referral the council needed to look at. It wasted much of the council's time—'We now have this going to LGANT. There is another counterargument here.' It went back and forth.

The upshot was that Councillor Un was barred for 12 months from coming into the council chambers; she could not come to the meetings, as we do here. She could attend electronically, but she could not go there because those words had affected the safety of the staff and everyone. Councillor Un could still go to Parliament House and Government House without it being a problem, but she could not go to the council chambers. Bugger me dead, the council renewed that for another 12 months.

I cannot believe it. It is out of proportion, and we need to have it sorted. There must be a much better process, and I think we are doing that with this legislation.

I am a big supporter of local government; it does a lot of work. There are great apps like Snap Send Solve. I always work closely with the councillors in my electorate. I even promote them in my newsletter. I am trying to tell people that although they want me to fix their streetlight or cut down a tree, that is not the NT Government's responsibility; it is a local government responsibility. I give them the details of their councillor and will make an appointment for them to meet their councillor if need be. Likewise, the councillors have people come to them all het up and saying, 'You need to fix the police'. They tell those people, 'No, we cannot do much about the police. We will send you to Brian at the electorate office.' I am happy to take those people. We work collaboratively on that.

I give a big shout-out to the council, which committed to and has started the work on a $3.5m development of an intergenerational playground at Malak Oval. I was part of that when I was on the council. I have an election commitment that we will look at possibly topping up that to expedite its development if we can. That was something we pushed. It is the northern suburbs. All the others seem to have one, but we did not have a regional playground. Our residents had to travel a long way. It will be a fantastic facility. There will be more car parking and it will open up the whole area. It is for everyone; I say that it is intergenerational. Congratulations to the council on that. I am a huge supporter.

I am also a big supporter of developing a youth hub at Leanyer water park, adjacent to my electorate. We have to do positive things for our youths, and I know my northern suburbs colleagues want that too.

The council elections are coming up in August this year. I encourage as many candidates as possible to put up their hands; give people a choice. I respect all candidates who put up their hand. People should also question existing councillors as to their stance on key issues. Where did they stand on reducing local content weightings for local businesses? Where did they stand on getting rid of HPA? My advice to residents is get it in writing because you need to understand.

I foreshadow to all residents that I know there are discussions at council—I will not betray certain confidences, so I will talk in generalities—to introduce tip fees for the City of Darwin and it wants to restrict the number of times you can take your trailer to the tip. That is wrong. We get cyclones, and it is part of our lifestyle. Ask the candidates and the existing councillors, and get it in writing: where do you stand in regard to tip fees for the Shoal Bay dump? Where do you stand on restricting the number of visits allowed? Council will try to

sneak it through and will not talk about it until after the election. Residents, I am giving you the heads-up. Get out there and question every candidate about this.

I am against it. People pay for it in their rates. People want to go the dump as part of their cyclone cleanup. Yes, fees are charged elsewhere around the country, but this is not elsewhere; this is here. This is a big call-out to residents: watch this space. I will alert you to it. I will remind you in my newsletter to question every councillor and every candidate. If Katie Woolf is listening, ask the Lord Mayor about it on your show. Get him to put it in writing or get him to say it. He may change his mind later, but just ask him anyway.

I support the Bill. I am a big supporter of local governments, but be careful they do not make serious mistakes.

VISITORS
Parap Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Grade 6 students from Parap Primary School accompanied by their teachers. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank the Members for Arafura and Goyder and the Member for Karama for his passionate speech about local government. Their contributions are valuable as we debate the changes to the *Local Government Act 2019* and the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021.

I thank the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for its careful consideration of this Bill and its report tabled on 29 April 2025. I note the work of the Chair of the committee, the Member for Wanguri, as well as the work of the Members for Drysdale, Goyder, Johnston and Gwoja. Thank you for the work you have done in not only looking at the Bill but also preparing a significant report outlining some of the matters that were raised about this legislation. Thank you for your work to help move this Bill forward.

The Bill aims to modernise and streamline local government operations by updating outdated or unclear provisions. These amendments will support more efficient service delivery and resource management across the sector. We are focused on fostering self-determination and shared responsibility and building partnerships with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector with the objective of restoring the Territory lifestyle, growing the economy and supporting community wellbeing.

The scrutiny committee made seven recommendations for the Bill. I again thank the scrutiny committee for its work. As I understand, as part of its consideration the committee invited written submissions from the sector and members of the public. Submissions were received from the City of Palmerston, Roper Gulf Regional Council, Alice Springs Town Council, West Daly Regional Council, the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Electoral Commission. I thank all those groups for taking the time to provide those submissions. Continued consultation and feedback from the respective councils and sectors are important for transparency, practicality and the results across the board in local government.

Of the seven recommendations, it is proposed that recommendations 6 and 7 are adopted in full. Recommendations 4 and 5 are adopted; however, the exact wording of those amendments have been drafted by the experts—namely, Parliamentary Counsel. Recommendations 2 and 3 were not accepted.

I thank all the staff from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, particularly the Local Government staff who have been working tirelessly on developing the Bill and on the consultations with the sector. The Member for Arafura highlighted that these consultations are ongoing and have been for many years.

It is important to emphasise that the amendments in this Bill are the first tranche of reforms that will be implemented in stages. By tackling some of the most pressing issues first, the amendments lay the groundwork for comprehensive changes that are underway.

We are empowering remote communities; it begins with listening and truly understanding the identity, culture and aspirations of each place. This is not about redrawing council boundaries or simply creating smaller local

governments; it is about working with communities to shape place-based approaches that reflect cultural authority, support self-governance and strengthen access to essential services.

I will reflect on a couple of points made by the members who contributed.

I thank the Member for Arafura for his input. He mentioned that clause 6 of the Bill provides a new section 19C that gives the minister powers to divide and merge local government areas without consultation. That is incorrect. Existing section 16 already provides the power to do that, so that does not require consultation.

I acknowledge the comments regarding the Groote Archipelago Regional Council. As the member said, its establishment is a milestone achievement that speaks to empowering local people and restoring decision-making to community. Some of the issues addressed by this Bill were learnt from the process of creating this new council, and this Bill will help simplify the process moving forward. I thank the Member for Arafura for that contribution.

It is worth pointing out the claim that a lot of the work was done by the former government, but it was not done properly. It is important to put on the record that, yes, the previous government worked to establish the Groote Archipelago Regional Council, but upon coming into government it was clear that the previous government had not done the job properly.

Feedback from the people on Groote was that they wanted to see a ward system, so I initially suspended the council elections to get further feedback from the community. This is what it is all about—getting out and talking to people on the ground. That is what we did, which is why three wards have been established. I am proud to say that those elections have been completed, and the Groote Archipelago Regional Council is now in place. That is a good news story, and we look forward to working closely with that council.

I thank the Members for Goyder and Karama. It is good to have that diversity in this Chamber with two members who have been councillors for their respective councils.

The Member for Goyder served on the Litchfield Council. He spoke about a number of things, particularly recognition of councils and their important service delivery. He pointed out, as a timely reminder, that the elections are coming up in August this year.

It is appropriate to encourage people to start thinking about local government now, because it is only three months before those elections. We are looking for good people to put up their hand. It is not easy to put up your hand and serve your community, but we encourage people to start thinking about it now.

The Member for Goyder demonstrated that, as a former councillor, he understands the changes we are making. He outlined many of the benefits of these changes to simplify processes within councils.

I thank the Member for Karama for his contribution which highlighted the role of councils and the important role he played as a councillor, championing many issues, including lighting and playgrounds. I think he mentioned the bollards at Malak and ensuring that council was focused on not only service delivery but also engaging with police to help prevent and reduce crime.

The Members for Arafura and Karama also discussed the code of conduct.

This is the first tranche of reforms going through. All the consultations are underway for the further tranches. As we move forward those consultations will continue and we will bring in further changes as those consultations are concluded.

In wrapping up, I thank once again all the members and staff who contributed to the development of this Bill.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail

Clauses 1 to 8, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 9:

Mr EDGINGTON: I move amendment 1 to clause 9(1) in proposed section 54(2)(b) and (c) to omit the words ‘may, by vote of existing members:’ and insert ‘must, by vote of existing members, do one of the following:’

Amendment agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON: I move amendment 2 to clause 9(1) in proposed section 54(2)(b)(i) and (c)(i) to omit the word 'or'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 11:

Mr EDGINGTON: I move amendment 3 to clause 11(1) to omit the words 'may, by vote of existing members:' and insert 'must, by vote of existing members, do one of the following:'

Amendment agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON: I move a further amendment after clause 11(2) to insert the words:

(2A) Section 65(2)(b)(i), (3)(b)(i) and (c)(i) and (ii)

And omit the word 'or'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 39, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Schedule, by leave, agreed to.

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

Bill agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

APPROPRIATION (2025–2026) BILL
Serial 25
and
REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 26

Continued from 21 May 2025.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I will pick up from where I was yesterday.

They are our first responders to motor vehicle accidents. They are on the other end of the phone when you ring 000. They educate Territory children about the dangers of fire and how to respond in emergencies. They are passionate community-focused individuals who are committed to making our community safer, and deserve to be resourced adequately.

Tourism is a vital part of the Territory economy. It is a critical job-creating sector that delivers significant financial and lifestyle benefits to our regions and cities. Working with the sector, the former Territory Labor government invested strongly in marketing strategies to attract more tourists and support infrastructure and initiatives which would guarantee them a wonderful experience.

In the 2024–25 budget the Territory Labor government committed $115m to the tourism, events and screen sectors. This year the CLP government has committed only $88.4m, which it called significant. This is an

overall cut of 23%, including a 12% cut for Territory events and a 30% cut for our screen sector. What a shameful display from the minister for Tourism. We need to be investing in our tourism sector to ensure competitiveness in both the domestic and international visitation markets.

The former Territory Labor government promoted growth in international visitation by supporting marketing activities and measures such as the Territory Aviation Attraction Scheme which caters to domestic and international flight travel. Thanks to these actions, the outlook for tourism remains positive over the long term as the industry continues to grow. However, the minister is struggling to develop an original idea or vision for the future of tourism in the Territory.

Territorians want and need a government that invests in people's success and a future where Territorians have the chance to thrive no matter where they live. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is hard to see where this CLP government has shown strategic vision or foresight in this budget. I also agree with the Member for Blain who yesterday acknowledged that this budget is not ideal. The first thing he said in his speech was this budget is not ideal …

Mr Kerle: Typical Labor taking things out of context, twisting words.

Ms Uibo: It is not twisting words; it is your words.

Mr YOUNG: It is on *Hansard*, Member for Blain. You can check it. It is all there; check your own words and what you said—this budget is not ideal. It is delusional, actually.

Mr Kerle: Because Territorians were let down by Labor.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Let the Member for Daly be heard in silence.

Mr YOUNG: I agree with the Member for Blain that this budget is not ideal.

Question Time yesterday was interesting. I asked the Minister for Public Service whether flexible work and working from home arrangements will still be a part of the enterprise bargaining process. The minister could not answer the question. She could not guarantee that public servants would still have their entitlements to work from home and have flexible work arrangements. She said:

> *We will find out what the wash-up of that is when they end, and I will let the Assembly know.*

I look forward to the minister letting us know how that enterprise bargaining agreement went. I hope that the minister will not allow those cuts to happen. We saw what happened at the federal election when Peter Dutton mentioned that he would get rid of flexible work arrangements and working from home entitlements. He then backtracked on it.

It sounds like the minister is backtracking because she has been called out. We know how important it is for public servants to have flexible work arrangements in place, as it allows families to pick up kids from school and do extra activities for their kids, such as drop them off at the soccer park. These flexible work arrangements are in place so that people can continue to do their job and have a thriving family. Therefore, it is astonishing that the Minister for Public Service said, 'We will see what the wash-up is. We will see what happens when this is all washed up.'

Mrs Hersey: Out of context.

Mr YOUNG: That is what you said.

As I suggested to the Member for Blain when he said that this budget is not ideal, the minister should look at *Hansard*, which was put out last night. I could not believe it when I read it. I thought I heard it in Question Time, and there it was written clearly that we would see what the wash-up is from all this.

Also washed up and not ideal was the fact that the Treasurer was fishing at the Daly River in my electorate a week before the budget. He was fishing while public servants were working all day and long hours into the night. The minister does not care about them. Treasurer Bill Yan could not care about them. He was more worried about hooking a barramundi and probably sinking a few tinnies. He could not care less about the Territory. He was more worried about hooking himself a barramundi.

The Chief Minister probably should have tightened that drag up and got him back to Darwin. We know how much he loves being in Darwin because he stated it. He came in here and stated that he likes to be in Darwin because he has to fix the budget, yet he is more worried about being in Darwin. I do not know where that fits in, fixing up the budget when he is on the Daly River fishing.

Mr Mackay: It is a shame you have never been to that comp.

Mr YOUNG: I go there all the time. I have been fishing down there.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Stop the interjections, please.

Mr YOUNG: I choose my time. Do you know what else I do when I go there? I make sure I talk to the Leader of the Opposition, and I put in my leave. I do not just go there and say that I was 'working' when I was fishing, hooking up some barramundi. That is what the Treasurer did. He could not care less about the public sector or his advisers on the fifth floor. I am sure they are upset by it all because they were working hard while Treasurer Bill Yan was fishing, trying to catch barramundi. He does not look too happy about it all because he has been caught out; he has not put his leave in at all.

I have had a few people tell me that they could not believe it because he carried on in opposition, saying that he would be a great Treasurer and stand up for Territorians, yet on his first budget he was fishing.

Member for Blain, this budget is not ideal because your Treasurer could not care less about Territorians; your Treasurer was fishing. I guarantee that the Treasurer did not take the left-hand turn before the Daly boat ramp to tell the Malak Malak rangers, 'We have cut $12m out of the budget for ranger programs'. I tell you why he did not do that. It was because he did not know. He did not have his eyes across the budget; he did not even know that was going on. People in the background—probably one of the ministers—said, 'The Treasurer is fishing; let us just cut this $12m from ranger programs. He will not notice anyway because he is down there fishing.' That is what went on.

Ms Uibo: Shame.

Mr YOUNG: It is a shame that the minister cannot see the irony in this. He is smirking, thinking it is hilarious. I suggest to the minister that the next time he goes fishing and goes away, he puts in for leave. There is no concerns about people taking leave; we understand we all have those entitlements. However, when you are the Treasurer handing down the budget, you should not be out fishing the week before. I would have thought he would have to make some sacrifices in that job. All of us have to make sacrifices in our roles. Especially if a person is a Treasurer or minister, they have to make sacrifices in their roles.

I understand the Member for Blain's concerns. We understand why it is not ideal because the Treasurer has been down there and is hooked on fishing. He does not give a damn about Territorians. We see it in this budget …

Members interjecting.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up on the interjections about the mess of the budget. I thank the Member for Fannie Bay who is coming in saying, 'It is a mess; the budget is a mess' …

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Direct comments through the Chair, and cease the interjections, please.

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 31; disorderly. They are mischaracterising the Member for Fannie Bay's comments about Labor's failed budgets.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 20; interruptions. I think you have addressed it, so thank you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: As I said, can the Member for Daly be heard in silence. Everyone else has spoken on this and generally had their freewheeling speech. I will give him the same courtesy.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up that we now have two members on the government side—one saying that it is not ideal and one saying that it is not a mess—because the Treasurer is down there fishing.

Concerningly, the Treasurer has not been across the numbers in his budget. We know that because last week the Treasurer could not even answer questions from the media on the budget. He and his government ministers cannot even answer questions in Question Time. You would think he would be prepped, ready to go and know his numbers for the media. He was asked questions by the media and he could not even answer them …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I move that an extension of time be granted to the Member for Daly.

Motion agreed to.

Mr YOUNG: I thank the Member for Barkly for agreeing to an extension of time. Some of the others did not want to. He is a bush member; he gets it. He does not go fishing at the Daly River, but still some things were cut in the Barkly. What about the Barkly? We will have to say it on his behalf, and maybe the Treasurer will hear then.

Members interjecting.

Mr YOUNG: That is right. The Member for Fannie Bay said that the budget is a mess, then the Member for Blain …

Ms Uibo: She does not care.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, stop the interjections, thank you.

Mr YOUNG: The Member for Blain said that it is not ideal. We know it is not ideal, Member for Blain …

Mrs ZIO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 38; tedious repetition. We have heard this so many times. Can we move on, please?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a freewheeling debate. I will let the Member for Daly continue.

Mrs Zio: How many times?

Mr YOUNG: Do not worry; I will keep saying it, Member for Fannie Bay, because Territorians want to hear it. That is what is going on. Territorians know that this budget is not ideal. You might not want to hear it, but Territorians want to hear that this budget is not ideal.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! When the member has the call he should direct his commentary through the Chair not at the Member for Fannie Bay.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I agree. I remind the member to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr YOUNG: Territorians have been reaching out to us. They have big concerns about this budget because it is not ideal. It is messed up. Maybe it is washed up, as the Member for Katherine would say, when it comes to people's entitlements.

I hope that the Member for Katherine sticks to her words and comes back to inform the Assembly about people's entitlements to flexible work arrangements and working from home, because she said that in this place. I pray that we do not see cuts to flexible work entitlements and working from home because Territorians rely on flexibility a lot.

Some members in this House have used flexible work arrangements. I believe that the Member for Wanguri did with the scrutiny committee. She was sick, as she stated in the House, and she still showed up to work. That is what we are talking about with flexible work agreements. I commend the Member for Wanguri; she showed up for the scrutiny committee. She acknowledged she was sick, and she probably did not want to pass on her sickness to her colleagues, so she did the right thing. She could Zoom into the meetings, which she did, and rightly so. Therefore, I hope that the Member for Katherine talks to the Member for Wanguri about flexible work entitlements.

Sometimes you get up in the morning and feel a bit sick and are unsure whether you should go into work because you do not want to pass on sickness to your colleagues, but you know that you are not so sick that you cannot work. I hope through the EBA that the entitlement will be there. I hope that the minister will talk to her department about it, because we do not want to see the same thing as happened to Peter Dutton when he announced that policy. I hope it is not a policy of the CLP.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is hard to see where this CLP government has shown any strategic vision or foresight in this budget. I agree with the Member for Blain that this is not ideal. I agree with the Member for Fannie Bay that the budget is a bit of a mess. I hope that next year if the Member for Namatjira is still the Treasurer that he is not fishing a week before the budget and that he works in collaboration with the public sector, because the busiest time of year is putting together a budget for Treasury.

Some public servants worked late into the night to get the budget ready for the minister, yet they probably did not know that he was fishing in the Daly River. They probably wanted to clarify something in the budget and get hold of the minister's office. They wondered why they could not sign off on the ministerial briefs that came through and have been put on hold. It was because the Treasurer was out on the water, fishing with his mates, not even on leave, pretending to work.

I would hope that after this, the Treasurer can get back to his electorate and represent the people of Namatjira because that is what they deserve.

Ms Uibo: Does he know where it is?

Mr YOUNG: I do not think he knows where it is; we may have to draw him a little mud map to get back there.

I thank the Assembly for allowing me to speak on this, this evening. I am certain, after this week …

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is actually morning.

Mr YOUNG: It is morning—I was still caught up in yesterday afternoon. Thank you for clarifying that.

I thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. I am certain of one thing after this week; that is, Bill's only balance is excuses.

Mrs LAMBLEY (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to make some comments about this budget, given that since I have been a member of parliament I have made comments on all the budgets from 2010 to now. Being Speaker it is more of a decision about your contributions, for some weird reason. Here I am representing my community of Alice Springs which has done it tough for many years.

It is fair to say that Alice Springs was not the priority of the former Labor government. The former Labor government's priority was the Top End. This beautiful City of Darwin was the main beneficiary from the eight years of Labor government.

This first budget of the Finocchiaro CLP government was greatly anticipated in terms of how it would be different for the people of Alice Springs. I was delighted that the Treasurer spent a significant part of his speech on budget day, 13 May, talking specifically about Alice Springs—not Tennant Creek, Darwin, Palmerston or anywhere else. I thank him for that because—he has been a colleague of mine in this Chamber for the last four-and-a-half years—the Treasurer, the Member for Namatjira, understands how difficult it has been in Alice Springs for many years. There have been lots of promises, but not much has been delivered.

This budget is important to us in Alice Springs and it is encouraging, but once again it is about the delivery. Promises come and go, but the delivery is what counts. In Alice Springs we have learnt that nothing happens overnight or, indeed, nothing happens at all.

The greatest example of that is, dare I say, the national Aboriginal art gallery. I was in this Chamber before the 2016 election when the former Giles CLP government put $70m on the table for a national Aboriginal art gallery and cultural centre to be built in Alice Springs. That was nine years ago and we are still talking about it, debating the site and looking at the numbers. It is changing as we speak, or that is what it looks like from an outsider's perspective.

The gallery has been a great disappointment for everyone in Alice Springs and across the Northern Territory. It has not eventuated. There is still doubt in the minds of the people of Alice Springs about whether we will ever see it. I am encouraged by the new government's commitment, but, honestly, we question whether we

will ever see a national Aboriginal art gallery or whatever the government chooses to call it at this point in time. It is almost like the PALIs, the police outside the bottle shops, or POSIs—the name changes regularly according to the latest person in charge. I will always call it the national Aboriginal art gallery because that is what it has always been called.

Money has been committed in this budget to the gallery. I think we are down to $123.5m. That is a drop of about $23m from last year's budget allocation for the gallery. The Treasurer gave an explanation for that drop in the funding for the gallery, but it is difficult to understand. Further explanation around that is necessary.

Under the CLP government the site has been allocated to the front car park of Anzac Oval, and that is now under contention. On 6 May the Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour, stated on ABC Alice Springs radio that she is considering blocking the Northern Territory CLP government's use of the $80m of federal funding for the building of the national Aboriginal art gallery on the car park at Anzac Hill because she does not like that site, so here we go again. I am not sure what will happen and I do not want to incite any more confusion or trouble around this, but when the re-elected Member for Lingiari says that she will potentially take on the new CLP government over its decision to put the gallery in the car park at Anzac Hill oval that usually spells trouble. If it looks like a rat and it smells like a rat it usually is a rat. There is potentially more trouble on the horizon for this beleaguered development in Alice Springs.

Dare I bring up the issue of the site of the gallery because it is still contentious. I do not think it should be built in the CBD of Alice Springs, and I never have. I am on the public record for nine years saying that. I think it should be built south of The Gap where the traditional owners have always wanted it. It should be built on the highway as you come into town, and I think it should be built at the Desert Knowledge precinct. That is my opinion.

I probably should not want that because my husband and I own property in the CBD of Alice Springs and it would make a lot of sense for us to benefit from this big investment going into the heart of the CBD, but culturally and socially it does not make sense to put it on that site. Although I am loath to agree with Marion Scrymgour—God love her; we agree on a lot of things—she might get a lot of support for her concern about where the CLP is currently planning to put it.

The fact that it has been downsized to a regional gallery is disappointing. Part of me thinks that, controversially, you should just walk away from it, government members. It has lost its spark; it has been minimised and demonised. We are all demoralised, so maybe it is time to put it on the shelf and walk away because wherever you put it, it will be wrong. It is a no-win situation.

Instead, the money should be invested thoughtfully and quickly into other projects and initiatives in Alice Springs. If people were given the opportunity to contribute to a discourse on that, you would come up with some good ideas. This gallery is probably the epitome of the Northern Territory Government's failure for Alice Springs.

There have been good announcements for the town, such as the police comms coming back to Alice Springs. Police communications were taken away from Alice Springs many years ago, before my time in this place. I think it was before 2010. I remember in 2012, as a part of the former CLP government, we promised to bring police comms back to Alice Springs. We did not do that. We did not deliver on that promise—some of you may remember that—because it was too hard to get the staff to man the police communications in Alice Springs. It was far more efficient and cost-effective to leave it in the Peter McAulay Centre in Darwin. Centralising the management and control of police comms and emergency services in Darwin made sense, and it probably still makes sense.

I am watching this space with great interest because we broke an election promise then. I wonder exactly what this government will do in this space and how it intends to bring police comms back into Alice. There has been $2m allocated to that. I need a lot of briefings because I do not know the answers to these questions. I will be asking for a briefing on that soon. I wonder whether that will be successful. The intent and promise is there; let us see whether it is delivered.

There were a few more interesting things in the budget which I do not know much about. Once again, I will need briefings. There is the development of St Mary's precinct south of The Gap just after the Old Timers nursing home. It has been there forever. It is a heritage precinct—at least parts of it are. Part of that will be developed into social housing and this government has allocated $14m towards that. I look forward to seeing exactly what that looks like and how it will function. Of course, when you talk about a new housing development, security and safety is paramount. How to keep that beautiful area safe for the people who live

there will be a challenge. It is a beautiful precinct. I have not been there for several years, but it is special. I hope the historical value of St Mary's precinct is honoured.

Another curiosity to me is the subdivision at Sienna Village. I do not know much about it. Approximately $1m has been allocated to developing that site—the pointy corner area, I take it. I read somewhere that it will be used for tourism. That will be interesting. It is across the road from a caravan park and near the Alice Springs brewery. That has remained derelict for some time. It was a part of the bigger Sienna Village complex. I think it was gifted to the government a few years ago. It has remained an empty block. There was a building demolished on that site. It is in a key location to be developed for tourism, if that is the government's intent.

The Road Transport Hall of Fame has been a key tourism drawcard for Alice Springs for many years. It has hit hard times over the last—it is probably close to 10 years now. It has struggled. There has been lots of controversy about the management and the governance structure of the Road Transport Hall of Fame. It has struggled to attract visitors. After COVID it was in a bad way, and it still is. The former government allocated about $3.5m to revitalise the National Road Transport Hall of Fame. Once again, that was not delivered; it was an empty promise. I understand that this government is continuing to fund the revitalisation of the Road Transport Hall of Fame. I look forward to seeing what that looks like. Another briefing would be great; I will send you a list this afternoon.

Flood mitigation is one of my key favourite topics. In 2017 the former Northern Territory Labor government received a flood mitigation report about Alice Springs. It was commissioned by the former CLP government and handed to the Labor government in 2017 recommending a 10-year plan as to how the government should proceed in securing the town from flood damage. At that stage—eight years ago—I think the bill would be about $150m. Virtually no money was spent on flood mitigation during that time. I note that this government still has $9.4m in the budget to pursue the cheapest option, put on the table by the advisory group in its report, to expand the drainage and systems within the town.

This is a huge problem for Alice Springs because, as other members have mentioned in this new parliament, we are being charged exorbitant insurance levies. That is primarily due to the fact that there has been no progress on flood mitigation in Alice Springs for many years. I want the CLP government and the Treasurer to look at this and allocate more money. Money has to come from somewhere, but this is a real investment in the town. It may not be sparkly, attract tourists or give a media grab that we as politicians love, but this is a real need in the town. The safety and security of our town during flooding is essential and it affects the back pocket of each of us.

Look at what is happening interstate as we speak; people on the mid north coast of New South Wales are seeing a one-in-100-year flood decimate their communities. That could happen to Alice Springs tomorrow or next week, and we are not prepared. We have made virtually zero progress since the last major flood in 1998. I call on this government to take a closer look at that.

I will not speak any more, as it is almost lunchtime, and I have made my point. I am watching this government closely. I am sick of empty promises and things not being delivered to Alice Springs fairly and equitably. We make up 30% of the population of the Northern Territory and we deserve to be treated better. Now that we have the Members for Braitling and Namatjira in Cabinet advocating for us, I would hope we get a better deal. I look forward to seeing how things progress.

I support the Appropriation Bill.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

VISITORS
Henbury School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of senior students from Henbury School accompanied by their teachers. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

NOTICES

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move that the NT Legislative Assembly:

- acknowledges the important and extensive work of the Northern Aboriginal Interpreter Service in its 25-year legacy

- recognises the Northern Territory is one of the most linguistically diverse areas in the world, and the expansive and challenging requirements of the role of interpreters in the NT context

- recognises the right of Territorians to access public services in a language they understand and the value of embedding interpreter services across all relevant sectors of the public service

- urges the government to increase its commitment to funding the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, acknowledging the importance of strategic, long-term and intersectoral investment to ensure the service is able to sustainably recruit and develop the Aboriginal interpreter workforce to deliver its core business operations across urban, regional and remote locations of the NT.

PETITIONS

Petition No 12 – Immediate Action to Protect Companion Animals (Evie's Bark)

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I present a petition from 1,495 petitioners praying for immediate action to protect companion animals.

I acknowledge in the gallery that we have Dean and Anitra to whom Evie belongs and will remain part of their family.

The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

> *The petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly takes immediate action to protect companion animals through the implementation of Evie's Bark. These reforms are crucial to prevent further tragedies, provide peace of mind to pet guardians and uphold the values of care and respect that our community holds for its animals.*

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

Motion agreed to.

Petition No 13 – Dundee Beach School Infrastructure

Mr YOUNG (Daly)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I present a petition not conforming with standing orders from 283 petitioners praying for immediate action on Dundee Beach School infrastructure. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

> *The petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly takes immediate action to:*
>
> 1. *acknowledge the dramatic growth of school students enrolled at the Dundee Beach School and the pressures being placed on the school.*
>
> 2. *acknowledge the work of the school council in developing the Dundee Beach School Masterplan and commit to the implementation of the master plan.*
>
> 3. *prioritise stage 1 of the master plan due to the imminent health, safety and student wellbeing.*

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

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I present a petition from 217 petitioners praying for the immediate resurfacing of the entire length of Boulter Road, Berrimah. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

The petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly supports:

1. *immediate resurfacing of the entire length of Boulter Road, Berrimah, to provide a smooth, safe and durable road surface.*

2. *realignment and construction of a safe and accessible footpath along Boulter Road to ensure pedestrian safety.*

3. *addressing flooding issues by improving drainage systems along Boulter Road to prevent water build-up and road damage during the Wet Season.*

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

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

Alcohol Policy – Katherine

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for ALCOHOL POLICY

Madam Speaker, before the clock starts and with your indulgence, I acknowledge the Henbury students. They have some up-and-coming leaders, particularly one student who hosted me in the past at Henbury School as part of the Learning Commission. A big welcome and shout-out to the Henbury students; I hope you enjoy your time in parliament.

Crime and antisocial behaviour in Katherine are at unacceptable levels. Police launched a grog crackdown after a staggering 345% increase in banned drinker orders in just three months. The number of BDOs issued in April more than doubled, hitting 332. Police say that alcohol is the primary driver of crime in Katherine, and our frontline officers are stretched in dealing with the social impacts. Violent crimes are at record highs. Assaults in March were 60% higher than in March 2024. Katherine recorded its highest level of crimes against the person in 16 months. Things have become so bad that the town's major supermarket has reduced its hours due to safety concerns for the staff and customers. Even the Member for Katherine has said that there are not enough police in Katherine and the situation is bad.

How can you defend your government's record when violent crime is on the rise and alcohol-related harm and antisocial behaviour are plaguing our community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear Labor talking alcohol-fuelled violence, because if we look back at the eight years under Labor we can see what the statistics really tell us. From 2016 to 2024 in Katherine, alcohol-related assaults were up by 97%; domestic violence assaults were up by 135%; property damage was up by 173%; commercial break-ins were up by 167%; house break-ins were up by 201%; and total offences against the person were up by 136%. That was during Labor's eight years of government, and today those opposite are talking about alcohol policy and asking what we are doing.

Let us look at Labor's record on dealing with alcohol, because the only plan it had was to invest in shares when the Stronger Futures …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. I was not asking about the past Labor government I was asking about the CLP government. What are you doing to support Katherine?

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, you have used up your relevance quota because he still has almost two minutes left.

Mr EDGINGTON: Let us look at the real situation. Yes, I pick up on the point of order because Labor does not want to hear about the mess that it created in eight failed years …

Members interjecting.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I cannot hear the reply due to the interjections.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, we will be quiet. There will be silence; no more interjections.

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: The minister will be heard in silence. Opposition Leader, you are on a warning.

Mr EDGINGTON: When the Stronger Futures legislation lapsed in July 2022 the only plan that Labor had was to invest in shares at the expense of the safety of people in the Northern Territory. When that legislation lapsed Labor did not have anything in place to protect women, children and Territorians, including those in Katherine. All Labor did was invest in shares, banking on more grog flowing into the Northern Territory.

What the former Labor government did to the Northern Territory is a disgrace. To come in here and start pushing all this back on the CLP is a disgrace.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; disorderly words. There are imputations and improper accusations in the Member for Barkly's contribution to the question.

Madam SPEAKER: What words specifically, Opposition Leader?

Ms UIBO: Saying that the Labor government was investing in shares of alcohol and making our community unsafe. That is improper and an imputation.

Madam SPEAKER: I think it is on the public record—that discourse, debate and discussion. I do not think there is any question around the history of that, which you have decided to refer to.

Ms UIBO: The imputation I take offence to is that I asked the question and the Member for Barkly is implying in his answer that I have done the wrong thing. I dispute that imputation.

Madam SPEAKER: Let us continue respectfully. Minister, you have the call. I am not sure that there is a point of order.

Mr EDGINGTON: On coming into power we passed legislation to give police more powers to address nuisance public drinking. We have targeted alcohol restrictions in public housing. We have not let this go. We have been on the front foot, introducing legislation from the very first sittings focused on reducing crime and antisocial behaviour and dealing with the effects of alcohol that we were left by the out-of-touch Labor government. It had no plan and no idea what it was doing when it came to dealing with crime. We scrapped the minimum floor price, which only pushed drinkers to heavy spirits. Labor left the mess, and we are getting on with fixing it.

Road Safety

Mr KERLE to CHIEF MINISTER

Last week we observed National Road Safety Week. The simple message was 'drive so others survive'. Sadly, it appears that for some the message is still not getting through, and we have had what can only be described as a tragic period on our roads. We know that the impact of road trauma extends far beyond those who lose their lives and their families; it is felt across the community. This was particularly felt in my electorate with a female being struck near my office on Thursday last week and sadly passing away this week.

Can you advise the Assembly what more can and needs to be done to stem the flow of these all too often needless deaths on our roads?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, last week was Road Safety Week, and we have all been wearing our yellow ribbons in the parliament. Over the last two weeks there have been seven deaths on our roads, including one in the Member for Blain's electorate. One of the pedestrian accidents was a constituent of mine. Of course, one life lost is one life too many. We have lost 16 lives on our roads this year.

It started in January when there were four deaths in Yirrkala, and it has increased since then. We had two car crashes recently in my electorate, where two people lost their lives in almost the identical spot on Kirkland Road. You are right; it is not just the loss of life and the impact on the family but also the support network, the friends and the entire community.

We are urging people to be careful on our roads. Our police are maintaining high-visibility policing. I receive a lot of feedback from people saying that they see a lot of police on our roads, which is terrific.

Just prior to Easter I launched a campaign with the Motor Accidents Compensation Commission, which is contributing about $4m a year for road safety initiatives. There has been a big push with the 'drive like your life is worth living' campaign. That applies to everyone because it is not just about you in control of that vehicle; your passengers and everyone else on the road are impacted by your actions.

The fatal five continue to be the key drivers of lives lost on our roads. Fatigue, speeding, impairment through drugs or alcohol, distraction and not wearing seatbelts continue to be a focus. Our police ran an enormous Easter campaign which was successful, with 56 RBTs across the Territory and 5,071 drivers tested. Forty-one drivers tested positive for alcohol and 24 tested positive for drugs. However, there is still much more that needs to be done.

We have those intensive campaigns are confronting people with the reality that Territorians are four times more likely to die on the road than the national average. We have the highest road death rate in the country. We want to be the best in the country at a lot of things, Member for Blain, and this is not one of them. It is an absolute tragedy.

We continue to ask people to drive with care. It impacts our community and our first responders who are rocking up on the scene. They are doing everything they can to preserve life and help people, and that takes a massive toll on them. We have to be doing more as a community. Our responsibility when we are in a vehicle with friends or family is not to allow them to be distracted or affected by the other fatal five. If we all stay safe together, we can reduce our road toll.

Housing Construction

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The latest KPMG report on the Territory economy clearly warns that sluggish housing construction is acting as a major handbrake on growth. Darwin is set to deliver only 36% of the Commonwealth's target of housing stock, which is by far the worst outcome nationally. Your budget has slashed housing funding by $100m, including cuts to urban, remote, government employee, homelands and town camp housing. How can you justify these severe housing cuts at a time when experts identify inadequate housing supply as the biggest threat to our economy?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, although there was an article today, we have some positive news coming out of our housing construction and housing finance data across the Territory.

The programs that the CLP put in place, with our FreshStart and HomeGrown grants, are reaping rewards across the Territory. More than 700 applications for those grants have already been put forward. We announced last week, as part of the budget, that we will continue those grants for another 12 months. That gives Territorians the opportunity to get into the market. When we first announced those grants, the Property Council and Master Builders said that it would take time for them to have an effect, particularly with people trying to get land, find builders and get the finance needed to have those projects underway. This is why we have extended these grants for another 12 months.

I will share some data with the Chamber. At the start of the month, the data for the previous quarter was released; it showed that under the CLP government the construction industry is thriving and our housing

supply is growing. Residential building approvals were up by 48.6% in the March quarter, and this is a year-ended change. Engineering construction activity in the December quarter was up by 26.2%. The engineering work commenced was up by $348m in the December quarter. Housing finance commitments, which is a key indicator, were up by 16.5% in the March quarter. The number of first home buyers commitments—these are great numbers—is up by 48% in the March quarter. That shows our CLP government is delivering for our housing sector.

I note that the difficulty we face in driving growth in our housing sector market going forward is tradies.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question was specifically about why the Treasurer cut $100m from the housing part of his budget.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call.

Mr YAN: I will continue answering the question.

The capex on buildings and structures is up by $697m. Our HomeGrown and FreshStart grants and all the other work we are doing to get people to put down roots in the Territory is building our economy. The stuff the CLP government is doing is providing the opportunity …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. It is specifically about the $100m cut to housing in the Territory budget.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister.

Mr YAN: Yes, we have a record Infrastructure budget this year. I do not like saying it, but we have had to invest heavily in infrastructure for all Territorians and will continue to do so.

What we are doing with the housing market is making sure that people have the opportunity to get into housing …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: I know he is not answering the question the way you want him to, but do you have a different point of order?

Ms UIBO: The standing order is the same:

Answers will be concise and directly relevant to the question asked.

That is Standing Order 110.

Madam SPEAKER: Eleven seconds, minister.

Mr YAN: We are improving our economy and getting more people to move to the Territory to put down roots, build houses, raise their families and call the Territory home.

Port of Darwin

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and LOGISTICS

The Port of Darwin underpins our trade routes, Defence posture and future jobs. How is the CLP government making sure that this vital asset stays secure, competitive and firmly aligned with the interests of Territorians and the nation?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we all know that Darwin is Australia's front door to the Indo-Pacific. Our port region must be ready for heavier Defence logistics, the surge in critical mineral exports and the growing LNG cargos that will fuel the region and the world. At the same time it must operate in a way that reflects Australian interests and safeguards the Territory's prosperity.

The Commonwealth stated that it wishes to see the port's long-term future anchored firmly in Australian hands. Turning that goal into reality depends on close cooperation with the NT Government. Landbridge

remains the leaseholder and runs the day-to-day business, yet the legislative settings, harbour oversight and commercial agreements that define what happens on the waterfront sit with the Northern Territory. Any durable path forward therefore needs Territory expertise and consent.

Our approach is grounded in three clear principles shaped for today's realities, not the circumstances of a decade ago:

- sovereign assurance arrangements must strengthen Australia's control over essential trade and Defence infrastructure
- investment certainty—the Territory's reputation as a dependable place for long-term capital must be protected
- local benefit—every decision that is made must translate into jobs, skills and contracts for Territorians.

We are engaging quietly and methodically with all stakeholders in a respectful manner. Options are being stress tested against these principles, and only those that meet all three values will progress. I will not speculate on particular mechanisms or timelines. Policy made in haste rarely endures.

I assure the Assembly that Territorians will help set the course for the Port of Darwin. Once that course is settled our harbour will remain open, competitive, secure and proudly Australian. The outcome will preserve our strategic reach into emerging markets, deepen Defence cooperation with our allies and position the Port of Darwin precinct as the natural service hub for northern Australia's growth over the next generation.

We have been quietly doing this work since November last year. We have been working with the federal government and proponents in the Territory, and we will continue to do that important work because we understand the strategic and economic significance of the Port of Darwin to the Territory's economy.

VISITORS
Stroke Foundation

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of two visitors representing the Stroke Foundation: Hon Heidi Victoria, the former Minister for the Arts and Women's Affairs in Victoria; and Dr Lisa Murphy. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Private Hospital – Maternity Services Closure

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for HEALTH

You received half-a-billion dollars in federal funding from the Albanese government—a 30% increase in funding from last year—yet you still have not managed to come up with a plan for maternity services in the Territory, even though you knew about the closure of the private maternity ward way back in September last year. The federal government has demonstrated that it is ready, willing and able to support the NT Government to deliver better health services for Territorians, but it has not received from you a detailed fully costed plan to fix the maternity crisis that you dropped the ball on. When will you start taking this issue seriously and work with the federal government to deliver a fully costed long-term solution for pregnant Territory women?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I have answered this question previously, but I thank the Member for Daly for again inquiring about what we are doing in regard to maternity services.

The Member for Daly needs to ask: where is the Member for Solomon when it comes to working with the CLP? We remember that the Member for Solomon came out before the election and promised to buy the port. He promised to deliver Aldi, and we are still waiting to see the Aldi that the Member for Solomon talked about.

We have been asking for a range of upgrades to our funding in Health for many years. The Opposition Leader would know that it has not been forthcoming. Patient retrievals cost the Territory millions of dollars. Where has the Member for Solomon been? It costs us more than $40m per year for patient retrievals, and we are

the only part of Australia that pays for that out of our own health budget. Where is he? Why is the Member for Solomon not helping, supporting and fighting for Territorians when it comes to maternity services?

Where are those opposite? We have not heard boo from the Member for Daly except in Question Time. We have heard nothing from the Opposition Leader.

We have been getting on with the job since we were advised in February this year that maternity services would be closing in the Northern Territory. We stepped in where Healthscope stepped out. We developed packages for those parents and families who pay for private health insurance. We have done everything we can to offer alternatives to what is being taken away by Healthscope, not the Northern Territory Government.

We have written to the federal government asking for $35m to upgrade the maternity services at Royal Darwin Hospital. But do you think we have heard anything? We have had no support from across the Chamber and no support from the Member for Solomon. Nobody has been out there fighting for Territorians; all they have done is sit around questioning what we are doing and criticising everything that is going on, rather than getting out to help and support Territorians.

We are getting on with the job. We are waiting for $35m from the feds, and when we receive it we will get on with the job of fixing maternity services in the Territory.

Air Travel

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

The Northern Territory economy was going backwards under the previous Labor government. Territorians deserve better, and we all know it. As Territorians we are all familiar with the ongoing hurdles of air travel. Strong air connectivity is extremely important for revitalising our economy and it is crucial for supporting our local communities and businesses across industries. Can you update the Assembly on domestic and international air travel initiatives our government has introduced in the past eight months, and how new routes are helping to enhance economic opportunities and support our local businesses?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as with all Territorians the Member for Fong Lim's constituents are keen to see the Northern Territory's connectivity to not just Australia but also the rest of the world increase. That is what our government has been doing. Connectivity between the Northern Territory, the rest of Australia and the world is critical to the development of our economy. It is critical for Territorians to be able to visit family and have holidays. I know those on the other side love a trip to Bali, as do those on this side. We have delivered this in spades.

Since the work commenced in this space we have delivered 95,000 more seats on Qantas and Jetstar flights across the country. What does this translate to in dollars? That is the most important question. A week ago at short notice, a colleague of mine booked a return airfare to Brisbane for just over $500. How amazing is that? In fact, if I booked to go to Brisbane today it would cost me $525 and if I booked for three weeks from now it is just $387 for a return flight. Look at that!

I can go to Bali every day thanks to the work that has been done by this CLP government. We can travel the world through increased routes to Singapore, Denpasar and, as of the end of this coming month, direct flights to Kuala Lumpur, which will take us to the rest of the world. For business and trade, that is critical.

The increase in flights domestically just with Qantas and Jetstar is 11% on what we have seen previously. This affordable connectivity is making it easier for us to do business and visit family at the last minute. How often have we heard that flight costs were out of control, like $1,000 for a trip one way. Now we can travel for just under $500 return to Brisbane and $550 return to Melbourne. It is an incredible experience that we have been without for too long thanks to the failure of those opposite to work with us to improve connectivity.

Budget 2025–26 – Jabiru

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

When the CLP took government last year it inherited a $50m Labor government commitment to support Jabiru's transition to an ecologically sustainable tourism hub led by the Mirarr traditional owners, including $20m specifically for the Bininj Resource Centre. Despite nearly two years of costing, planning, design and

approvals by the Mirarr people, your budget stripped all funding from this culturally significant project which will deliver Indigenous jobs and economic development for the Jabiru and Kakadu region. Why has the CLP abandoned Jabiru and broken faith with the Mirarr people?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will refresh the Assembly on what we inherited when we came to government. We inherited a budget that was in freefall, with debt spiralling out of control. When we went through the books with Treasury we saw it was clear that Labor had lost control of its budget. We had to do the hard yards, which sometimes require difficult decisions.

I have said many times in this House and I will say it again—there was a $1.2bn infrastructure program, and DLI spent all the funding it had and went over a little. It delivered for Territorians, I must say; I give kudos to the department for doing that.

To deliver the program that was in place another $1bn to $1.2bn needed to be spent, but Labor budgeted $300m. That $300m would have done only a couple of things. It would have finished the Mandorah Jetty across the harbour, finished the State Square art gallery next door and delivered a little of the housing program. It would not have delivered anything else in the infrastructure program; the money was not there.

We had to go through the infrastructure program and the budget and reprioritise a number of issues. There are things we have to deliver that are already in train in the infrastructure budget. These are things already being built and roads already being made. These things are happening in our regions and communities, and we have to fund them. The extra funding in our infrastructure program has gone on delivering the things that were already underway.

Sadly …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question is specifically about Jabiru, the Bininj Resource Centre and the cuts to that in the budget and why the CLP turned its back on Jabiru and the Mirarr people.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes; minister, maybe focus on Jabiru.

Mr YAN: I am explaining and getting there. If Labor had not spent $147m on the State Square art gallery next door there might have been more money available for the people of Jabiru.

There are difficult decisions. We cannot keep throwing around money; otherwise, the budget position and the debt position will blow out of control, which is what Labor would have done. Also, there are tens and hundreds of millions of dollars of unfunded liabilities that Labor left sitting there.

A lot of difficult decisions had to be made. We had to reprioritise where we are spending and where that will sit next year and in the outer years. In doing that work we had to make decisions to reprioritise a number of dollars.

Budget 2025–26 – Jabiru – Supplementary Question

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

Can you confirm whether you can come out to Jabiru and talk to the Mirarr people about why you cut that out of your budget?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will clear up one thing. We had to reprioritise a number of projects and dollars in the infrastructure program …

Ms Uibo: Will you go out and tell them why? Will you explain it to the Mirarr people yourself?

Mr YAN: I pick up on the interjections from those opposite. I still have 50 seconds to answer the question. I will get to answering the question …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mr YAN: We had to look at the budget and what is available and reprioritise to areas that benefit all Territorians and drive our economy forwards.

I am happy to go to Jabiru and talk to the people there when I get the time. I would love to go to Jabiru; it is a beautiful place. I have been there a number of times.

The way the current budget sits and the mess that was left by Labor have forced us into making decisions and reprioritising money to make sure that it goes to the places it is needed and where Territorians get the best bang for their buck.

Feral Cats

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Feral cats pose a significant threat to the existence of many native animals and plants across the Territory. I have witnessed in my electorate stray and rogue pussycats indiscriminately killing our local birds, including beautiful finches. They are not only a wildlife issue but also a lifestyle issue, as they erode the things that make our incredible landscapes so special. Can you outline to the Assembly what this government is doing to address such threats and, ultimately, contribute to restoring the Territory's unique lifestyle?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I recently joined staff from the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment's Flora and Fauna Division in the West MacDonnell Ranges. The West Macs are iconic and magnificent. The amazing landscapes, gorges, swimming spots and rich biodiversity offer an exclusive experience for hikers, campers and those who just want to get out and experience the unique Central Australian lifestyle. That is why protecting the special habitat of this pristine area is so important. The MacDonnell Ranges are a refuge to rare and threatened animal and plant species, including the Central rock-rat, the Central Australian rock-wallaby, the MacDonnell Ranges cycad and the Central Australian cabbage palm.

Feral cats are one of the leading threats to native wildlife, including some of our threatened and endangered species that are found nowhere else in the world. Controlling feral cats in the MacDonnell Ranges is a crucial step towards the protection of Central Australia's exclusive biodiversity. Through a partnership with the Commonwealth under the Priority Places project, the MacDonnell Ranges threat abatement plan was born.

The department deployed in the West Macs Felixer cat grooming traps which target feral cats. This is an innovative technology that intuitively targets feral cats with a gel-based toxin when they pass by. These devices are highly selective, using sensors and artificial intelligence to avoid harming non-target species. It is a brilliant example of how modern technology can support this type of work, making it more efficient, humane and accessible across remote landscapes.

Trying new approaches like this is vital, and I am proud of the department's efforts to leverage its resources through investments in smart science-backed tools. It highlights this government's commitment to finding long-term and on-the-ground solutions for protecting our environment.

Not only does feral cat control give our native animals a fighting chance it also has a direct benefit for the lifestyle and overall experience for people who camp and hike in the West MacDonnell Ranges, including popular spots like Mount Sonder. A healthy ecosystem means a rich and rewarding experience for visitors and for tourism, with more native birds, small mammals and reptiles to encounter along our trails and a landscape that reflects the natural beauty of the region, enriching the lifestyle and sense of excitement that draws people to incredible Central Australia.

These innovative approaches are a testament to the efforts of this government to not only protect our environment but also ensure that we have a wonderful place for future generations.

Madam SPEAKER: They can bring their traps to my place in the East MacDonnell Ranges. My dog had a cat bailed up a tree last week.

Northern Suburbs Youth Hub

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for YOUTH, SENIORS and EQUALITY

The original location of the northern suburbs youth hub was chosen because it was close to public transport and easy to access for young people. The community was consulted on its design and on activities and support programs to be run from the centre. The location was supported by the Sentinel Property Group and others that could see real opportunities to support young people into training and jobs.

Your government chose to move the youth hub to Leanyer because a handful of people from Palmerston signed a petition, including the Member for Drysdale. Who was consulted before this decision was made and on what basis was the decision made? Do you have a plan for the programs that will be run from the hub? How will they support young people and ensure that those who need it are connected to support services and other opportunities?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I made a speech yesterday about telling lies time and again, and I offended the Member for Johnston because I referenced her name. I would say that in the last two weeks this is the third or fourth time opposition members are talking about the lies about the change of the Casuarina Square youth centre to the proposed site of Leanyer.

The consideration will start in the first week of June. I said this three times within the last two weeks in this Chamber. There is a consultation process. It will be unlike what the previous government did. If the Member for Daly googled the documents about the consultation paper released by the previous government, he would see on one page that it is clear there were concerns raised by the majority of the stakeholder engagement about the location. They were not happy and raised concerns.

Those opposite are always bringing back to the Chamber a petition that was submitted last year. I was clear, even late last week, that this was made specifically because the now Member for Casuarina, Mr Khoda Patel, doorknocked before and after the election multiple times in that area. I will not name any other members, but another member approached me and raised concerns because her electorate is adjacent to that road as well. There were concerns for the residents living in that area and that was the reason that we looked for another location. Based on that we proposed a new site, which will be in the Leanyer Recreation and Water Park.

When it comes to the activity and bus stops, within 200 metres there are two bus stops. The Member for Daly would know Vanderlin Drive, which goes from Casuarina to Berrimah. When you drive it, you can see there is a bus stop on both sides, with traffic light signals as well, so there is safety for people.

This area is already being used by young people during the school holidays and after hours. On top of that this program is running from Sanderson Middle School, which is less than three kilometres away, so the kids in that area are already using this program and it will benefit them.

Currently the program is run by Anglicare, the Youth Shack program, which is doing a good job there. When it comes to the new program specifically, once it is being built there will be a tender process to find out who will run the program.

The Member for Daly can provide feedback or input to the consultation process. No-one will be stopped from commenting on location or activity; you can provide feedback on both. Last time the consultation was done, people were not allowed to provide feedback on the location.

Festivals and Events

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

Territorians love our lifestyle and our unique Territory events. We have the Italian Festival, GleNTi, the Irish Festival, V8 Supercars, Electric Storm, Red CentreNATS, Parrtjima, cracker night, Darwin Cup, Barunga Festival, the amazing Finke Desert Race and BASSINTHEGRASS, just to name a few.

Under Labor there was no real plan to turn lifestyle opportunities into prosperity. We all agree that restoring lifestyle is central to rebuilding the economy, and 2025 is our year for action, certainty and security. Can you update the Assembly on how the CLP government is turning the dial, giving Territorians more to enjoy,

attracting more visitors and backing the tourism, hospitality and major events that will help power our economy and our way of life?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Fannie Bay constituents love a good festival and concert. A lot of things happen in the electorate, and I know the Member for Fannie Bay has been to a lot this year already. I thank her for that.

Everybody in the Territory knows that over the last number of years, things got out of control. Labor allowed our tourism industry to tank. Visitation was down and our reputation was shot. Territorians and tourists knew that. We had a lot of damage to repair.

Upon coming to government that is exactly what we have started to do. Territorians deserve that. They love the Territory so much, and they know what we have to offer. When tourists come to the Territory, we have everything to show them, which means we can showcase the best place in the world to the whole world. That is exactly what we are doing.

Last weekend was BASSINTHEGRASS, an amazing event which has been going for a long time.

Mr Young: Steve was there, dancing away.

Ms BOOTHBY: The Minister for Health, the Member for Barkly, was up there in the nosebleed section, having a fantastic time. I think he might be one of our oldest members, but, geez, you know how to party, Member for Barkly! The Member for Sanderson was also there, having a blast.

There were 11,000 attendees at BASSINTHEGRASS, which is phenomenal. Not only that, 25% of them were from interstate. That is exactly what we want: young people coming to the Northern Territory, because if they come here once they will want to come back, and they may even want to stay. How good would that be?

Speaking of the Member for Barkly, also last weekend was the Tennant Creek Cup. It drew one of the biggest regional crowds in its history. That is fantastic for our racing industry. Paul Denton, a proud Territorian and renowned jockey, won on Venting, which was 42 years after winning the inaugural cup in 1983. Can you believe that? It is amazing. Well done, Paul, and your horse, Venting. That is the real Territory spirit, right there.

The Alice Springs Cup Carnival's attendance was up by 30% from last year. More than 1,100 punters were there on Cup Day, which was the highest attendance in recent memory. There were 531 nominations across the five days, which is more than in the last decade.

The Nightcliff Seabreeze Festival celebrated 20 years. The much-loved community event had a strong turnout. That is where we have our homegrown arts and culture, right there.

Coming up is the Greek GleNTi. We have the biggest motorsports events ever in 2025, with a bunch of things that the Member for Fannie Bay mentioned. We have AFL next week in Alice Springs and the Darwin Festival. We are backing them.

Budget 2025–26 – Kinship Care

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Two years ago there were 219 children in kinship care. As of 31 January this year, there were only 28 kids in kinship care. How much funding is there in this budget for kinship care? Has there been any increase in funding to try to increase the number of kinship carers? What is the government doing to keep kids in their kin?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, clearly, the first priority in any situation is keeping children with their families. When kids are at risk we have to take a long hard look at how we deal with that. There is not a specific budget for kinship care. There is a budget that we use to support our kids, support their families, support foster carers, support kinship carers and support paid care, and it is a complex process.

About 890 children are in care across the Territory, and every one of them deserves the best possible option to have the best possible opportunity to finish school, get a job, build a life, have a family, have a home and do all the things that we often take for granted. About $373m, off the top of my head, is the budget for the

Children and Families portfolio. A large proportion of that is dedicated to child protection services. That team works tirelessly to make sure that our children are placed where they will get the best possible opportunity to thrive. At the end of the day, the only thing that matters is the wellbeing and safety of that child.

Member for Mulka, the Children and Families team, particularly in the child protection space, work tirelessly to rebuild and reconnect families; they do not give up. They make sure that every opportunity is given to the parents, the aunties, the uncles and the grandparents to remain involved in a child's life, and they will always opt for kinship care when they can. It is a challenging environment. There are many external factors that impact on the capacity for that. There are many challenges that they must overcome. Member for Mulka, let me assure you that whenever we can do that, we will make sure that is where those children are placed.

Budget 2025–26 – Recreational Fishing

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for RECREATIONAL FISHING

As you know, fishing is not just a pastime in the Northern Territory; it is a way of life. Recreational fishing alone contributes an impressive $270m annually to our economy, underscoring how vital this sector is to Territorians, the community and our tourism sector. The Finocchiaro government is making the Territory an even better place to live through our investment into restoring the Territory lifestyle, including continued funding of Recreational Fishing Grants. Can you tell the Assembly how this budget is benefiting recreational fishers, local anglers and community groups?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I look forward to fishing with the Member for Casuarina. Hopefully I can learn some skills.

We all know how much Territorians love their fishing, whether it be blue water, on the river or on a billabong. We go fishing a lot, and I probably fish a fair bit, but I have to acknowledge that the Member for Goyder's partner is up there in the gallery, and she has seen more barramundi than all of us put together. She works at Humpty Doo Barramundi, and there are millions of fish there.

I am proud to be the Minister for Recreational Fishing. I am excited to say that this government is delivering more for recreational fishing in 2025 through the Northern Territory Recreational Fishing Grants Scheme. This program helps deliver a range of activities relating to education and infrastructure programs and fishing events that benefit local communities. It is about getting people out onto the water and land-based fishing to enjoy our unique Territory lifestyle.

We were elected to restore our Territory lifestyle, and this program goes directly to that. We are restoring the Territory lifestyle by trying to make this a better place to live. We are working on safety, which was completely wrecked by the previous government and made the Territory a unsafe place to live. We are fixing that and making sure that we have a great lifestyle for us, our children and our grandchildren.

Recreational fishing and commercial fishing are big industries in the Northern Territory. A lot of money is spent chasing the elusive barramundi. I have spent a fair bit of my money chasing the elusive barramundi.

Fishing is a huge part of our Territory lifestyle, and it creates money and jobs. It brings jobs to the community and jobs mean that people can buy a car, get their hair cut or go to the local shopping centre to buy their food. That is what it is about; you cannot have the best lifestyle in the world and not be able to afford it. You need a job in the Northern Territory, and recreational fishing does that.

These are small grants of up to $15,000 and large grants of up to $100,000 for different programs.

In the last 30 seconds I will talk about a program that I have physically been involved in, along with the Treasurer. We went out on Buddy Boats Day with the Palmerston Game Fishing Club. We took my boat and put it in the Elizabeth River. People came down and jumped in our boat—HIA. I have had the same lady twice, as I have done it twice. From my own experience I can tell you of the joy she had being out on the boat and catching some little fish. She had a great day; she really enjoyed it. I will go back and do it again because that is the Territory lifestyle at its best.

Legislation – Consultation Process

J DAVIS to the CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday when I asked why previous consultation on VAD would be ignored, you said that you believed it was insufficient and:

> *It makes a mockery of the importance of the issue and the respect that should be afforded to people who care passionately on both sides … We need to proceed through this process to have legislation that has credibility and integrity.*

You also noted that the four months for consultation you have put in place was a short timeframe.

Why do changes to the Criminal Code, Aboriginal sacred sites, merits reviews and environmental legislation not need to have credibility or integrity? Why is it okay to make a mockery of the importance of these issues by not consulting on them?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, honestly on the last day of a two-week sitting of parliament this is the type of trash that is getting served up cold by those opposite. What a ridiculous question from the Member for Johnston—just straight in the gutter; their happy place on the other side.

VAD is a very sensitive issue and, in fact—you would not appreciate this because you are an Independent—for Labor and the CLP it is a conscience vote issue. This is a convention across the Westminster system, which is something you might want to brush up on. Matters that attract a conscience vote are, by their very nature, different. We have established a rigorous bipartisan—in fact, cross-parliament—process, with a well-established entrenched committee that has a long history as part of our system, to do an important job on important legislation.

If you want to diminish that and have a go at me, fill your boots, Member for Johnston. Maybe your mate sitting next to you would have a few answers to give you about why they spent eight years not delivering on VAD. We are providing a pathway forward that is respectful, allows consultation in the bush and to hear from people who may not have had a voice and to look at the report that has already been done, and then prepare drafting instructions for Parliamentary Counsel.

I am not sure why that process is difficult for you. I do not know what you propose; would you like to do some backyard Bill and lob it into parliament and see how it goes? It is remarkable …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. My question was not in criticism of the consultation process of VAD; as you would know, I am in support of consultation. My question was: why are other Bills, which have huge significance to many people in this community, not afforded the same respect?

Madam SPEAKER: The Chief Minister has the call.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That was not exactly your question. You went to the gutter on integrity, Member for Johnston, and I am serving it straight back at you.

If you want to know why other Bills we have passed have not had to go through the same process, I will tell you. It is called an election, and it happened in August and the CLP won 17 seats. We won because we told Territorians that we would reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle.

We promised in the first sittings of parliament we would pass that legislation on urgency, and we did it. We promised we would give police better powers and more resources, and we did that. We promised Territorians we would make domestic violence victims safer by ensuring that the perpetrator would have mandatory sentencing, and we did that as well. We gave police more powers. We passed the Territory Coordinator Bill, which I promised in 2020 all the way through to 2024.

The difference is this: at the election, just nine months ago, we took to Territorians a comprehensive suite of policies and promised them that we would take action. This government in this term has already delivered the action, certainty and security that Territorians want and expect of us.

Community Facilities – Maintenance

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for PEOPLE, SPORT and CULTURE

My question is a little less spicy.

This weekend thousands of Territorians will flock to Freds Pass Reserve for the best show in the Territory. They will all talk about the fantastic announcement we made last week, when I joined you and the Member for Nelson, to confirm that we are delivering on our election commitment to fund lights at Norbuilt Oval—home of the mighty Southern Districts Football Club. Can you update the Assembly and Territorians on how the support for facilities enhances and improves our lifestyle?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not sure who is more passionate about Freds Pass and the rural area, whether it is the Member for Nelson or the Member for Goyder. I am not sure of the number of times that these two members walked into my office in the last eight months wanting this to be done. That is the reason we are making sure that it will be done.

We made the announcement last week that we will deliver the lights most likely by the next NTFL season in October. The department is working with the football club to enter into an agreement and make sure it will be done by that time.

I spoke with the AFL boss last week or the week before, when I made the announcement about the AFLW, this came up again. The reason was that Southern Districts has more junior girls teams than boys; that is special and shows how passionate the people in the rural area are for AFL.

The government is leading the way to make sure that it will be delivered, and it was an election promise. This promise was part of the budget, but these two members made sure it was part of this budget and my department found the additional funding.

This is part of a commitment from the federal government, but there was no funding for the lights, so we stepped in and supported the project, with the Litchfield Council, so that will be completed.

The Member for Goyder's question was about other facilities. The support for facilities enhances and improves our lifestyle. A key part of that includes ongoing repairs and maintenance. One of the first things I found as minister was that the former Labor government neglected our own community facilities which thousands of Territorians use each year. My department is responsible for maintaining 51 NTG-owned community, sport, recreation, cultural and arts sector assets. The majority of these are 30 to 40 years old and desperately need repairs and maintenance. This was neglected by the previous government.

On the last day of the budget week I am pleased to announce that we are funding an additional $2.64m in this year's budget for repairs and maintenance for community facilities. I saw that the opposition was struggling yesterday to read the budget papers and then came up with the idea that we cut funding to the multicultural community. For this specific one, if you go to Budget Paper No 4, pages 10 and 11, you will see the funding difference—an increase from $3.75m to $6.4m, which is $2.65m.

Overall, we are making sure restoring the Territory lifestyle—which is the third commitment of our election promise—will be delivered over this year.

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

APPROPRIATION (2025–2026) BILL
Serial 25
REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 26

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, firstly, I congratulate the Treasurer for delivering a responsible budget that addresses the key policy changes that we have made in government and the legacy budget problems left behind by the out-of-touch Labor government.

Over the last few days all I have heard from the opposition is that we are not dealing with the root causes to address crime. The bottom line is that we are. We are getting on with the job and delivering. We have invested in tackling the root causes of crime.

Under the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement we secured $842.6m over six years to ensure that communities have access to critical services. Highlights include:

- Health—$75.98m for community alcohol planning, compliance and treatment; and $50.5m for oral and hearing health services

- Housing, Local Government and Community Development—$53.13m for community development services; $24.62m for jobs, training and business services; and $54.98m for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service over six years

- Police—$205.82m for remote policing, including Aboriginal employment

- Children and Families—$62.64m for remote safe spaces; $34.37m for family support services; and $38.87m for child and family centres

- Education and Training—$55.63m for Families as First Teachers; $6.73m for Aboriginal teacher training; and $26.88m for transition and engagement support.

In addition to the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement there is the $4bn boost to remote housing and the $1.1bn Better and Fairer Schools Agreement to fully fund all Northern Territory schools by 2029.

We are investing in programs and services that tackle the root causes of some of the most complex issues that children and families experience across the Northern Territory. These include programs such as school attendance and engagement officers, the Circuit Breaker Program and our $36m annual investment into domestic, family and sexual violence prevention to improve the wellbeing and safety of all children, young people and families.

This budget is not just about numbers; it is all about people. It is about listening to what Territorians are asking of their government and responding with action, certainty and security.

I will start with Health. Territorians expect and deserve safe quality healthcare. This is what we are delivering with our budget for 2025. Before getting into budget specifics I will highlight that our government inherited a structural budget deficit in Health of more than $300m. The former government provided only time-limited funding in some areas of Health. This funding was due to expire next month. It is ridiculous to contemplate how the Health budget has been left in such a poor state.

The cost to deliver health services continues to rise. It is a national challenge that Health ministers face. It is the subject of scrutiny at the national health ministerial council of which I am a member.

Our government has been able to address some of this shortfall in the 2025–26 budget with $100m ongoing—not time-limited funding like the former Labor government had—to increase the Health budget, but there is more to do. The responsibility for our funding deficit is shared between the former Territory Labor government and the Australian Government. We will work closely with the newly elected Australian Government to address funding shortfalls that equate to more than $200m per annum for hospital funding when compared with the funding other states receive. Gaps also exist in areas such as aeromedical retrievals across the Top End, north of Elliott, which are not funded. In all other states and territories of Australia the Commonwealth meets this cost. Our Health department operates 47 remote primary healthcare clinics. Residential aged-care services remain unfunded, contributing to bed block in our hospitals.

We are still waiting for the federal government to deliver an election promise made by the Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour, on 26 April 2022 for 500 new First Nations medical trainees, 30 new renal clinics and double the funding for rheumatic heart disease.

These are key contributing factors that led us to legislate lifting the debt ceiling, an inevitable outcome given the lack of financial planning for hospitals and health services to operate. However, it is not all about additional funding. An ambitious savings target of more than $100m over three years has been set for NT Health, and I am pleased to say that it is on track to achieve this without impacting on service delivery.

I turn to the 2025–26 Health budget. I am pleased to confirm that a record $2.33bn is being invested in 2025 for NT Health services. This is a $270m increase from Labor's 2024 budget and forms part of a broader $2.5bn health-related budget for 2025–26. Included in the 2025 budget is $1.536bn for hospital services and support. This is up by $154m on 2024. The increase is predominantly due to additional one-off funding from the Commonwealth with the National Health Reform Agreement which includes a base uplift of $103m and $27.7m in indexation.

We are aiming for a five-year National Health Reform Agreement deal with a fair and reasonable Commonwealth contribution rate of 42.5%, which was committed to previously. The Territory receives the lowest Commonwealth contribution rate at about 31.5%, despite having the most remote and dispersed population in Australia with the highest proportion of Aboriginal people, who have the poorest health outcomes of all Australians. Closing the Gap is a Commonwealth and Territory commitment to achieve equal outcomes across our population. We will need more, not less, funding than other states and territories to address this gap.

The budget for primary healthcare is $313.4m, up by $54m on the 2024 budget of $259.2m. The additional funding includes $50.9m for remote primary healthcare through the Commonwealth Comprehensive Primary Health Care Delivery agreement.

We made sure that there is funding in the budget for our election commitment to build a new Borroloola health clinic, which will be delivered over the next 12 months. It is a program that was never fully funded by Labor.

I am especially pleased to announce the 2025 budget has $210.6m for community treatment and extended care, up by $40.7m on the 2024 budget of $169.9m. The additional funding increase includes $16.5m for the fit-out and operation of the mental health services facility at Royal Darwin Hospital. The new facility will not only reduce the burden on the emergency department but also enhance patient outcomes and safety. This new funding will provide an additional 56 staff working to a 24/7 roster, including nursing, medical and allied health staff, Aboriginal mental health workers and pathology professionals. It will also be used to purchase hospital beds and other equipment for the ward, as well as covering ongoing costs for utilities, catering, cleaning, pharmacy, clinical consumables and security.

Also in mental health, commencing on 1 July we are funding the first dedicated community perinatal mental health service through Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA). This service will provide free and accessible mental health support to parents and families during pregnancy and throughout the first year of parenthood through PANDA's national hotline service.

We are providing bilateral funding for new Medicare mental health centres opening in Alice Springs and Katherine and for the Head to Health Kids Hub to be established in Alice Springs.

An additional $2.8m under the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement will be provided to implement reforms to assessment, withdrawal and specialist alcohol treatment services to assist people with alcohol misuse issues and dependence.

Funding is provided to specialist non-government services in all regions of the Territory to expand day programs alongside residential programs. Alice Springs and Darwin services are piloting take-a-break, short-stay respite approaches to get people started on the track to change.

The Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce Program has been redesigned in partnership with AMSANT to increase direct support in remote communities so that people do not have to travel to town to get help.

Health staff are also working closely with Corrections teams to make sure alcohol rehabilitation is available to prisoners to drive prevention efforts in domestic, family and sexual violence. After-care services are also being expanded to make sure that there are supports in place when people leave prison.

We have secured a funding commitment of $60m from the Commonwealth towards construction of a new residential aged-care facility. We will ensure this facility is delivered, and I look forward to working with Minister Butler, who made that promise. We are ensuring that land is available through servicing and titling to clear the way for a registered provider to build and operate this much-needed facility at the Palmerston hospital precinct.

At any given time between 60 and 80 aged-care clients occupy hospital beds reserved for acute care because we simply do not have enough residential aged-care beds in Darwin. To a lesser extent this is the case for Tennant Creek and Alice Springs Hospitals, and we will not stop advocating until we have a sufficient number

of aged-care beds across the Territory. Our senior Territorians deserve high-quality care and peaceful living at their end of their long lives, not being stuck in a hospital bed. At the very least we owe that to them.

The 2025 budget also includes $28.1m for disease prevention and health protection, up by $0.9m on the 2024 budget of $27.2m. This additional funding will help strengthen food security in remote communities, where prices for healthy foods will now be similar to Darwin. Making healthy food choices easier will help to address high rates of chronic diseases.

We will also ensure our children are vaccinated against preventable diseases and strengthen our response to rheumatic heart disease, an illness resulting from poverty that should no longer exist in our modern society. I reiterate the promise made by the federal government when the Member for Lingiari on 26 April 2022 said that it would double the funding for rheumatic heart disease. We are still waiting.

NT Health continues to work with the Australian Government. We have also delivered our commitment to provide meningococcal B vaccinations to 4,394 children and young people, who are now protected from this deadly infection. This completes one of our key election commitments. I acknowledge the Lawrence family for their advocacy and recognise that this is their legacy in the name of their beloved daughter, Skylar. Thank you for this gift to Territory children.

We continue to lead the way in national readiness and response to emergencies through our National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre team established in Darwin. Budget 2025 includes $26.2m to continue the work of the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre.

I acknowledge the well-functioning corporate side of NT Health. In the budget there is $218m for system support services required to enable the vast health system deliverables.

I acknowledge the investment made by our government for prisoner health services which appears in the budget of my colleague Hon Gerard Maley, Minister for Corrections. Budget 2025 includes an additional $20m for prisoner health services, which the Department of Health delivers. This additional funding to addresses the $10.1m legacy funding shortfall left behind by Labor and includes $9.9m to address increasing demand for primary healthcare in our correctional facilities, prisoner watch houses and hospital system due to increased numbers of people being incarcerated.

I cannot finish this section on Health without acknowledging the amazing and talented people who work tirelessly every night and every day to provide Territorians with quality healthcare. Our health workforce is the backbone of the health system, and the Territory's workforce is among the best in Australia.

This budget continues our investment in strategies to strengthen our clinical workforce, including prioritising attraction and retention initiatives. The $500,000 funding for leadership programs ensures we provide development opportunities to our valued managers and leaders of the future. In addition $1.2m has been invested to boost early career placement opportunities to ensure that we have employment pathways, particularly for Territorians.

We continue to invest in a workforce for the future through the Northern Territory-funded Flinders NT Medical Program which offers Northern Territory residents and Aboriginal students the opportunity to study medicine in the Northern Territory. At the beginning of 2024 there were 38 students who commenced their first of four years of study in the NT medical program, being the largest intake since the program commenced in 2011, with eight of those students identified as Indigenous. To date, the Northern Territory medical program has achieved 89% local participation and the graduation of 230 students. Of these, 23 graduates identify as Aboriginal, representing 16% of all doctors who enter the graduate pathway.

Earlier this year I met with NT Health Aboriginal Cadetship recipient Ebony Hill, who is in her second year of study for a Doctor of Medicine degree at Flinders University. Ebony said that the NT Health Aboriginal Cadetship Program presented an opportunity for her to prepare herself for the workforce by undertaking cadetship work placements where she gained practical skills and continued her studies without compromising her financial and personal responsibilities.

The Charles Darwin University Menzies School of Medicine will commence the Territory's second medical program and will take its first students in 2026.

These initiatives will increase the junior medical officer pipeline and assist the Northern Territory to grow our own medical workforce.

Northern Territory Health supports 18 pre-vocational rural generalist training positions, including 76 pre-vocational rural placements across health services in our regions. Northern Territory Health supports a total of 55 vocational rural generalist trainees, including 17 in the Barkly, eight in the Big Rivers region, five in Central Australia, 19 in the East Arnhem region and six in the Top End.

Nurses and midwives are a critical part of our health services. Recently, I celebrated the exceptional achievements of Territory nurses and midwives and the 2025 Northern Territory Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards.

We are increasing the availability of undergraduate clinical placements to facilitate initial nursing and midwifery registration. In 2024 there were 1,232 student placements provided across the Northern Territory.

The first NT Health allied health new graduate program also commenced in January 2025, with 13 graduates enrolled across the Northern Territory.

I turn to the budget for Housing, Local Government and Community Development. With an operating budget of $856m and infrastructure funding of $932m in 2025–26, we sustain communities across the Territory daily. Whether it is providing 72 remote communities and 79 outstations with housing, water and sewerage services, delivering services to the 10,000 people who live in our 500 homelands or our Aboriginal Interpreter Service which celebrated its 25th anniversary earlier this year, our work is fundamental to many Territorians. We own more than 10,000 social housing dwellings across the Territory and oversee our third tier of government, empowering Territorians to have a voice through their local council.

Access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is essential to wellbeing and restoring lifestyle for Territorians. A key investment in the Housing budget is $147.9m to manage the urban housing portfolio of 4,076 homes, with the community housing sector managing an additional 842 homes as of 1 May 2025. This includes supporting investment to deliver new homes; manage waitlists and allocations; provide tenancy and property management services; and repairs and maintenance.

Other key investments in the Housing budget include:

- $1.23m for the development of a site for affordable housing at Ozanam House, enabling community housing provider St Vincent de Paul to provide sub-market rental opportunities for income-eligible key workers

- $11.5m to progress Housing Australia Future Fund commitments, with construction of 102 homes due for completion by June 2029

- $255.9m to manage a remote housing portfolio of 5,754 homes in 72 remote Aboriginal communities, including homes in the Alice Springs town camps and Tennant Creek community living areas

- the joint $4bn Northern Territory and Australian Government investment in remote housing, which will see up to 2,700 homes built over 10 years

- $67m to deliver housing and manage 1,397 government-owned and 451 privately headleased tenancies, including repairs and maintenance, for Northern Territory Government employees in regional and remote areas

- $127.6m for the delivery of essential services, electricity, water and sewerage to remote Aboriginal communities.

We are committed in our budget to providing greater support for Territorians in need of social and affordable housing. We have made a great deal of headway. Earlier this year I was at a sod-turning event in Alice Springs with my colleagues the Treasurer, Bill Yan, and the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Josh Burgoyne, to mark the official start of building works in Alice Springs as part of the Social Housing Accelerator program.

Last month I was in Groote Eylandt to hand over the keys to tenants of a home in Angurugu after the property was upgraded from a three to five-bedroom home through the Room to Breathe program. Under this program, which upgrades and extends existing homes, 16 of 21 projects have been completed. This work is part of the $4bn 10-year commitment to deliver up to 2,700 homes across remote communities, helping to create stronger healthier futures for Aboriginal Territorians. Already this month five families in Ramingining have settled into brand-new rental homes thanks to the investment in remote housing. Can you imagine how life changing this is for families in the Northern Territory?

There is more to come. Ramingining is on track to receive 51 new homes through the HomeBuild NT program, with 40 already finished. Under HomeBuild NT $500m has been allocated from 2017–18 to 2026–27 to build new homes in remote communities.

The remote community of Maningrida is experiencing one of the largest community housing upgrades in recent years, and the impact is already being felt by local families, with a 85 new homes out of a planned 95 now complete.

There have also been housing milestones in Tennant Creek with 12 new social and affordable homes that marks the completion of a partnership between the Northern Territory and Australian Governments under the Barkly Regional Deal with Housing Australia and Venture Housing. The Barkly Regional Deal commenced on 13 April 2019, but like many things, Labor failed to deliver. I was pleased to be there to assist with the handover of those new homes. These homes are a critical step towards a more secure future for key workers who deliver necessary services to Tennant Creek and the Barkly more broadly, as well as to more vulnerable members of our community. The $6.9m partnership marks the first Territory-targeted project in social and affordable housing to be funded by Housing Australia through the Australian Government's National Housing Infrastructure Facility.

As part of the Australian Government's Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program the NTG will continue to contribute funding of $40m in 2025–26 and 2026–27 to deliver housing, municipal and essential services in 381 homelands, 18 non-leased town camps and for municipal services delivered in the 25 leased town camps in nine remote communities.

Our government has said that 2025 will be a year of action, certainty and security, and this includes making public housing safer and tenants more accountable. Extra staff have been recruited for the antisocial behaviour team, including three additional public housing safety officers and two additional case management officers. As the minister I am determined to achieve tenant and community safety by strengthening policy and legislation to deal with antisocial behaviour, serious incidents of crime, tenancy termination and debt management.

Our remote property and tenancy management program delivers social landlord responsibilities, including working with tenants to support management of their homes, providing information on house inspections and a $1.14m repairs and maintenance program for 2025–26. Of the 61 contracts across property and tenancy management in the Northern Territory, 66% are contracted to Aboriginal business enterprises, supporting sustainable local employment.

The 2025 budget provides $59.5m to manage contemporary legislation, funding initiatives and capacity-building programs that foster and build strong, resilient and sustainable local governments that represent communities fairly and effectively and deliver services that best meet community needs.

We are committed to fostering community self-determination and strengthening service delivery through reforming our local government system. This is particularly important in the regional context where we know that restoring control of communities to Aboriginal people and empowering the bush are fundamental to rebuilding our economy and restoring our unique Territory lifestyle.

Last month I witnessed the official formation of the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council, a significant moment in the history of the Groote Archipelago region. It was a proud and exciting time as I met with five of the seven newly elected councillors. The new three-ward council shows real action in creating certainty in our bush communities by offering fairer and more localised representation to residents.

We have also invited councils, local government stakeholders and the broader community to have their say on discussion papers relating to proposed amendments to the *Local Government Act.* Public consultation sessions will begin in Darwin on Friday 23 May, followed by sessions in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Tiwi Islands, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Jabiru and Groote Eylandt, with consultations finishing on 20 June 2025.

Other highlights include:

- $39.7m to drive the delivery of strategies and actions to improve outcomes across the Territory in partnership with government agencies, community organisations, key stakeholders, local government and the Australian Government

- $9.28m in Australian Government funding under the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement to support community development in jobs, training, business hubs and services

- $7.4m for the provision of home loan products and services to assist eligible Territorians to achieve affordable home ownership

- $13.1m for Aboriginal and other interpreter and translator services to overcome language barriers for Territorians who do not speak English as a first language

- $8.5m in Australian Government funding under the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement to deliver Aboriginal interpreter services.

It was a privilege to meet hardworking staff from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development at the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Aboriginal Interpreter Service last month. It was an honour to congratulate interpreters, two of whom came from Tennant Creek.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, this budget is all about addressing the root causes of crime.

Mr YAN: 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 EDGINGTON: The opposition does not like to hear that we not only have a plan but also are all about action, certainty and security. A quick recap—we are addressing the root causes of crime in health, housing, policing, education and harm minimisation. This budget is not just about money; it is about investing in people. When I travel in my Barkly electorate and across the Northern Territory, I see the benefits to all Territorians.

Budget 2025–26 is a tremendous investment in the Northern Territory. I commend it to the members of this Assembly. I congratulate the Treasurer on delivering this budget for all Territorians.

Mr YAN (Treasurer)(in reply): Madam Speaker, the Finocchiaro CLP government's first budget is a turning point for the Northern Territory. It begins to restore confidence and rebuild.

I thank all the members who contributed to this debate. I look forward to unpacking our budget and revenue measures in detail during the upcoming Estimates hearings in June.

This budget puts victims first, prioritises law and order and backs our private sector to lead our economic recovery. This is a budget delivered in the CLP's year of action, certainty and security. It is a record investment by the CLP government towards law and order—the biggest investment in frontline services—with the police budget increased to $608m; the Corrections budget increased to $494m; and our courts receiving an increase to $237m.

Since coming to office in August 2024 we wasted no time in pulling the levers of government, and already we are seeing results. Gross state product is forecasted to surge by 7.8% in 2025–26 and another 5.9% in 2026–27. The fiscal deficit is projected to fall to $531m by 2028–29. The net operating balance has improved from negative $707m in 2024 to a deficit of $265m in 2025–26 and will turn into a surplus by 2027–28. Global risks remain, but the Territory's fundamentals are strong, and this government is going for growth.

We have also delivered smart targeted reform. We introduced internet gaming tax amendments under the *Gaming Control Act 1993* and will raise the tax cap for bookmakers and exchanges under the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024.* These changes bring integrity, fairness and consistency to a vital Territory sector.

The responses from across the Territory have been overwhelmingly positive. I will share some feedback with the Assembly.

From Master Builders to the Housing Industry Association, the housing sector has praised the sensible 12-month extension of the HomeGrown grants, support that keeps tradies at work and backs the construction industry while stimulating much-needed housing supply. I am pleased to say that since the commencement of our HomeGrown grants we have received nearly 700 applications. This extension gives families more time to find a block, build their dream home and provide certainty to secure a fresh start in the Northern Territory.

The Property Council welcomed our policy settings, saying that this finally gives investors the certainty they have been waiting for. Major financiers with multibillion-dollar balances are already scouting Territory projects.

Even not-for-profit leaders, who are often quick to point out gaps, have praised the strengthened frontline support that this budget delivers. Following our payroll tax reforms for not-for-profit businesses, John Cherry, Head of Advocacy at Goodstart Early Learning, wrote:

'I just wanted to let you know how delighted we are by the government's decision on payroll tax on not-for-profits, which includes Goodstart, the Territory's largest provider. This decision means we will not have to increase our fees to 750 Northern Territory families across our 12 services. This means real cost-of-living relief for Territorians.'

Thank you, John, and thank you to all in the sector who held on and worked with us to make this reform possible.

It has been revealing to hear Labor members try to explain away eight years of failure. Excuses do not build homes, create jobs or make our streets safer. Perhaps as those opposite ate their breakfast at the Property Council's budget breakfast last week, which the CLP brought back after Labor scrapped it, the reality of how badly they failed Territorians may have begun to sink in.

For those on this side of the House it has been a privilege to deliver the first budget of the Finocchiaro Country Liberal government. It is a budget that restores confidence, rebuilds the economy and begins the long task of repairing Labor's mess. This is how you govern collaboratively, by finding practical solutions that make the sector stronger and deliver real cost-of-living relief to Territorians.

We have gone further because we will not let Territorians down. By repealing Labor's portable long service leave levy on the community services workforce we have given the sector certainty and spared parents even higher costs. Labor's scheme would have slugged 10,000 childcare, aged-care and disability workers with a new tax, costing centres up to $50,000 a year and jacking up Territory families' fees by an estimated $20m annually. Sector leaders branded it as fundamentally flawed. By scrapping it we have protected jobs, prevented price hikes and honoured our promise to cut red tape and back Territory families. Again, we are reducing the cost of living for Territorians.

Put simply, this budget backs community and businesses alike. We are creating the conditions for the Territory to be the best place to live, work, play and invest.

I was delighted to see the Full Bench of the Supreme Court throw out the Central Land Council's final appeal against the Singleton water licence. That ruling locks in certainty for Fortune Agribusiness' 3,500-hectare horticulture project south of Tennant Creek which will benefit our regions. It is an investment that is set to inject more than $200m a year into our economy and support more than 1,000 jobs.

Budget 2025–26 also has a record investment in our education system, with $1.6bn in education and training to be delivered. I echo the statement by the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Jo Hersey, and reaffirm our commitment to investing in the future of our children. That is why we have allocated $12.9m to boost school attendance through the school attendance officer program, an increase of more than $4m compared with last year.

The CLP government will always back agriculture, and this budget does that. We heard the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Hon Josh Burgoyne, a passionate gardener and a land lover at heart, outline the CLP government investment of $123m in Lands, Planning and Environment to accelerate land release, protect the environment and drive regional growth. This includes $2m a year for independent environmental monitoring; $2.25m for weed and fire control, including targeted buffel grass eradication; and $11m for the Farrar West headworks, supporting 300 new homes, plus new lots in Sienna Village and Holtze to keep Darwin and Alice Springs growing.

This week the Assembly passed our Sacred Sites Act amendments, modernising a 35-year-old Act whilst strengthening protections. We have formalised the authority board membership to keep traditional owners in the majority while welcoming new development and governance voices. Existing authority certificates can now be transferred or extended, cutting red tape without compromising those all-important safeguards. We have introduced enforceable undertakings to resolve damage through remediation and penalties, replacing drawn-out prosecutions with real accountability. Industry welcomes the clarity. Custodians retain cultural authority. That is action, certainty and security, which is what the Territory needs.

This week we cemented the Territory Energy Link, our 670-kilometre buried multi-utility corridor from Elliott to Darwin. This is the backbone of northern Australia's next growth wave because we are backing gas.

A specialist advisory tender is now in place to ensure the priority section is shovel ready by 2028. Gas and water will flow side by side, tying the Beetaloo to global markets and unlocking billions in private investment.

The Minister for Mines and Energy, Hon Gerard Maley, expressed to us that the mining sector forms the greatest sole contributor to the Territory's own-source revenue through royalties and associated revenue. It is crucial to our economic recovery that this sector grows and that it grows quickly. Unleashing the Beetaloo is the most rapid way to guarantee energy security for Territorians and an additional long-term royalty revenue stream for our Treasury. We are securing the tenure up-front and cutting red tape, giving industry the certainty it needs to build and hire.

The Minister for Health, Hon Steve Edgington, highlighted the $100m ongoing increase to the Northern Territory Health budget. He also outlined the 2025–26 budget's $1.5bn investment in hospital services and support, which is an increase of $154m compared with Labor's last budget. This is not time-limited funding, like Labor loved to caveat its projections with; this is genuine ongoing investment in our health system.

Minister Boothby has one of the best portfolios in government. She gets to bring fun to the Territory, and she has certainly delivered. In this budget we are also backing tourism, the engine of 16,000 Territory jobs. This budget delivers an $88.4m package to replace Labor's funding cliffs with long-term funding confidence, including $8m a year in base support; $3m for the visitor experience fund; $3m to turn our World War II heritage into a military tourism drawcard; and $36.5m for major events, from AFL to the upcoming Finke. I cannot wait to get to the Finke.

We are also investing in the screen sector, which punches well above its weight. This budget backs Screen Territory with $3.6m because it delivers real jobs, global exposure and an economic return. Two examples over the last nine months are Netflix's *Territory*, which generated $6.9m locally, and *NCIS: Sydney*, which injected $2.94m into Darwin's economy from only two episodes.

What a weekend we all had in the Top End. BASSINTHEGRASS drew more than 11,000 people to Mindil Beach, with 30 acts across multiple stages. Meanwhile there were record crowds at two Gold Coast Suns AFL matches at TIO Stadium, including the biggest crowd in 20 years last Thursday night. That is the lifestyle this government is restoring—a lifestyle Labor could never deliver. We have locked in the 2025 AFL Women's Dreamtime blockbuster between Essendon and Richmond, bringing elite sport and Indigenous culture to centre stage, proving Darwin can host marquee national events.

We have secured new flights, delivered a record cruise season and put Territory events back on the map. Watch this space: we will have more to say on sports next week. Territorians will be excited about this.

Most of you are probably aware that New South Wales and Queensland are trying their best to dampen our cracker night, but hell hath no fury like a Territorian who is not allowed to set off their own crackers on firecracker night. I even note that the *NT News* has been trolling the New South Wales and Queensland Premiers about taking away our choice to light them up on 1 July. I assure you that the Chief Minister is on top of it and we are confident this will be resolved. No-one will stop our crackers.

The Minister for Disability, Hon Jinson Charls, highlighted in his budget speech the significant investment being made to support disability services. In the 2025–26 budget we are investing $141m to ensure Territorians living with a disability are included, seen and heard. We remind them that they matter too.

As the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, Hon Robyn Cahill, stated in her budget reply speech, this is the most honest budget the Territory has seen in recent history. The Department of Children and Families will receive $71.5m to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence, including early intervention and recovery, because tackling the root causes of crime is critical to making change.

Minister Cahill also highlighted the success of the Circuit Breaker Program. Since launching in Darwin and Alice Springs last year and Katherine earlier this year it has supported 141 families and established more than 80 family responsibility agreements. It is an initiative that is delivering results, which is why we have committed $8.3m per annum in ongoing funding to support full-time staff to deliver this all-important service.

This is a responsible budget that begins the process of fixing Labor's mess. Let us take a moment to touch on some of that mess. The Opposition Leader in her reply championed Labor's 2019 budget repair plan, which was meant to save $11.2bn by 2028–29. Territorians saw through it and unsubscribed from the train wreck. Even Labor's 2024–25 budget admits the target was missed and the plan abandoned. Net debt exploded from $3bn to more than $10bn. Labor's farewell budget had it on track to smash through its own debt cap.

If you fail to learn you are doomed to repeat. The Opposition Leader has learnt nothing. She remains unfit to come within cooee of the Treasury bench. The Opposition Leader likes to parade with her red pen and highlighter, claiming she can dissect every cent in the budget, yet when she held the pen in budget Cabinet she rubberstamped the fiscal train wreck that she now claims to uncover. The black hole we are feeling today is no surprise. It is her handiwork. Territorians are still footing the bill for her financial sleight of hand. Her colleagues know this too. They know who is responsible for Labor's black hole.

Not surprisingly, instead of focusing on the budget and Labor's debt those opposite spent budget week waging gutter politics. They have been attacking public servants—who have no right of reply—with no regard for their families, all in a vain attempt to slide away from their failures whilst in government. I am constantly asked by Territorians, particularly those in the business sector, 'Where is Labor's policy agenda?' It is a good question. It is a bit like a *Where's Wally?* painting; you keep looking, but you cannot seem to find the member in the red shirt.

Those opposite have nothing but a toxic mix of petulance and incompetence. In the absence of policy those opposite resort to the tired old Labor playbook of playing the man and not playing the ball. If you need any proof that those opposite are not serious, cast your mind back to last week when those opposite used their matter of public importance to celebrate their glorious win in the federal election, on the very day that this House was lit yellow for Road Safety Week and after we woke up to more fatalities. Let us be clear that was a deliberate choice by those opposite—politics over real issues that affect everyday Territorians. Sadly, that is the Labor way. That is not the conduct of serious people. They are simply not serious people, and those opposite know it. That is why it upsets them so much when it is pointed out.

I chuckled at the Opposition Leader's joke about a fishing lure falling out of her budget pack and criticising my volunteering at the Barra Classic. That event raises hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Territory economy, particularly the Daly region. That is why I was on the water; I was out there speaking with Territorians, hearing from those in the fishing sector who feel backed by this government. They are good people who told me of their relief that Labor was no longer in government.

This gives me the opportunity to turn to my young friend the Member for Daly—smirk, polished, self-anointed Labor bovver boy, famed for the cringeworthy capers he clocked up while carrying the Opposition Leader's briefcase. On the ground he is a phantom. Constituents say that they rarely see him. When I recently visited the Daly, locals offered me a few wry observations about their member—tales for another time. One local quipped, 'He is so scarce, his own shadow is on smoko at the pub waiting for him to turn up'. Another, delivered with a classic Territory humour, was, 'All bull bar and no engine'. He is young, so maybe we need to give him a break. All that youthful exuberance and ambition needs to be channelled somehow, I guess.

Turning to other speakers, I thank the Member for Mulka for his thoughtful budget reply. I know we have common ground on many issues and that he is serious about representing the people of his electorate.

I also note the Member for Nightcliff backed our tougher bail laws, yet did not support the $1.5bn needed to put them into effect. It is difficult to square off on those two positions.

The Member for Johnston called our budget a missed opportunity, lamenting money for police and prisons, yet when we strengthened bail laws, she sat glued to her seat. You cannot refuse to bolt the front door one day and complain about the insurance bill the next day.

We said that we would respect every Territory taxpayer by redirecting Labor's scattergun spending into three clear priorities—reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our unique Territory lifestyle. This budget delivers just that. It is a solid foundation, one built not on fantasy but on responsible, realistic and bold decisions to rebuild the Territory.

I thank the CLP team for their discipline and vision. I thank the team from Treasury for all their hard work and dedication they put into the many months it took to put this budget together. In this year of action, certainty and security we are well and truly on track to make the Northern Territory the best place in Australia to live, work and raise a family.

I am proud to deliver the first Finocchiaro government's budget for 2025–26.

Motion agreed to; Bills read a second time.

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, as agreed by the Assembly on 14 May 2025, the Bill stands referred to an Estimates Committee for report by 19 June 2025 after which consideration in detail will take place, followed by the third reading.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Road Fatalities

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received correspondence from the Member for Goyder as follows:

Under Standing Order 66, I propose for discussion a matter of public importance on the following subject:

The Northern Territory's tragically high number of deaths on our road, including heartbreaking recent events.

The letter is signed by the Member for Goyder. Is discussion supported? Discussion is supported.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, this matter of public importance is about an issue that continues to devastate families and communities across the Northern Territory—the tragically high number of lives lost on our roads.

In the last few weeks it seems as though there has been a new crash every couple of days with another life lost. Already this year we have lost 16 Territorians to road crashes. That number is more than a statistic; it is a symbol of heartbreak. It represents children who will not see a parent come home, parents who will bury their children and mates who will forever feel the absence of someone who should still be here. Communities must carry the weight of the loss. Children will grow up without a mother or a father.

I raise a confronting comparison. If we were losing one Territorian a week to firearms or drug overdoses there would be crisis meetings, saturation media coverage and urgent demands for action. However, when we lose one person a week on our roads the reaction is subdued; it goes under the radar. It does not spark the same outrage or urgency. We cannot let road deaths become background noise. We cannot accept this toll as normal. We must treat it as the crisis it is.

This is not about scaring people; it is about waking up and understanding that almost every fatality on our roads is preventable and we all have a role to play. This issue should unite us across politics, regions and communities because no-one is immune. No-one wants to see another funeral, roadside cross memorial or life lost to something that could have been prevented.

Every death on our roads is a tragedy. Every one sends ripples of grief across our schools, workplaces, families and communities. This is personal for all of us. Each of us has driven past a crash site, knows someone who has lost their life on our roads and knows the impact an unexpected death has on a family, community, sporting club or friendship group. Every one of us has felt that pit in our stomach. Each of us drives past crosses and memorials on our roads every day. When you drive down Stuart Highway or the Arnhem Highway in my electorate, each of those memorials on the side of the road represents a loved one who never got to complete their story. We must never allow ourselves to become numb to the toll or shrug and accept that road deaths are just part of life up here; they are not and never should be.

As a younger member of this Assembly and a young Territorian, I know the unique anxiety many of my generation carry. When we read and see posts on Facebook and Instagram that say, 'Crash on the highway' or 'Fatal incident in the Top End', we stop and wonder who it is this time. Is it someone I know, a mate of a mate? Which friend just lost a loved one? The Northern Territory is a close-knit place. We do not have the luxury of anonymity; when tragedy strikes, it strikes close to home.

Last year I spoke in this Chamber about a young man named Thomas Venturin. Thomas was 20 years old. On the morning of 8 June he was on his way to work along the Arnhem Highway. He never made it; he died on the roadside surrounded by friends who stopped to help him as he took his last breath. Thomas was a hard worker, a loyal mate, a loving partner, a son, a brother, a grandson and a young man with his whole life ahead of him. I remember reading a 'road closed' Facebook post that morning. I remember hoping I did not know who it was. I remember where I was when I found out what had happened. I remember the disbelief and overwhelming sadness at the tragedy.

I attended his funeral. The grief I saw was immense, and I will never forget the raw emotion in that church. If every driver in the Northern Territory could have seen that service and felt what it was like in that chapel,

they would understand what road trauma really means. Thomas, like the 16 others who have lost their lives this year or the 60 last year, is not just another statistic; he is a human being whose story was cut short.

I will talk more broadly about the rural area, the part of the Territory I call home and the communities I represent. In the past few months we have lost several lives on rural roads. In Berry Springs a 25-year-old lost their life after a vehicle rolled over on Cox Peninsula Road; in Virginia less than a week ago a 43-year-old woman was struck and killed in the early hours of the morning; near Lake Bennett a head-on collision claimed the lives of a 25-year-old woman and a 45-year-old man; and on Hopewell Road a 44-year-old man died after colliding with a power pole. Each of these incidents is heartbreaking and has left a scar on the rural community that we feel every time we drive past these sites, see a memorial on the side of the road or drive that stretch of highway and think about what happened there.

The statistics confirm what our communities feel. Over the past decade the Litchfield Council region has recorded 78 road fatalities. That is 78 Territorians who could still be with us. That is nearly one in five road deaths in the entire Northern Territory—an average of 7.8 lives lost each year. These are not just numbers; these are our neighbours, classmates, teammates and family members. For a region such as Litchfield in the rural area—which prides itself on its strong, connected rural identity—this toll is staggering. It speaks of the urgent need for sustained investment, community awareness and behaviour change.

This month we recognised National Road Safety Week, a time to pause and reflect and remember that, on average, 40 people are killed and about 480 people are seriously injured on Territory roads each year. This is not only a week of awareness; it is a wake-up call. It is a reminder that each one of those people who lost their lives on our roads had a story, a future and a family. Behind each number is a human being whose life was cut short.

In 2024 alone we lost 60 people on our roads. Of those, 21 were drivers, 16 were passengers, five were motorcyclists and 17 were pedestrians. Most were over the age of 25 years, but 16 were under 25 years. We lost 17 Aboriginal Territorians and 42 non-Aboriginal people. Whilst 20 of these tragedies occurred in urban areas, 39 happened on our rural and remote roads. I have said it before and I will say it again: each of these individuals had dreams, relationships, responsibilities and a future. Each one had people who loved them and who now carry the weight of their loss.

When we compare our road deaths per capita with other states and territories around Australia, it paints a haunting picture. In 2024 we had 23.5 deaths per 100,000 people; the next highest state was WA with 6.2 deaths per 100,000 people. The average across Australia is 4.2 deaths per 100,000 people. This is not normal.

There are five key contributors to road fatalities, called the fatal five: speeding; distraction; intoxication with alcohol or drugs; fatigue; and failure to wear a seatbelt. These factors are involved in the overwhelming majority of fatal crashes, and they are all preventable. Let me be clear that these are not unlucky coincidences; they are choices. They are avoidable decisions that have fatal consequences, and the cost of those decisions is borne by not only the person behind the wheel or those in the car with them but also everyone who loves them. It takes only a second—a glance at a phone, a couple of beers, a few kilometres over the speed limit, driving home instead of pulling over for a nap or forgetting to buckle up—but the consequences of that second can last a lifetime.

I acknowledge the incredible work being done by our first responders—police officers, paramedics, firefighters and volunteer firefighters. These are the men and women who arrive first at the scene, witness the aftermath, comfort the living and care for the dying. The emotional toll they carry is immense. They never forget what they see. We must never take their service, courage and compassion for granted. I also acknowledge the people in the Major Crash Investigation Unit who work tirelessly to find answers for grieving families, and the community organisations that support road safety education and post-crash care.

This government is acting. We are investing in safer roads, including major upgrades to the Arnhem Highway in my electorate. This duplication project is essential to improve traffic flow and prevent head-on and T-bone collisions, especially around the Humpty Doo intersections. It is about giving drivers the room they need to stay safe.

We are also investing in local infrastructure. The kiss-and-go upgrades at Humpty Doo Primary School may seem like a small project, but to the families dropping off their kids each day it means the world. It is one fewer risk and one more safeguard.

Thank you to the Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure and the Minister for Education and Training for listening to rural Territorians and bringing these projects forward. As important as these upgrades are, we must understand that infrastructure alone will not solve the problem. We can build the safest roads in the country, but if people are still speeding, texting and drinking and driving, lives will be lost.

When I drive past the pubs in my electorate—I have quite a few, and they are all wonderful establishments—at 11 pm on a Friday, the car parks are full; at 4 am the car parks are empty, and I guarantee not every one of those people would have been fit to drive. They should not be getting behind the wheel because they are risking their own lives and those of other Territorians when they decide to drink and drive.

This is why we need a cultural change, a shift in attitude and a collective commitment from all Territorians to drive like their lives and others' lives depend on it, because they do. We need parents talking to their kids about safe driving before they get their licence. We need mates calling out mates when they get behind the wheel after a big night. We need passengers demanding their drivers put down the phone. We need to stop treating driving as a right and start treating it as the responsibility it truly is.

To the families who have lost someone—whether it was this year, last year or 10 years ago—we see you. We carry your grief with us, and we recommit ourselves every day to doing what we can to stop others from experiencing the same pain.

Let us make our roads safer together.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will address this MPI about the Northern Territory's tragically high number of deaths on our roads, including heartbreaking recent events.

This matter of public importance is timely. In the last month alone we have lost 10 people on Territory roads. That is 10 lives too many. Road safety should be the priority of all of us. The Northern Territory is blessed with wide open roads and breathtaking landscapes. Last year on our roads we lost 60 lives. This time last year we had lost 22 lives. We have lost 16 so far this year.

The Northern Territory consistently faces some of the highest road fatality rates per capita in Australia. Behind every crash statistic is a person, a mother, a father, a child, a friend. The ripple effects extend through families, communities and across our society. In our tight-knit communities, one fatality can touch dozens of lives, just like the recent one of a beloved community member who travelled the highway for bread deliveries. This tragic accident, along with many others with memorials along the highway, is a stark reminder every time I drive up and back from Katherine of the need to concentrate, stay alert and stop if tired.

I go back to the recent accident. That was our bread delivery man. He has a large family in Katherine. He travelled the highway often. He came across a beast, which is one of the many things we need to look out for and be vigilant about whilst driving. If you are driving throughout the night, these animals can come out at any time—even during the day. I was driving to Darwin when a little buffalo ran along the road just this side of Adelaide River. It was 2 pm, and it came straight out. Thankfully, I was not any further up the road. It is those chance things where it is wrong place, wrong time. They are tragedies.

Every life lost on our roads is a tragedy. Every injury is a burden on our health system, economy and, most importantly, the families and communities left behind. Despite progress in some areas, we still hold the unenviable position of having the highest per capita rate of road deaths in the country. This is not a challenge we can afford to accept as inevitable; it is a call to action.

When it comes to road safety and working towards zero, we must address the five key matters that contribute to road deaths in the Territory—that is, fatigue, driver distraction, lack of seatbelts, speed, and alcohol and other drugs.

The vast distances between our towns and communities, and endless road trip opportunities, mean long drives are a part of our Territory lifestyle. With this, unfortunately, comes fatigue.

Although it was not up here, I had an incident which has made me vigilant about driving with fatigue these days. As a younger person living in Adelaide I would travel back to my small community of Loxton, where I lived. It is a similar distance to between here and Katherine. After work on a Saturday afternoon, you are tired. You have worked all morning. We used to start at 7 am and work until 2 pm. The sun was shining in the window, and I was drowsy. People say that most accidents happen close to home. I was not that far from my home, only about half-an-hour out of Loxton. Fortunately nothing else was coming the other way, because

I had fallen asleep in my little Datsun 1600. The first I knew about it was when I was on the other side of the road. I overcorrected and ended up driving into a tree. It scared the life out of me.

I now make sure that every time I am driving and I feel tired—it does not matter where I am—I pull over and get out. I have been known to do star jumps or walk around the car and have a drink of water. If I am near Pine Creek or Adelaide River I will pull up. It is those kinds of things that make you think about driving on the road. It is easy to forget how important and significant the smallest thing is—whether it is reaching for your phone or whatever—and we need to ensure we do not let that affect our decision-making while driving.

A person can be unaware of fatigue until it is too late, as I said in my story. In the Northern Territory where vast distances between communities mean long stretches of driving, fatigue plays a dangerous role.

I think of my experiences, having lived in Katherine for 35 years. Now, as a member of parliament and minister, I know the long drive between Katherine and Darwin like the back of my hand, as I am sure the Opposition Leader does. It is easy to become complacent. As I said, It is a conscious decision to stop and refresh at Adelaide River. Before making that long drive I have a good sleep the night before to make sure I am not driving tired. If I am tired I make sure that I stop. I know only too well that driving while sleep deprived can impair your reaction time and judgement as much as driving drunk.

The second contributor to road deaths I wish to address is distraction—specifically, mobile phones. We live in an age of constant connection, but when you are behind the wheel there is no such thing as a harmless glance at a screen. A two-second distraction at 130 kilometres an hour means your vehicle has travelled more than 72 metres blind. This risk is worse when you consider not only texting but also using social media, checking maps or making phone calls without a Bluetooth connection.

When I am driving around Darwin or Katherine or on the highway I can tell when people are on their phones whilst they are driving. Their head is down or some do not even hide it; they have the phone to their ear if the phone does not have Bluetooth. Whether it is on speaker or not, probably all of us in here have, at times, done that. We need to stay vigilant and be conscious of what we are doing every time we get behind the wheel of our car.

With the growing use of technology, we especially need to educate our young people about the dangers of distraction. I am sure those who have young children who are not driving yet will be talking to them about it and role-modelling good behaviour. It is definitely something I drum into my kids. When I see my son driving out the driveway—his car does not have Bluetooth—and wants to be on his phone, I say, ‘Make sure you have your music sorted before you get on the road. It is one thing that you do not need to deal with while you are driving.’

It is shocking and deeply disappointing that seatbelt non-use remains a major contributor to fatalities in the Territory. In many fatal crashes victims were not wearing a seatbelt. This is a tragedy made worse by the fact that the solution is so simple. We see it on billboards and in adverts on TV that say, ‘Buckle up’. Seatbelts reduce the risk of death in a crash by 50%. They are not optional for short trips, in the back seat or ever.

We have come a long way since I was a child. I remember in the back of the little Volkswagen my mother had my little brother would be in his bassinet on the back seat. Now there are car seats and capsules. Parents with small children can get the capsule out of the car and put it straight into the pram, so you are not waking up the baby. We have come a long way with safety in that area, yet I still see parents travelling with children on their laps and babies on the front seat being nursed by the person in the passenger seat. It beggars belief.

Speeding does not always mean street or drag racing. Sometimes it simply means driving too fast for the conditions. Heavy rain, low visibility, in dust or around fires—we have a lot of fires on the road from here to Katherine at the moment, with the burn-offs—with speeding continually proves to be fatal.

We must also address the persistent and devastating role of alcohol and drugs in road deaths. In the Northern Territory, impaired driving contributes to a disproportionately high number of fatalities. Whether it is alcohol or drugs the impact is the same, with impaired judgement, slower reflexes and a high chance of death. The legal limits are there for a reason. Driving under the influence is not just illegal; it is deadly.

Our schools have a range of programs and resources on road safety and learning to drive that are free to access, such as the road safety community engagement officers who work with schools to promote positive road safety behaviours and provide access to teaching resources and workshops; the NT Government Safer Roads teacher resources, which are aligned with the health and physical education Australian Curriculum; and the road safety NT Choices workshops, which are available to senior school students and focus on

issues faced by novice drivers and passengers and include sessions on coping with peer pressure, harm reduction strategies and making safer decisions as road users.

Road safety is not an abstract issue. It affects every family, community and corner of the Territory. Reducing road trauma is not only possible; it is essential. Let us not have another holiday period to bring another set of headlines and heartbreak.

I thank Joanna Noonan and the SLIDE Youth Dance group. Recently at the Darwin Entertainment Centre, they put on a performance about all the things we are talking about here with road safety, driver distraction, peer pressure and making sure you are not getting into the car with a drunk driver. In the performance this young girl asks her parents why she cannot go out—her friends are going to a party, she will be home soon and she will not be late. After discussion with her parents she goes to this party, there is drinking and carrying on, then someone decides they will get in the car and drive her home. It was a fatal mistake that young girl made, and at the end of that performance she was killed. Then it goes on to demonstrate the devastation and grief that family had to go through.

Last year that performance brought it home because while it was happening some of those Darwin High School students and members in that performance lost one of their friends. I do not think there was a dry eye in the house. When you have children in that age bracket, it makes you think whenever your children get on the road. I have three children who are driving, and it worries me when they go up and back to Darwin or are travelling with their friends. I do not mean to be discriminatory, but I worry about my boys more than my daughter because boys egg on each other and might overtake when they should not. I always have them text me when they leave Darwin and when they reach Adelaide River and Pine Creek, so I know where they are. As a family we do that, including my husband and me. Whenever I pull over I let them know. When I leave Darwin I let them know when I should be home.

The Member for Goyder spoke about the memorials along the highway. In the 35 years I have lived in Katherine there are many I pass where I say, 'I knew that girl; she used to work at Knotts Crossing' or 'This was a girl my youngest boy went to school with'. My daughter went to school with 25-year-old Kit Reed—her mother works at Pine Creek School—who passed away in that accident at Lake Bennett. It is tragic. As a parent I cannot imagine losing my child, and no child should go before their parent.

I will give a story about some friends and a young family in Katherine. It was last Australia Day when mum, dad and three boys were in a car on the Arnhem Highway to go fishing, but because of the actions of one person who was under the influence, speeding, not driving to the conditions when it was raining, not thinking and not doing the right thing on the road, this amazing family—going slowly as the dad worked for CareFlight and was a careful driver—had their lives changed.

The mum and dad had to be airlifted to Perth, where they spent more than 12 months in rehab. Her parents had to move to Perth to look after the children. The children were out of school. Those boys are now living at home with a relative to look after them while they finish school. These kids were sporty, and Mary-Lou was part of their rugby teams; they were parents who did everything for their children and were into sport. Whether it be fishing or sport, mum and dad would be out with their kids all the time. Just over a year later they have been able to move back and have gone into an assisted facility at Coolalinga while they wait for their house to be remodelled because neither of them can walk; they are in wheelchairs. Hopefully, Charles will be able to walk again, and Mary-Lou is getting better all the time.

It is amazing that they are alive to this day. Those three boys could have lost both their parents that day—they all could have died—leaving a community and families devastated all because of the lack of judgement and concentration of this one person who was not doing the right thing on the road that day.

Everyone with children or who know people with children, who have parents, sisters or brothers needs to imagine the grief their family would feel because of their inaction, not concentrating, thinking of other things and putting on music or whatever else they may be doing in their car. By the end of this MPI from the Member for Goyder I hope that all of us would think about things a little more before we reach to do anything we do apart from just drive our car.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I have only two or three dot points. This is an important MPI, and it is one we need to take seriously. It deserves serious attention and consideration. The best way I will speak to this is by speaking from the heart. I will talk a little about personal experiences.

As the other speakers said, obviously there is the tragedy and the direct victims, be they deaths or serious injuries, and our hearts go out to them. However, many other people are impacted by these events and

tragedies. We think of the grieving families, be they the spouses, children or whoever, but it goes wider than that. Think about the first responders who come and service those events. Think about the health professionals and all the others who have to treat the results of these tragedies. They are seriously impacted by these events, so it goes much wider through our community.

On that note, my darling son, Fergus, is a paramedic. I am proud of him and what he does to serve the community, but I worry about him. I worry about the impact on his life and his mental health when the paramedics continually go to not only crime events but also road accidents and see the blood, the guts and the pain. They see people who are seriously injured, people who are dead and, regrettably, sometimes young children who are dead. If you think that does not impact on people I do not know what you think would.

Their first response is they are professionals; they get on with the job, try to do their best, triage people and try to save lives. That is what their focus is, and they do it. Be it the police, the fire brigade members who may have to use the jaws of death, the paramedics who get there or the bystanders who are the first to come to the crash site and do not know what to do so they call the emergency services, they are doing whatever they can, but physically seeing and encountering it has an impact.

I ask my son, 'How did you go today?' He will say, 'We had a couple of road accidents, dad, and it was a bit tragic' and so on. He will not betray confidences; he is obviously a professional, but I say, 'Ferg, you have to look after yourself'. They have debriefs and counselling, but I admit I wonder after he has done that for five or 10 years whether it will result in post-traumatic stress syndrome affecting him.

It is a job he wants to do and loves. His ambition is to become an intensive care paramedic. He has done his master's and all the extra bits around it, but he is my son and my wife's son. He will always be our son. I care for them. This is why I say it goes wider than the direct victims. I feel sorry for the victims. Some of them are victims of accidents they were not expecting to happen. I feel for those who are seriously injured with spinal injuries who become quadriplegic and so on. It is life changing for everyone. You wish that we can avoid this stuff.

We spoke earlier about local government. One of the first things I dealt with when I was in council were some residents in Matthews Road, opposite Sanderson Middle School, who wanted to see me. They were traumatised by the monument that had been established for about three to four months directly across the road for a 15-year-old who was tragically killed. Understandably, his family wanted to mark the death of their son. However, there were unintended consequences.

The monument had become bigger and bigger and it was almost like a grave, rather than just a cross to symbolise it. Then it was lit up at night. People might think that is okay, but it is not. The people across the road said that continual reminder of the death was ruining their lives, as their grandkids no longer wanted to come over because they would see the cross at night and it was worrying them.

The worst thing was that other kids were trying to copycat and wanted to jump out in front of cars, because they thought, 'This must be a good thing to do'. That was wrong. It was a double-edged sword; we can understand the grieving family, but there were unintended consequences.

I worked out which land it was on, and it was a council responsibility. The council did not have a road monument policy, but there was an NT Government policy. As a result and through delicate negotiations with the grieving family, we implemented a road monument policy which mirrored the NT Government policy about what was appropriate. It would never be a win-win situation, but we could not let this continue.

There are so many people impacted that you do not even think about it. The worst thing is that someone loses a life; we are losing human capital, and they are the future of the Territory, particularly our young ones. It is everyone of all ages, but when we lose a young person that is a loss for all of us.

I heard the Member for Goyder speak about a number of factors, including speed, alcohol, fatigue and not wearing seatbelts. I remember a young group of boys who played for Waratah Football Club and loved to go hunting and fishing. They came back through the Douglas Daly and rolled the car. The young driver did not wear a seatbelt; he went through the window and was killed. The other lad was wearing a seatbelt; he was injured, but he was okay. My son knew these kids, and we went to the funeral. Without going into too much detail, the young boy, who was the best friend of the young driver who died, was lost after that. I am sorry to say that a couple of years later he took his own life; he was depressed because of the loss of his friend.

This is how things go on and on. We have to do the best we can to minimise it, so wear your bloody seatbelts. We all have to take responsibility, particularly in educating our own kids about what should or should not be done. Do not drink and drive—there is no excuse for it. We have to change attitudes.

When my son and daughter were teenagers they would go to parties and go clubbing on Mitchell Street; they would have a great time. I made it clear to them not to drink and drive. I told them, 'Whatever happens, phone me or get a taxi home. If you have no money, dad will pay for it.' A number of times I picked up them and their mates at 3 am—they were having a great time, eating a souvlaki or similar stinking to high hell—and I did not mind driving them home. It is the right thing to do. If there was a group of them and one was a Sober Bob—fantastic. I would give the Sober Bob extra money in case they had a drink so that everyone could get into a taxi. I did not care. That was my thing.

A number of times people will say, 'I can still drive; hop in.' We have to think about not only them but also the innocent victims coming the other way. How many times on a highway does someone fall asleep because of fatigue, but they believed they could drive all the way? They may injure and kill themselves, but it is the innocent family coming the other way who could be taken out. It is not right, so we must get the message across—take responsibility. There are ways of doing that, use your friends.

I heard the Member for Goyder say that he goes to pubs at night and then sees all the cars gone. I celebrate when I see that people have left their cars there because they are too pissed to drive home. They have done the right thing and either had a friend drive them home or have taken a taxi and then come back to pick up their car the next day when they are sober. To those people I say thank you; you are taking responsibility for your own actions.

It is a tragedy, and we all need to work at it. Please think of everyone else who can be affected. Can you imagine Christmas time—a lovely time for family—with kids saying, 'Where is mum? Where is dad now? They are not here', or parents saying, 'Where are our children? We are lost.' We do not want that to happen to anyone, so let us all be safe and look after ourselves.

Mr ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I give the call to the Member for Daly. If the Assembly could indulge me for a moment, I apologise. It appears that we called three government members. I missed giving the call to an opposition member.

Clerk, is it possible to give the extra five minutes to the Member for Daly?

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, that is okay; I probably will not need it. I appreciate your acknowledgement of that. I understand, being a former Speaker of the House, that sometimes you miss the calls or, as we change over Speaker roles, you give the call to the person who has been in the Chair.

Mr O'Gallagher: Member for Daly, let me correct everyone. I called for the next speaker and no-one stood up on that side. The Member for Katherine was the only one who stood up.

Mr YOUNG: It is all good; that is no problem.

I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing on this matter of public importance about road safety. I acknowledge the Northern Territory's tragically high number of deaths on our roads, including heartbreaking recent events. This side of the House supports this matter of public importance. Like the Member for Goyder I have a rural electorate. The Treasurer and I have similar electorates in a lot of ways. They are hybrid electorates, with a lot of remote communities and rural communities. This is close to our hearts and we see the tragedy that happens on the roads each year.

Road accidents have a devastating impact on Territory families and their communities. Too many Territory families have received that awful phone call telling them that they have lost a loved one in a fatal crash. I pass on my condolences to all those families who continue to grieve their lost loved ones.

We are approaching the end of May and have already seen 16 lives lost on Territory roads. That is 16 more families in mourning and 16 more communities devastated. This comes after the heartbreaking loss of 60 lives on our roads last year, the highest number of lives lost on our roads in more than a decade. It is nothing short of a tragedy.

At the end of April the Northern Territory continued to have the highest per capita road fatality rate in Australia with 19.2 deaths per 100,000 people. These numbers represent more than just statistics; they represent mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children, friends and neighbours who will never come home. It is

a reminder that we need to remain hypervigilant on our urban, rural or remote roads. Every time we get behind the wheel each of us has a personal responsibility to maintain the highest levels of safety for ourselves, our families and other road users.

Mr Peter Frazer founded National Road Safety Week after his daughter Sarah was killed in an avoidable crash in New South Wales in 2012. We marked National Road Safety Week last week, reminding us all to stop and think about how we can contribute to making our roads safer. Many of the crashes on our roads are avoidable and preventable, but it takes everyone to play their part.

The Territory Labor government developed a number of concurrent road safety action plans to reduce road trauma. We backed that up with investment. The plans were developed in consultation with NT Police, local government and Aboriginal stakeholders. They considered all the factors that contribute to better road safety outcomes for Territorians, from vehicle safety to roads and driver behaviour. We introduced a range of measures to curb illegal and negligent behaviour on our roads.

The Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2018–2022 highlighted several simple changes that would make a difference in the long term. As part of this plan, we introduced a blood alcohol concentration limit for supervising drivers; increased maximum penalties for failure to undertake a breath or saliva test; increased police powers to give breath or saliva tests; and we started drug testing drivers in 2020.

Our statistics show that over the past 10 years at least 33%—one-third—of all fatalities on Territory roads involved people not wearing a seatbelt. With the NT Motor Accidents Compensation Commission we launched the Always Wear Your Seatbelt campaign in 2019. We invested in culturally appropriate education and awareness campaigns, such as 'Who's Your Sober Bob?', 'Enough's Enough Drink Driving' and 'Sorry Business Stories – Drink Driving'. I hope that the new government continues these important and impactful campaigns that support constant vigilance and remind Territorians everywhere to keep road safety top of mind.

Motorcyclists face a different challenge from commuters in cars. In 2019 we passed laws requiring people to get a learner's licence for mopeds. Lane-filtering regulations for motorcyclists were also introduced. In 2022 a media campaign was released, called Dress for the Ride and the Slide, promoting protective motorcycle clothing.

We followed up with the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024–2028. We undertook extensive consultation to inform that plan and urge the government to continue with important actions developed as part of that plan. They will save lives.

A key feature of the road safety work we did was its partnership focus with police, Aboriginal organisations and communities and NT MACC. I appreciate that the government is continuing to take a partnership approach. I welcome that and thank the government for it. As I said, we are all in this together.

As a member of the Assembly representing a bush seat, driving my vast electorate is of course a privilege, but it also makes me keenly aware of the seriousness of road safety, with the fatigue of driving vast distances, flooding on roads, Wet Season storms disrupting visibility and navigating unsealed roads leading into our remote communities.

I know roads, and that is why I know that one of the most effective ways to prevent a road accident is by investing in safer roads. The Labor government invested $203m in a road safety program, including shoulder widening and sealing; culvert extensions; installing guardrail barriers; audio tactile edge lines; intersection upgrades; truck parking bays; variable message signs; and street lighting. I thank the government because when I drive around my electorate I see those upgrades continuing to happen. That helps with road safety when people are driving along the Stuart Highway to Daly River. Those upgrades ensure that we make those roads as safe as possible for the users of them.

There have been upgrades to seal standard on various sections of the Tanami Road, Central Arnhem Highway, Port Keats Road, Maryvale Road, Litchfield Park Road, Gunn Point Road and Keep River Road, to name a few. There have also been upgrades to two-lane standard on various sections of the Carpentaria, Tablelands and Buntine Highways.

The construction of new bridges is important for road safety. We saw upgrades on Port Keats Road, Keep River Road, Litchfield Park Road, the Arnhem Highway and Roper Highway to improve flood immunity.

Construction on the Tiger Brennan Drive and Berrimah Road intersection overpass will improve road safety and the traffic flow. The construction of the Truck Central transport hub in Darwin will assist with the

management of driver fatigue. A total of 28 variable message signs display road safety and traffic messages across the Northern Territory.

I acknowledge that the Member for Namatjira confirmed the government will not cut funding for Port Keats Road between Wadeye and Palumpa, which will significantly improve safety on that road. I also acknowledge the community members from my electorate who have been advocating for quite some time now—before I was in politics, they were advocating to the previous Members for Daly, Gary Higgins and Ian Sloan—for that to remain in the budget. I look forward to seeing those upgrades to the road.

When it comes to road safety we also need to remember the bush. Upgrades mean that road users—whether they are going to and from homelands or people commuting between main communities—are travelling on safe roads. It also means that their cars do not become defective and are of the best standard possible and can be registered. When we upgrade dirt roads they are not deteriorating over time. That deterioration can create a lot of issues for people travelling along those roads. A tyre blowout, for example, can lead to a crash, especially when you can drive up to 80 or 100 kilometres an hour on some of those roads.

We always talk about driving to the conditions of the road. Although the signs may say the speed limit is 100 kilometres an hour it does not mean that people should drive at that speed. As a good rule of thumb on a bush road, I usually stick to 80 kilometres an hour or below, depending on the condition of the road. I always put it in high for a four-wheel drive because that will keep traction on the road. The Member for Katherine talked about buffalo running out onto the road. If you accidentally swerve that will hold your line also.

I thank the Treasurer for keeping that in the budget because it is important for people out bush in the Thamarrurr region.

Upgrading and sealing roads not only connects the Territory and provides economic growth, at the heart of the investment is road safety. It is critical that this government continues to invest in safer roads for drivers, motorcyclists and pedestrians alike. We are happy to support from opposition these things that are in the Towards Zero report and are the product of community consultation:

- upgrading road safety signage on regional and remote roads, targeting seatbelts, driving to the conditions and other key road safety messages
- providing funding to local governments to develop local area traffic management plans
- reviewing and increasing overtaking lanes on the Stuart Highway between Darwin and Katherine and between Katherine and the Carpentaria Highway intersection
- upgrading road network lighting infrastructure with smart controller lighting technology
- investing in technology-based solutions to increase compliance with speed limits at roadwork sites.

These steps are relatively simple and supported by the community.

Our road safety goals cannot be achieved by government alone. It will continue to take a substantial paradigm shift by everyone. Every Territorian must accept that they have a part in creating safe road culture. We need to slow down, buckle up and drive to the conditions. Even when a speed limit is 100 kilometres per hour, you should take it back to the conditions. If you are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable when you are driving, I suggest you slow down.

You touched on drink-driving, Member for Karama, and I could not agree more. I thank people like you who get up at 3 am to pick up your kids and their friends, because you understand the decision-making of people who are behind the wheel when they are over the limit. We know the devastating statistics when people are over the limit and what that could lead to.

I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing this important motion to the Assembly. I acknowledge the Member for Karama's son, who is a paramedic, and I thank all paramedics. They are the frontline services, and unfortunately they are usually the first responders to tragic accidents. The flow-on effect is that is not only the direct family, friends and community who are impacted but also the frontline workers who may not have known that person but still have to confront that scene. It is a huge concern and we urge everyone to slow down and think before you get behind the wheel.

I am thinking of all those families who have lost their loved ones on the road.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing this matter of public importance to the Chamber.

Road deaths are a significant issue and one that I feel strongly about. Earlier this year communities in Gove were shocked by a car crash that killed four people in two separate cars. The circumstances of these deaths are still being investigated, so I will not comment on the cause, but it was a tragic and distressing incident. There were three young people in one car and beloved Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot Chris Coffee was in the other vehicle. This was a very sad time for the MAF community, our homelands and communities of the region who knew this wonderful pilot and the families of the three young people.

In March last year the death of a young person occurred on Melville Road in Gove. It was tragic for the family and community to lose a young person who still had their life before them.

The Gove community also suffered in 2023 with the hit-and-run death of a cyclist on the road between Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala, a young life lost too soon.

I have previously spoken on this issue: more needs to be done on road safety investigation. We need to consider how our roads can be made safer and what the contributing factors are to road deaths. I have also spoken previously about my *wawa*—my brother through kinship terms—Mr Ganambarr, who was killed by a hit-and-run driver in 2023 at Palmerston. The driver did not stop and offer assistance to him, but left him to be hit by another car, which caused considerable distress for his family. He had come to town to see an optician to get his eyesight checked and then go home to his family. Sadly, he did not go home.

My thanks go to the police in these situations, who try to find the answers for the families and investigate what happened.

Little time has been spent in this Chamber on talking about the crime of hit and run in the Northern Territory. Many pedestrians have been hit by cars, and many of these are hit-and-run crimes. This government needs to apply the same level of concern and focus to these crimes and these victims that it has applied to other crime.

I am still uncertain what has happened for the victims who were killed in Brinkin. Two groups of Yolngu people were hit by hit-and-run drivers in 2024. In April 2024 three pedestrians in Brinkin were killed by a hit-and-run driver. Another three women were hit by a hit-and-run driver in November 2024, also in Brinkin. Two of these women passed away.

Many of these pedestrian deaths are people from remote communities who are visiting Darwin. We need to investigate why these deaths have occurred. When the driver flees the scene there needs to be justice for the victims.

I am pleased that the Member for Goyder has brought on this MPI. I want to know how much is in the 2025–26 budget to address the issues of road deaths.

Road deaths are tragic. Each family is left in a state of shock when they suddenly lose a family member. They grieve that loss forever. I send condolences to all families who know this devastating loss.

We must work to make our roads safer for everyone. If there are changes that can make roads safer we must do them. This government must invest in investigating how to make our roads safer for everyone.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will contribute to this definite matter of public importance.

I thank the Member for Mulka for his contribution and pick up on some of the issues he raised. Pedestrian deaths are tragic. Last year we had particularly high numbers, delivering devastating consequences to friends, families and entire communities.

The Member for Mulka asked about funding, and I have some data readily to hand. The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure spends $2.7m a year specifically on remote communities for driver education and safe driving practices. Through that amount of funding targeted programs can be delivered in the bush. There is a lot more that has to be done, Member for Mulka, and I think there is unanimous agreement on that in this Chamber.

Last year we had record numbers, with 60 lives lost. We doubled the numbers last year. In 2023 there were 31 lives lost. Fast-forward to last year and it was 60. This year we have already lost 16, and that was a mixture

of pedestrian fatalities and fatalities in a vehicle. It has tragic and lifelong consequences for the people involved and our communities.

In my electorate in the last couple of weeks there have been significant fatalities, which is devastating and has an impact on not just the friends, family and communities but also our emergency services workers. Over many years we have talked a lot in this Chamber about the impact on police and why wellbeing continues to be such an important support. It is not just our police but also our firies who cut people out of vehicles and the paramedics who respond and take people to hospital. There is a significant increase in trauma for them because of the frequency of the incidents they respond to. Additional trauma is then placed on people who are first responders. Unfortunately, trauma exposure is a part of what they do. The intensity and severity of it is increasing exponentially. Road safety is one way we can try to push the message.

In Question Time I went through data about proactive policing campaigns, and we are encouraging police to have that proactive focus. It goes back to years of underfunding and under-resourcing our police. There were a few years with COVID when road policing dropped away due to resource issues and pressures. We have brought that back, and we are now in the position that we can have intensive road policing. People need to know that they will be caught. They need to be afraid to drink and drive, to speed and to be on their phone. They need to be caught so that people do not do it. We will continue to ensure that enforcement is a component.

A large component of this is the decision-making of the driver and the decision-making of the people in the car with the driver at the time. The Member for Fannie Bay and I spoke with young students from Parap Primary School who were in the gallery about what we would be doing today. We talked about our yellow ribbons and how important it was that everyone has a responsibility, even the kids to hold their parents or the adult in their car responsible for their behaviour.

We launched a campaign prior to Easter with the Motor Accidents Compensation Commission, putting about $4m towards a high-impact, high-visual graphic campaign to ‘drive like your life is worth living’ to get the message across that the consequence of not doing the right thing is you, your loved one, your friend or someone else’s family loses their life. We are pushing this campaign. It has been run across TV channels, radio, billboards, newspapers, social media and all those platforms you would expect to try to get the message across about personal responsibility. You do not have the right to take that challenge into your own hands and deprive someone else of their loved one and their future.

We will continue with the campaigns of ‘Who’s Your Sober Bob?’, back to school and ride to school, as well as all the road safety initiatives regarding National Road Safety Week, which we celebrated last week. There are also the road safety community grants programs, the bike centre and the recording artists and athletes against drink-driving campaigns that are well known to people.

Our Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan goes through to 2028. There are 30 actions as part of that plan.

The Road Safety Task Force is made up of various key agencies that are delivering strategic road advice to inform our actions. Part of it is about safer roads and whether we need to reseal or have barriers—the physical-type of element, which I am sure the minister for Infrastructure and Transport will go into. The enforcement component acts as a strong deterrent so that people make good choices even if it is through fear of paying a fine or being pulled over.

There is also the education of our kids. I had the opportunity earlier this year to attend Street Smart High which is a great initiative that AANT partners. Hundreds of Territory teenage schoolkids go to the Convention Centre where a visual, high-impact event is put on to give young people the opportunity to understand the gravity of what driving means.

It is a fun time in your life when you are a young teenager getting your Ls and getting your Ps. It is exciting; all of us have lived through that. Thank goodness my children are still very young, so I do not have to stress about that yet. I am so grateful for that, but the time will come. We must make sure our teenagers have exposure to reality. Street Smart High has a demonstration of a car crash and the response. Young people who have been in car accidents and suffered lifelong disability or the trauma of the incident are there. Parents who have lost their child through road accidents come and speak. It is an incredibly powerful and confronting way to send the message to our young ones that driving and picking up your friends is fun and fantastic and all part of growing up, but there is a huge responsibility. I think too many of us know someone from our younger years who lost their life in a road accident.

Thousands of schoolkids are getting different types of road safety education and awareness through the department's road safety team. Hector the Cat is still going strong. It is important no matter how old you are, whether you are learning how to cross at a school crossing and to be aware of cars right through to when you can drive a car.

Millions of dollars across different portfolios go into programs, such as DriveSafe, but despite this collective energy, effort and focus we continue to see far too many people losing their lives on our roads. We must continue to raise awareness, call out bad behaviour and ensure there is strong enforcement. We must look to technology to see whether there are additional solutions like cameras to support our police to run big operations, particularly on long weekends when a lot of people are out enjoying our lifestyle.

At the end of the day that is what we want—lifestyle is the third tier in our government platform. We believe wholeheartedly in lifestyle and we want Territorians out every long weekend, with the boat, camper trailer, kids and roof rack—whatever that looks like for your family—exploring our beautiful Territory. Whether it is the MacDonnell Ranges, the Davenport Ranges in the Barkly, Nitmiluk in the Big Rivers region or Litchfield—as far as you can go across the Territory—we want people to experience the joy and tremendous beauty of the Territory. However, we need to ensure that everyone comes home safely and whilst they are enjoying our lifestyle takes responsibility for themselves, their family and friends and other road users. That needs to be front of mind at all times.

I thank the Member for Goyder for what is, unfortunately, a pertinent and topical matter of public importance. In the last 14 days there have been seven deaths on our roads, and we do not want to be competing with last year's numbers. The loss is too profound, and it is avoidable.

We urge everyone to use their voices as members of parliament. The road safety team provides electorate offices with ribbons, stickers and information to be used in members' community rooms to encourage people to access that information. I encourage all members to engage with their schools about whether they have had Hector the Cat or the road safety team attend to provide education. Encourage your schools to be engaged with the opportunity that Street Smart High presents. I have had terrific feedback from teachers, parents and students after they had been through that program. It is on all of us as leaders in our respective communities across the Territory to continue to push this message.

It is critical for us as a government to keep a keen eye and focus on road safety and push the limits of what we can do, but it all boils down to personal responsibility, so we ask Territorians to exercise their judgement wisely and make good decisions. As a government, we can put the framework around that to help people make good decisions, but at the end of the day it rests with the individual at that moment in time. As a government we are focused on this, particularly given last year's horrific levels.

Thank you, Member for Goyder, for bringing forward a not nice topic, but one that impacts on all of us. We need to continue to work hard at and strive for improved road safety. We need to call out bad behaviour and keep the important decision-making before you get behind the wheel front of mind so that we can reduce the tendency for the five key indicators—including seatbelts, drink-driving and distracted driving—to continuously come up. It is on us as leaders, Territorians and road users to make sure that we put our influence where we can to encourage people to make good choices.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, last week was National Road Safety Week, and I was given indulgence by this parliament to make a statement about that and how it is every Territorian's responsibility to be a part of that. I implored all Territorians to take care on our roads and drive so that others will survive, but last week—National Road Safety Week—was probably one of the worst weeks on our roads, which was hard to take. I know all the work that is put into it by various organisations and, as the Chief Minister mentioned, schools. To see that happen last week was hurtful to a lot of people in the Territory.

I stand before everybody today as not just a minister but also a Territorian who is deeply committed to road safety and making sure that people who call the Territory home stay safe on our roads. I have to speak some hard truths because too many Territorians are dying on our roads.

We have had seven in last 14 days, and 60 people lost their lives last year. That was the highest road toll in the Territory in more than 10 years. Behind every statistic is a broken family, a lost future and grief that does not go away. When you spoke about your son, Mr Deputy Speaker, who responds to these incidents, that is the wider picture. We have the families, friends and loved ones, but there are also the first responders—our ambos, our police and our firies who sometimes do rescues and cut people out of vehicles. The toll on those first responders is immense.

What is worse is when we look at that road toll for last year we see that more than 74% of those fatal accidents included drug or drink-driving—that is, 74% of those road deaths. That is people making the decision to get behind the wheel of a vehicle when they are impaired by alcohol or drugs. The message is still not getting through.

There is so much messaging out there from government, private sector organisations and organisations like MACC, the NT road authority, the RACV in Victoria and the NRMA in New South Wales—nationally, people are doing all this work to try to get that message out—but the message does not seem to be getting through.

To date we have had 16 fatalities in the Northern Territory, including those seven in two weeks. That is down from 21 this time last year and at least is a step in the right direction, but let us be clear that 16 fatalities is still 16 too many.

These numbers reflect a heartbreaking reality and one that demands action. The government and I call on all Territorians to change this through immediate behaviour change because some responsibility has to go back to the individual. We cannot be there looking over everybody and holding everybody's hand; there has to be responsibility from the person.

We have unique challenges in the Northern Territory. Our vast and diverse landscape presents unique challenges. Having a remote electorate I face these challenges all the time. We live in a place of long distances, harsh weather and remote regions, but we cannot allow geography to be an excuse for tragedy. I am out driving around my electorate, thousands of kilometres every few days, on primary dirt roads, secondary dirt roads and tracks, but you must drive the conditions and drive to survive.

What we are speaking about today is not just about numbers; it is about people. It is about our mates, our kids and our future. It is about doing something, not tomorrow or next year, but right now—today.

The fatal five—speeding, drink and drug-driving, not wearing a seatbelt, fatigue and driver distraction—remain widespread issues. Over the last 10 years data shows us further alarming statistics, with frightening trends contributing to our road toll. Of our road toll, 40% was alcohol related; 37% involved the failure to wear seatbelts; and 27% was speed related. Fatigue and driver distraction can be harder to measure, but we know that these too are significant. We cannot afford to give up fighting the dangerous behaviours we are seeing from drivers on our roads because those behaviours affect not just the drivers but also other innocent road users. The decisions people make to drive while impaired, to speed or to drive fatigued not only affect them; they can impact on everybody else.

At the end of the day, what are we doing? In response to these challenges the government continues to drive important initiatives to raise awareness and improve road safety for all road users in the Territory.

We remain committed to the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024–2028. This detailed plan follows the CLP's Towards Zero approach with the goal of ending serious injuries and deaths on our roads. We focus on 10 key areas of making roads, vehicle speeds and driver behaviour safer. Most importantly, it calls on all Territorians to work together to make our roads safer for everybody.

We have established a Road Safety Task Force, which is chaired by the Logistics and Infrastructure CEO. This taskforce includes senior representatives from NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services, the Motor Accidents Compensation Commission and the Department of Education and Training. This group is dedicated to coordinating efforts and ensuring real, measurable progress, backed by data and collaboration.

We are also contributing nationally to the National Road Safety Data Hub, ensuring our reporting is transparent to help shape national strategies.

We are investing in infrastructure to enhance road safety in the Territory, and this remains a large priority for this government. We are working in partnership with the Australian Government alongside our local councils. The infrastructure upgrades are not only about roads; we are also upgrading streetlights to smart LED systems and adding lighting at rural intersections and roadhouses to improve safety for everybody. Brighter lighting helps everyone see better, particularly pedestrians, and that makes our roads safer.

Pedestrian safety is an ongoing challenge, and education programs alongside infrastructure improvements remain a priority for us. Later this year we will also start trialling new technology that can detect pedestrians in a smart way to help protect those most at risk. It may detect a pedestrian walking across the road and the lights will become brighter, alerting drivers that there is movement on the road.

We will continue work with the federal government to jointly fund road safety projects across the Top End and in the Red Centre, targeting areas most at risk based on thorough safety assessments.

We are benefiting from upgrades to our road infrastructure to improve road safety as part of the Australian Government's $3bn national road safety program. As part of this program $144m has been set aside specifically for the Northern Territory. The program focuses on making city and regional roads safer for everyone, including drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

We continue to invest in public promotional campaigns for awareness and proactively encourage people to take part in road safety activities and take this seriously.

We launched a new campaign over Easter this year, the Lives Worth Living campaign, which aims to tackle the harsh reality of the wide-reaching effects of road trauma in our community. It emphasises the human cost of road accidents and encourages responsible driving behaviour.

However, we recognise that government action alone is insufficient; community involvement is paramount. Educational programs targeting our young drivers, partnerships with Indigenous communities to address specific challenges and collaborations with local organisations are integral components of our strategy.

In March, along with the Chief Minister, I attended the annual Street Smart High event held in Darwin. Our government was proud to support this event. Street Smart High, hosted by AANT, targets students and young drivers to drive early awareness of road safety home for those young people.

Our young drivers are vulnerable to road safety issues, which is why we have a keen focus on engagement with them. Our road safety education team, through the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure, has delivered 316 education sessions to more than 9,229 students across the Territory in the last 10 months. That shows the commitment we have to road safety and our young people who are about to get their licences and hit the road.

We also have focused initiatives for people in our remote communities, because it is difficult to get that messaging out there correctly. We need to tailor our road safety messaging to specific audiences so that we know the message is getting out to everybody. One standout success has been the DriveSafe remote program, delivering road safety education to more than 80 of the most remote communities across the Territory. Our road safety education team, through DLI, delivers campaign messages in local languages so that they connect with people and help create long-term change in how we behave on our roads. This approach is essential to making sure that road safety education reaches everyone, regardless of their background or location.

Our police play a key role in keeping our roads safe through enforcement and regular monitoring. NT Police has stepped up its road safety enforcement efforts in 2025, particularly during high-risk periods, to address unsafe driving behaviours. These kinds of operations help stop dangerous driving before it leads to tragedy.

We are investing in more speed cameras across the Territory to crack down on speeding. A lot of people may not like that, but one thing I know is that those cameras work. Everywhere I go across Darwin where there is a camera, everybody slows down. These cameras save lives by forcing drivers to slow down. If you choose to speed, know that you will be caught.

Although we have made progress, the journey towards zero fatalities continues. I urge every Territorian to take responsibility for themselves. Drive sober; do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and obey the speed limits because they are there for a reason. Speeding reduces reaction time and increases the severity of crashes. Wear your seatbelt. The simple act of wearing a seatbelt can save your life. Always buckle up. Stay alert and avoid distractions such as mobile phones when driving.

Many years ago in Corrections we worked with italk Library and MVR to develop a cartoon about using mobile phones when driving. It was done by the prisoners in the correctional centre, working alongside italk Library. It was a great animated cartoon about two fellows driving down the road, then one gets on a mobile phone, crashes the car and kills his mate. This thing sticks in my head today. At the end of it the words were, 'Don't be a dickhead. Don't use your phone in the car.' I remember that to this day.

Every road fatality has a ripple effect, impacting families, communities and the broader society. Beyond the emotional toll, road accidents impose significant economic costs, healthcare expenses, loss of productivity and property damage.

We must never stop fighting to change the behaviours that are costing us lives. They are not just mistakes; they are the reasons families are grieving and lives are ending far too soon. We owe it to every life already lost and every life we can save to keep pushing forward for change. Together, we can turn these statistics around and make a lasting difference and ensure that every journey Territorians take ends safely.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also thank the Member for Goyder for this MPI. I agree with everyone in this Chamber that the death on our roads is a tragedy. I welcome the opportunity to talk about it.

We know that far too many families are left devastated by the consequences of road crashes. We cannot afford to ignore the toll it takes on all of us. We have heard the statistics in the Chamber; this year we have already had 16 deaths in the Northern Territory. Each year an average of 500 people are seriously injured in road accidents in the Territory.

For so many of us this is not just a statistic; it is personal. These are our loved ones, family, friends and neighbours. There are people in this Chamber and those listening for whom this MPI must be incredibly painful. I encourage us to talk about this issue with respect and compassion.

I am one of those people. I lost a treasured family member who was not even 16, with her whole life ahead of her. She was killed in a road accident. Lucy was a vibrant, beautiful, amazing young woman and her death was a tragic and meaningless accident. Her life was over and the impact of her death was far reaching throughout our family and her many friends. At that time and almost every day since, I reflect on the danger of our roads. The death toll in the Northern Territory continues to be deeply shocking to me.

Like everyone in this Chamber I am committed to working to care for our community in every way we can and to ensure, with this issue, we are doing everything we can to keep people safe. There must be more we can do. Today we have heard lots of ideas and about the things that are happening. We also heard—I will restate—the toll is on not just on those hurt and killed or those who lose family members but also the first responders who do an incredibly challenging job. I thank them and our health services and all those who care for those harmed on the road.

We know the main causes of accidents on our roads—speeding, alcohol and not wearing seatbelts. I am deeply concerned that although alcohol is a key factor in many road crashes, the Northern Territory still does not have a comprehensive alcohol action plan and that the government has introduced legislation that makes alcohol more accessible by repealing the alcohol floor price. We have to continue to address alcohol-related harm, including its devastating impact on our road toll.

Young people, particularly those under 25, and communities in rural and remote areas are among the hardest hit. Tragically, First Nations Territorians are disproportionately affected, with 86% of fatal pedestrian crashes in the past 10 years involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We heard stories about that from the Member for Mulka.

Young people, especially those under 25, are significantly over-represented in fatal and serious crashes. This is particularly alarming, considering that the minimum licensing age in the Territory is 16. The training new drivers receive compared with everywhere else in Australia is minimal. When I or my kids talked to friends interstate and found out what they needed to do to get their licence, we were gobsmacked.

Like other people in this Chamber, when my kids and their friends started to drive I did everything I could to keep them safe. If they or their friends were out and not safe to drive I went to pick them up at 3 am. To be honest, their dad usually went to pick them up, not me. We put rules in place about how late they could drive and how many people they could have in their car, but it did not take away from me the real fear I felt that they might be harmed on the road.

We have to ask ourselves whether we are doing enough to ensure that our young people are adequately prepared for the responsibility of driving and have received the training they need to drive safely. Driving here comes with special challenges, with our rural and remote environment, poor road conditions, long distances, extreme weather and limited access to emergency services.

To make our roads safe for everyone we need a clear and consistent approach, which means investing in safer roads, targeted education campaigns, stricter enforcement of road rules and being honest about the decisions we make on alcohol policy. We cannot accept that losing lives on our roads is just a part of life. It is preventable and we know we can do something about it. Let us continue to try to make sure that whatever laws we make in this Chamber will make us all safer, that we have the evidence to show it will work and ensure that no more families have to endure this heartbreak.

An often overlooked category of road deaths, which the Member for Mulka talked about, is the hit-and-run crimes. Some of those deaths are allegedly domestic violence related. In November last year—this was the case that the member talked about—there was the tragic deaths of two women in Darwin's northern suburbs in what were alleged to be domestic violence-related incidents. These deaths, which are often hidden in statistics, represent a stark reminder of the intersection between road safety and broader social issues. Domestic violence-related deaths on the road are a unique and complex issue that deserves more attention. We need to find ways to address that through targeted intervention and support services.

There are many things we can do to address road safety; we have heard a lot from people in the Chamber, so I will not take up time repeating them. The road toll in the Northern Territory is a public health crisis. It is a crisis which requires urgent and sustained action, and it is one that we can do something about. We owe it to our communities, families and loved ones to do everything we can to make our roads safer.

Many people in this Chamber have talked about people we have loved and lost—friends, families and young people with their whole lives ahead of them. I think about my family and the pain we have lived through, and I know that I am not alone.

To everyone who has lost someone, has sat beside a hospital bed or who has had to make that impossible phone call, my heart is with you. I see you and I feel that pain too.

To our first responders, nurses and community members who are often the first on the scene, thank you for your strength and service in the face of trauma most of us can only imagine.

We must do whatever we can to reduce the number of lives lost on our roads and ensure that no more families have to endure this heartbreak.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I address this urgent and heartbreaking matter of public importance—the tragically high number of deaths on our roads in the Northern Territory. I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing this matter to the Chamber.

On New Year's Eve in 1999 I was in Alice Springs, where I grew up. We were at a party outside of Alice Springs and were getting ready for the world to fall apart due to the millennium bug, or Y2K as some of you might remember it. It was at this time when I was 21 years old that I had my first memorable confronting experience with a fatal road crash. Our world, as we knew it, did fall apart.

Four young kids, friends and acquaintances of mine, were heading to Uluru to celebrate New Year's Eve. On the drive a tour business pulled out in front of them. They swerved and the car rolled. Daniel Radovic was wearing a seatbelt and he survived. Matthew James Neck, 18 years old, was ejected from the car, no seatbelt, and he passed away. Matthew Glen Batson, 17 years old, ejected from the car, no seatbelt, and he passed away. Amanda Jayne Bell, 20 years old, not wearing a seatbelt, partially ejected from the car, passed away. Mandy left behind her young daughter, Morgan.

The car was fitted with seatbelts which were fully operational. No-one was wearing the seatbelts, except Daniel who survived with minimal injuries. Imagine what the outcome could have been if they were all wearing the seatbelts provided.

I remember Alice Springs after this event. The usually bustling town was quiet—silent—and the impact of the three young deaths in one incident was too much for a small town like Alice Springs to bear.

Each life lost is not just a statistic; it is a devastating blow to families, friends and communities across our Territory. The ripple effect of these kinds of events is tremendous. Already this year across 11 different incidents we have lost 16 Territorians on our roads. Behind each of these numbers is a story, a parent, a child or a friend whose absence leaves a void that can never be filled.

Our road toll is a stark reminder that tragedy can strike at any moment and in any place. These are not just isolated incidents; they are part of a persistent pattern that demands our collective action. The statistics are sobering. I am sure we have all heard it by now as a result of the media campaign, but for those who have not heard NT drivers are four times more likely to die on the road than the national average. Over the past decade an average of 42 lives have been lost each year on Territory roads, with 2024 marking a particularly devasting year with 60 fatalities. These numbers are not just figures on a page; they represent futures cut short and communities left grieving.

The contributing factors are well known—alcohol, speed, failing to wear seatbelts and fatigue, which remains stubbornly prevalent. Nearly half of all fatalities involve alcohol and more than one-third of those who died were not wearing seatbelts. These are preventable causes, and it is within our power to address them.

On 17 December 2018 I was travelling from Darwin to Queensland with my husband and two of my children to visit our oldest daughter who was studying in Queensland at the time. We were a few kilometres south of Larrimah and were some of the first responders to a crash that we soon learnt was a fatality. James Fisher was moving with his family from the Northern Territory to Cairns in Queensland. His family had flown over there prior to him heading that way. He was in the car with the family dog—a dalmatian puppy named Molly. James was driving to Queensland because Molly had a broken leg and could not be flown. Some of you might remember this story. At the scene no-one knew there was a dog involved as she was not on the scene at the time, but about a week later Molly turned up in Larrimah. Eventually she was reunited with James' partner in Cairns.

I have witnessed lots of things in my lifetime. I have travelled remote for work and arrived at locations where I have had to immediately assist with trying to revive community members using CPR, and on some of these occasions this has been unsuccessful. I have witnessed death right in front of me, but nothing compares with the events of being the first on the scene to a vehicle fatality, and it will stay and haunt anyone who witnesses this forever.

The pain of these losses is compounded by the knowledge that many of these deaths could have been avoided. The heartbreak is real and raw, especially for those who have lost loved ones in recent months. I extend my deepest sympathies to every family who has been affected. Your grief is shared by all of us in this House and across the Territory. I also extend my sincere thanks and empathy for emergency services workers who are confronted with these situations all too regularly.

The Territory and Commonwealth Governments have committed significant funding to deliver road safety upgrades, including shoulder widening, roadside barriers, rumble strips, protected turning lanes and improved lighting. These measures are targeted at the most dangerous stretches of road, aiming to prevent the run-off road crashes that account for so many of our fatalities. We all know that the infrastructure is only part of the solution. Road safety is a shared responsibility. Every Territorian, driver, passenger, cyclist and pedestrian has a role to play.

Last week marked National Road Safety Week, and we had a horror week on our roads. I urge everyone to take the pledge to drive so others survive. Talk to family, friends and everybody about safe driving, and honour those we have lost by making better choices on our roads. Behind every statistic is a person and behind every person is a family. We owe it to them to do everything in our power to make our roads safer. We can work together across parties, communities and the Territory to bring an end to this tragic toll.

In conclusion my message to all is: we can make all the infrastructure changes that we like. We can have the world's biggest budget and perfect roads and safety measures, but it would not matter if we do not have personal responsibility and drive so that others survive.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Goyder for bringing this important motion. It is likely that no-one in this House has not been touched by the loss of someone on Territory roads.

Last week was National Road Safety Week and we wore yellow ribbons in honour of that, but it was a shocker. I was sitting in this Chamber when staff from my electorate office notified me that the road outside of my electorate office at the Oasis shopping centre was closed. It quickly became clear on social media that a lady on a mobility scooter had been struck by a car. That was on Thursday 15 May. Yesterday Police media notified that lady had passed away. My deepest condolences go to her friends and family. Also in that media release, Police notified that the driver was charged with driving a motorcar vehicle causing death, careless driving causing death and driving with drug in body.

At 5 am on 14 May there was a two-vehicle crash on Kirkland Road in Durack, I was heading to this House and was notified that the road was blocked and had to take a different path. We later found out that, sadly, a 45-year-old woman was deceased at the scene.

Last Thursday, 16 May, there was another two-vehicle crash on Kirkland Road, Durack. A 36-year-old male passenger was deceased.

Three deaths in three days—indeed a horror week for Road Safety Week.

Road safety is all our responsibility. It is our responsibility when we get behind the wheel of a car. It is our responsibility when we hear about what our friends are doing and what our children are up to. My children are not ready to drive yet, thank goodness, but when they come to that age I will be putting a lot of time and effort into teaching them not only the practicalities of driving but also to think about what could go wrong and how to get home safely if they are at a party where there is alcohol.

I will speak about a dangerous trend that many Blain constituents are bringing to me; that is, the trend of young hooligans riding unregistered dirt bikes around Palmerston in a dangerous and unsafe manner without helmets. Many people have raised this with me. It is a common topic of discussion on our community groups. I have seen them when I have been at training at the Raiders.

This week we were having a Pizza in the Park event in Woodroffe Park, which is a lovely place. My children were there. The park was full of kids coming to enjoy the pizza we had brought. There was a hooligan on a green unregistered dirt bike doing wheelies, popping up on one wheel and riding back and forth on the two streets adjoining us. They picked up a passenger who was not wearing a helmet or the correct gear to be on a dirt bike, and they were driving dangerously. We rang the police who responded, but unfortunately by that point they had moved on and the police were unable to apprehend them.

I support the rights of Territorians to enjoy our wonderful outdoors on their all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes, but to do so in an appropriate and safe manner. We are blessed in Palmerston to be surrounded by a vast expanse of Crown land filled with dirt tracks that are perfectly built to be explored on two wheels. There is no need to be driving dangerously on our streets, popping wheelies and, above all, not wearing helmets.

I bring this up because it happened. At 6.30 pm on 17 August 2023 a 33-year-old man was riding a dirt bike without a helmet, under the influence of alcohol, on Bonson Terrace. My understanding is he was riding out of the laneway onto Bonson Terrace, towards De Mestre Court, and he was struck by a vehicle and, sadly, passed away at the scene. The driver of that vehicle was later apprehended by police and tested positive to illicit substances.

For the sake of the lives of the people in Palmerston, please—to the youths in Palmerston who think it is fun to ride dangerously on the streets without a helmet, if you have a dirt bike, go away from the roads where the cars are. Go to the Crown land where you can ride a dirt bike safely, where there are not vehicles and pedestrians to endanger.

It is critical to have high-visibility policing. During the era of COVID we had limited enforcement with road policing. One thing I was proud of when the Finocchiaro government came to power was seeing uniformed police on our roads, keeping people safe, pulling over drivers and performing RBTs. I hope that, despite the horror week we had last week, when this year draws to a close, our road fatality total will be much lower.

I pay my respects to the first responders who respond to those incidents.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I listened to the contributions this evening from across the Chamber. We can all agree that road safety is such an important thing for all Territorians. We heard stories which were very emotional about the loss of loved ones and friends. We can all resonate with that. We never expect that it will happen to us, and then it does and it tears families apart.

We all have a responsibility as leaders. The Chief Minister said in her contribution that we are leaders in our communities, so it is up to us to continue to share the message that road safety is important and drivers need to take care when they are behind the wheel. Vehicles are important in this day and age, but they can also be very dangerous if you have one of those five influences that most people in the Chamber discussed.

I place on the record my support of our emergency service workers, police, ambulance officers and those at the hospital who have to deal with horrific fatalities and accidents all too often. It should not happen as often as it does.

It is personal responsibility. My son the other day asked, ‘Mum, why can’t there be more police officers on the roads to help people?’ I said, ‘Mate, we can’t have a cop car on every road or next to every car’. It is a big personal responsibility.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
Member for Arnhem

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 26, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Madam SPEAKER: The member will be heard in silence. What she says will not be debated.

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, last night in the Chamber during his adjournment speech, the Member for Namatjira made a false and misleading statement. He claimed that my husband was the subject of an investigation by the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC). To be clear, this is entirely untrue. The Member for Namatjira stated:

> *I could talk about the Leader of the Opposition's husband who works in a government department. He is a public servant who was investigated in that department. His work area was investigated by the ICAC over impropriety in that area.*

This is not only factually incorrect, it is a serious and damaging accusation.

My husband commenced employment with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics in February 2021, eight months after the start of the review period examined by the ICAC. That review focused on procurement activities in the Katherine regional office between July 2020 and October 2021. I make it clear that at no stage was my husband or any individual investigated by the ICAC.

On 16 October 2023 the then commissioner, Mr Michael Riches, finalised and published the ICAC review of practices, policies and procedures of DIPL Katherine office, Operation Southern. This was a systemic review conducted under section 110 of the ICAC Act, not a personal misconduct investigation. It was a review of the procurement systems and practices, not a finding against any individual. DIPL accepted the ICAC's recommendations in full—a fact that is publicly available on the department's website. The now minister is the Member for Namatjira.

My husband voluntarily contributed to feedback in that review. As a new employee to that department he was not required to do so. He did it in good faith to support better practice and improve systems within his department and workplace.

If we start attacking those who voluntarily contribute to integrity bodies like the ICAC we discourage future operation and undermine the transparency we say that we stand for.

As someone who has been honoured with the privilege of serving in a previous Cabinet, I know that leadership comes with the responsibility to set an example, to be accountable and to uphold integrity, truth and decency in public life, not to shy away from asking the hard and sometimes uncomfortable questions as part of our job.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to provide a personal explanation.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure to attend the Mother's Day Classic on Sunday 11 May, which I have done for the entire time that I have been a member of parliament. It was a wonderful, heartwarming event full of community spirit, laughter and purpose.

Every year I participate in the classic we have a wonderful time. It was fantastic that this year 722 people registered to participate in the event. That is almost 200 more than last year, which is incredible.

I also had the opportunity to help at the registration desk with the Member for Port Darwin, who was there much earlier than me volunteering her time. We enjoyed registering people together. My colleague, the Member for Fannie Bay, had the barbecue, cooking up a storm for breakfast. I note the Member for Brennan was there showing our new member how to be a pro on the barbecue; it was great to see them participating.

The top Darwin team fundraiser this year was Bab's Breast Cancer Team, which raised $3,613. Ovaries Achievers' fundraising raised $1,720, and Feentuit Force's fundraising raised $805. I congratulate Isaac Noonan, who was the first across the finish line in 16 minutes, 38 seconds, and Ella Matthiesson, the first female to cross the finish line in 18 minutes, 33 seconds. We did the family-friendly two-kilometre toddle. We did not even finish that in 18 minutes, so they did an incredible job.

I thank everyone who supported this event, whether it was through donations, volunteering their time or the entertainment logistics. Of course, the major sponsor and cell partner for the year was Glencore McArthur River Mine, which has been great a great sponsor for a long time.

I thank the Darwin local business community that donated heavily or discounted their services and do an amazing job of supporting. Thank you to Sky Barre pilates; Anna Bowie Music; Laetitia Lemke, who is a survivor herself; ARC Fitness; Eprint; the Northern Territory Police Force, which had the horses and dog squad there; Darwin Catering Company; Bee's Bubbles Darwin; Charlie Bliss photography; and All About Party Hire. Raffle prizes were donated by Cape Adieu Harbour Cruises, Embella Jewellery, Novotel Darwin Airport, Dynamic Catering Solutions, Fiesta Flavors – Buffet, and McDonald's.

It is National Volunteer Week, so thank you to the Mother's Day Classic volunteers and the committee Chair, Jordan Tuit, who did a fantastic job. The increase in numbers is phenomenal, and I hope it continues to grow in numbers and success. I thank the committee members, Wendy Pritchard, Larnie Batten, Lauren Jenner, Rebecca Barmah and Lena Nesbitt for dedicating their time and energy to what is always a terrific morning. It is their hard work and commitment which brings the community together year after year to support an important event. I thank the Darwin Runners club, which is always at the finish line to cheer everyone on and support the event. I look forward to spending my Mother's Day with you all again next year.

It is an honour to acknowledge the efforts of the Northern Territory contingent at the 2025 National Schools Debating competition in Sydney from 11 to 18 May. The National Schools Debating Championships (NSDC) is Australia's premier debating competition for high school students. Established in 1971 the NSDC unites the finest young debaters across all states and territories, fostering excellence in critical thinking, public speaking and civic engagement.

Although they did not secure any wins in the competition, the students' participation and perseverance throughout the challenging event was nothing short of impressive. Their journey began with a long night of travel and no sleep, but despite that the team jumped into action and the excitement of the opening debate between New South Wales and Victoria, who are the reigning champions.

The event was held in the prestigious Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of New South Wales, setting the tone for the days ahead. Over the following days the Northern Territory team participated in the round robin debates where they competed against some of the best debaters across Australia on a range of topics from economics to politics to pop culture. Despite not having the same competitive experience as the other bigger states, the NT team held its ground and earned the recognition of an adjudicator in one of its debates, which was a big accomplishment considering the challenges it was up against.

I was pleased to provide members of the team with Territory flag pins to wear as part of their uniform as a symbol of pride that reminded them of their roots, who they were representing and that we were all cheering for them. The team's spirit of resilience and camaraderie was clear throughout the event. They gave each debate their all and took the opportunity to network, learn and grow personally.

Their enthusiasm for engaging with others across the country earned them the most social state award; we should all be proud of that. It speaks volumes about their love for connection, their willingness to engage in meaningful conversations and their ability to bring others together. It is a true reflection of the spirit of the Northern Territory, and I am incredibly proud of them.

The team had the privilege of travelling to different venues across New South Wales, including the University of New South Wales, Pymble Ladies' College and the University of Western Sydney, each providing a new and different experience to showcase their debating skills. Despite the competition's outcome, the experience in public speaking and chairing the final debate between Queensland and New South Wales was invaluable.

It was a great opportunity for the students, and I extend a special recognition to the members of the Northern Territory team: Isaac Loganathan, student debater, Year 11, Haileybury Rendall; Abigail Tonkin, Student debater, Year 12, Haileybury Rendall; Peta Gibson, student debater, Year 12, Haileybury Rendall; Amy Nguyen, student debater, Year 12, Casuarina Secondary College; Sam Reader, student debater, Year 11, Haileybury Rendall; Sam Ricketts, coach; and Darshi Pandithage, coach.

Thank you and well done. Your dedication is admired by us all, and I am sure you will continue to tell stories about this opportunity for years to come.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I put on the record my congratulations to Kalano Community Association in Katherine on its 50th birthday celebration that was held a few weeks ago. I was invited to celebrate the 50 years with it and to give a short speech.

Over the time I have lived in Katherine, Kalano has done amazing things with its community. It is a well looked after community that it has progressively upgraded. It has walking tracks that are kept well maintained. It has recently replaced all the fences in people's yards, and you see people out there working and maintaining that community well; it is an absolute credit to Kalano.

Kalano is truly part of the Katherine community. It provides services like a community bus service for all people around the community, and it is involved in the nightly patrollers meetings that happen between Thursday and Sunday. Each year it does a family fun day, which is a huge event that starts at about 8 am and goes until about 2 pm. It gets all the service providers out there and has the community involved; it is a fantastic event.

Last year it took back control of its aged care, which had been under the care of Red Cross; it came back under Kalano, which is fantastic. That was a good event at the time as well. Along with me were the CEO, Alan Mole; President Glen Nuggins; Lisa Mumbin; Jeff Leggat; May Rosas; and Noel McDonald. It was great to have a chat with Noel because he was one of the original founders of Kalano before it became Kalano Association. It was great to have a chat with him about different things he had done in the early stages of Kalano, including taking on the Rockhole community.

Lisa Mumbin, the CEO of Jawoyn, spoke about how she was a shop assistant and started as a cleaner at Kalano. It was great to listen to the stories of how Kalano had been involved in the community over the 50 years. It was a two-day event. On the Friday afternoon it had the celebration and the birthday, then on the Saturday it had another function that I was unable to attend.

There are strong elders out there; Lisa spoke about that. I found it interesting when she spoke about talking to people in the community about respect and being good citizens. As an elder in the community a lot of people look up to Lisa as she is a well-respected part of our community. When she talks, people listen, and you could just about hear a pin drop whenever I have been in situations where she has spoken.

It was a fantastic afternoon to hear Lisa, Alan and Noel McDonald speak, and I commend them on 50 years. Congratulations to them.

Another event we had in Katherine recently was the Do it For Dolly Day, which everyone gets behind. I have spoken numerous times in the House about Kate and Tick Everett and the fact that their daughter, Dolly, ended her life as a 13-year-old girl. They were clients in my salon. She was such a beautiful young girl. I cannot even imagine—as we have spoken about today with the tragedy on our roads—the loss of people to suicide. I cannot imagine how parents cope with that.

Kate and Tick got behind Do It For Dolly Day and Dolly's foundation, Dolly's Dream. Our whole community gets behind this as well. Elders Real Estate host a Do It For Dolly Day in Katherine. This year it raised $1,983 for the Dolly's Dream foundation. It is a shared commitment to spreading kindness and standing against bullying. They have plenty of people who donate raffle prizes, with the most exciting part of the morning being the community raffle, featuring more than 20 amazing prizes generously donated by local businesses. Every dollar raised goes straight to the Do It For Dolly foundation, helping fund education and support to combat bullying across Australia.

I reiterate that when people pass a comment on your social media or on any other pages out there, they need to stop and think about what they say on that because sometimes adults are the biggest bullies. We are trying to combat bullying in schools and be kind and nice to people, yet comments I read by some of the adults in communities is next-level.

Congratulations to the winners on the day:

- Lynton—$500 maintenance voucher (Call Now)
- Debbie—Galaxy earbuds and charger (Emerge IT)

- Mel—$200 meat voucher (FSNT Electrical)
- Trevor—$200 cleaning voucher (Katherine Cleaners)
- Bronwyn—horse lick (Coodardie Station)
- Bobby—cleaning hamper (Katherine Cleaners)
- Sam—engraved Yowi (Patow)
- Kate—camo Yowi (Elders Rural)
- Charmaine—boombox (Emerge IT)
- Michael—Contour voucher (Contour)
- Jack—gas burner (Mitre 10)
- Stuart— Sprout headphones (Emerge IT)
- Selena—$100 cash (Katherine Glass & Security Screens)
- Beryl—Dolly merch and wine (Elders Real Estate Katherine)
- Maddie—garden ornaments and socks (Mitre 10)
- Mel—pink mugs (Patow)
- Selena—party lights and glass (Anonymous)
- Megan—pink backpack and socks (Mitre 10)
- Judy—green backpack and socks (Mitre 10)
- Maddy—black backpack and socks (Mitre 10).

Elders Real Estate thanks everyone who donates to that amazing cause and everyone who participates, bakes for it, rocks up and purchases something or gives a donation. All the staff get behind it; they were all in their Do It For Dolly shirts. It is a fantastic event that we look forward to every year in our community.

Ben Coutts and all the staff at Nutrien Ag Solutions in Katherine get behind it as well. Elders Real Estate does one event in the morning and Nutrien Ag does one at lunchtime and puts on a sausage sizzle. Everything is blue, in the Do It For Dolly colours. Many people across the community donate. I have not caught up with Ben to find out how much was raised on that day, but it generally raises a lot of money. Some of the raffle prizes that people donate are worth thousands of dollars. It is good that people in our community—I always talk about how amazing our community is—get behind each other and give. It is times like this, with Do It for Dolly Day, that everyone gets behind the foundation, the events and donate amazing prizes for our community to stamp out bullying.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I was not here today because I am unwell and was at home also looking after a sick baby, but it is the last day of this sittings, and I did not want to miss my chance to speak about something that occurred yesterday. It is part of an ongoing thing that I feel has been unaddressed. I really want to take this time to address it.

Yesterday we heard in the adjournment the Treasurer be quite upset about the contribution we had from the Opposition Leader. He said, quite furiously, legitimately, ‘How dare you bring families into this? Spouses and families are off limits. You do not bring spouse and family in here for cheap political pointscoring.’ He said that this House had sunk to a new low and this was not something that should be occurring here.

I could not believe what he was saying. All of a sudden those were the ground rules, after I had spent weeks in here, in multiple sittings, having the Deputy Chief Minister and the Member for Barkly try to denigrate and humiliate me, bringing my partner into this, talking about his work, his job, my mortgage and our rent, multiple

times. I sat there and I copped it over and again, but suddenly, the lowest thing to do was to bring family into this.

I tell you what: the standard that you hold for other people does not mean anything if you do not hold it for yourself. I know I hold myself to that standard.

I do not want to see any smirking in this goddamn speech, Member for Goyder.

I hold myself to that standard. I was asked to bring up that topic here. I was asked to ask questions about it and talk about it, and I said no. I could have, because you had already done it. I could have gone tit for tat and said, 'Oh well, they've already done it to me, so I'll do it to them', but I did not because I hold myself to that standard, and I refuse to let this place change me as a person. This place that can be an absolute cesspit. I refuse to do that.

I will hold myself to that standard, but apparently others cannot. I am furious, because I am alone in here. I am on my own. I have no colleagues and no-one to back me up, but I am here with just as much right as you. I get that we can have argy-bargy. Question Time is a performance. I will take down policies and express and give criticism, and we get emotional, but if you cannot understand—apparently, you can understand the line between legitimate criticism, legitimate political pointscoring and nasty, low, personal insults and bringing family into it.

The hypocrisy—that is why last night during that speech I was gobsmacked. I was not laughing at the content of it. I could not believe everyone was jeering, 'Yeah, how dare you bring family into this!' I was shocked at the hypocrisy. How dare you! I come in here holding my head high and do what is best for the community, and for weeks I have had to put up with this.

That night I had said in my adjournment about some of the behaviour and how I also was trying to change my ways in here to make sure that I was not contributing to that, wanting to make this a safe workspace. I spoke about the Deputy Chief Minister saying, 'No-one cares about you'. I also mentioned how in one of the first sittings I had one member say quietly to me, 'You're a disgrace'. Do you know who that was? The person who just now was talking about bullies and how adults can also be bullies, and people should be careful what they say. It was the Member for Katherine who said to me, 'You're a disgrace'. You want to stand here and talk about bullies, and adults being adults. I am furious. How dare you hold that standard for other people and not also for yourselves.

Not that you deserve an explanation, but the whole thing about my partner, where he worked and what we did for a living—there is an element to class as well in this. As someone pointed out to me last night, it is even worse that you did it to me, because he is not a senior public servant who can be named for other legitimate reasons and has power, control and responsibility. He is a goddamn welder. He just goes to work, slogs it out, works for his family and comes home. Your Deputy Chief Minister, and the rest of you who laughed along and jeered with that, tried to use that against me in the most dirty, political, cheap pointscoring. You laughed at me time and again.

I can hold my head high. My partner did not finish Year 10. My partner grew up in poverty—stuff that I am sure none of you can imagine.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please. Member for Nightcliff, talk to me.

K McNAMARA: I am glad to hear that some people have that life experience, because it brings something positive. The reason I said that is I am shocked that people with that experience would also then pile on to people who share that experience.

I cannot believe these people during this speech, who shake their head at me.

My partner did not finish Year 10. His brother died of a heroin overdose. His childhood best friend died of a heroin overdose. He has come up—you would not believe—and he has more integrity in his little finger than the man who sits in that chair.

This is the thing when you are working class and you work in a trade. When I was nine weeks pregnant and terrified to lose my job because we had no money and nowhere to live, I was working at Hazelwood Coal Plant. Yes, I had protested against coal plants. I had a pretty strong idea about fossil fuels. However, I had

no money, and I did not want to tell my work. I was in a harness working on the top of a coal stack for nine hours a day at a coal plant, pregnant. Am I still allowed to make comments about the fossil fuel industry? Of course. In fact, it gives us even more credit.

The thing too that it was something secret or hidden—I talked about our background all the time during my election campaign. Of course, they would not know about it because no-one paid attention to the campaign or The Greens. Fair enough. I talked about it all the time though. I talked to people in the trades and the gas industry. We talked about all the issues about that. I know what it means to rely on something like the gas industry.

I have every right to talk about it and critique it. The idea that they would use that as some type of cheap political stunt is disgusting. For those of you who were shaking heads and rolling your eyes at me, I am sure you were also saying, 'How outrageous to bring family into it'. If you are still holding one rule for them and one for someone else, you had better take a look in the mirror.

I know what it is like to work in hostile workplaces. I know I have a thick skin; you do not work for six years as a the only female rigger, literally probably in Australia, without developing a thick skin. I am fine with that and some of the argy-bargy. However, there is a line, and this place and party cross it all the time.

Maybe the other side did too; I was not here. You do not hold yourself to the lowest bar. Some people say to me, 'Look at The Greens, all siding up to Labor all the time'. They treat me like a human being; I did not expect that. I know federally The Greens and Labor hate each other. I came in here expecting that and these people have treated me with respect and dignity and like a human being.

I believe I have also done this to the other side. If there is a time when I have insulted you, show me the *Hansard* and I will apologise …

A member interjecting.

K McNAMARA: Okay. Please, I welcome it. Personal insults I welcome, I do not believe I have. I have certainly not brought people's families and private lives into this Chamber to score cheap political points.

Now that we have a standard here that bringing families into this is disgusting and a low blow, I welcome that, so I expect an apology from the Deputy Chief Minister, the Member for Barkly and from every one of you who laughed or jeered along with it. If you hold that standard for other people—goddamn!—hold it for yourselves.

Do you know what it is like to come in here and just try to honestly represent my community and do a good job? This is meant to be a discussion of ideas, taking things by their merits. Yes, it gets emotional and there is a bit of political pointscoring, but there is a line. The hypocrisy that you people have shown in this is revolting. Bullies: that is what they call it, don't they, when a group of children gang up on one? I refuse to come into this place and be bullied any longer. I refuse.

Yes, there can be some level of combat here, but for God's sake, that is a line that many of you crossed. I expect and deserve an apology, and I do not want to see this happen again.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, the Australian-New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation Conference was held in the Parliament of Victoria in December 2024. Several members of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee attended—those being me and the Members for Daly and Wanguri. We were accompanied by the Legislative Assembly Committee Secretary.

It was the intention of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee to submit a formal committee report to the House during the February and March sittings, but unfortunately, owing to changes in Bill scrutiny reporting timeframes, it became impossible because there are, frankly, limitations in the Committees office, with the office being asked to do a lot of things on short notice.

I am pleased to note that there are recent additions to staffing in the Committees area. They are extremely welcome, and I am delighted to see some of them in Chamber right now. I am sure they will help us all in our work on committees.

Consequently, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee members decided to avoid further delay in reporting back to the House, and instead speak to the matter today in adjournment to ensure we can draw

some of the useful things we learned back to the House for the Assembly's benefit. It is serendipitous, because there has been a lot of attention drawn towards matters of scrutiny in this place in recent times.

I seek leave to table four papers arising from that conference: the conference program; the combined jurisdictions report; a paper by Mr Alex Hickman, the Legal Advisory Officer from the WA Legislative Council; and a paper by the Hon Natasha MacLaren-Jones, Member of the Legislative Council, Chair of the Regulation Committee of the New South Wales legislative committees.

Leave granted.

Dr RAHMAN: On the first paper, the breadth of the program speaks to the fact that there is an awful lot to think about beyond nitpicking. A range of stakeholders from all parliaments across the country, as well as New Zealand, were represented. We looked at things like COVID-19 legislation, which came through aggressively, as many of you would remember; emergency legislation, what it is and what it is not; the role and purpose of scrutiny committees; the use of AI in scrutiny committees to pick up on little things, particularly with respect to subordinate and delegated legislation; statutory silence; Henry VIII powers, which everyone should know about; explanatory memoranda; animal rights; life cycle models to involve post-enactment legislative scrutiny; and real versus lip service to things like human rights and democratic processes.

There is a tonne of stuff I could talk about in relation to all of that, but I will leave it to all of you to read the documents and learn yourselves.

In sum, what would be clear to any MLA here who had the benefit of going to that conference is this: large parts of NT process for several terms of government are not following national best practice, let alone international best practice. There is something for us to learn in that.

If we go to the jurisdiction reports, which is the second document I tabled, the first thing you will note is that everyone who attended provided one, except us. That is for a number of reasons, one of which is administrative and practical, but at the same time, we cannot be the outlier jurisdiction in the country repeatedly; we just cannot. It is important that we have a seat at the table at these things and provide information.

In fairness, there was a change of government, so there was a narrow window of time in which to provide that report. There was a technical issue as well. However, we have not participated in a lot of these national or international fora for a number of years. We need to build bridges with the rest of the country and let them know what we are up to if we want to be assisted by them.

If you look at the jurisdiction reports you will learn a lot, and you will learn that activity in all states and territories varies wildly. Suffice to say, scrutiny plays a much more significant role in every other jurisdiction other than ours. That is not surprising considering we did not even have a scrutiny committee for the last four years. I am delighted we at least have one now.

Look at the Commonwealth; it has three scrutiny committees, essentially. If you look at the five-year statistics, you will find that it picks up a lot of problems with laws. That is the Commonwealth, with all its money and resources, and all its time to make good laws. Still, after all that, roughly 25% of all Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation assessments find a problem, and more than 50% Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills assessments find problems. You do not want to pass laws with holes and problems in them. That is why Westminster systems around the world have scrutiny committees with a range of functions.

I will focus on only two of them that I want us to try to corral around, because they are positive things that would improve things for everyone in here in respect of all the laws we are making. The first one pertains to the third paper I tabled. It is a paper by Mr Alex Hickman, who is the Legal Advisory Officer from the WA Legislative Council. He has written a paper called 'Explanatory Memorandums for Proposed Legislation in Australia: Are They Fulfilling Their Purpose?' It is a good thing to read.

Here is the key thing to understand about it. A number of the jurisdiction reports I am talking about highlight the fact that there are challenges of both primary and subordinate legislation when explanatory statements and tabling notes are variable and sometimes, regrettably, have extremely poor quality.

The Northern Territory has a legislation handbook that provides some guidance, but the fact remains that some of our explanatory statements ain't amazing either. If you compare some of our recent ones, Serial 18

versus Serial 13 of this year, you see that one is 127 words on one page and tells you nothing; the other is 14,000 words and 16 pages long. We have a problem there, right?

They are both much better than Serial 125 from 2024, which the Minister for Alcohol Policy was in charge of. Ironically it reads like somebody was drunk when they were drafting it because it contains the words, 'consemotion', 'aemployee', 'complay' and 'coluse', which I think are meant to be consumption of alcohol, employee, compliant and clause. It is laughable that we would have this level of mistakes in legislative documents.

Why does this matter? It matters because the judiciary relies on these documents alongside second reading speeches to interpret our laws and to understand the intent of why we are passing laws, but before we can even get to that stage it is difficult to scrutinise the Bill without the comprehensive explanatory documents that support it.

Andrew Hickman suggests that merely paraphrasing the Bill clauses is insufficient. We need background, context, rationale and identification of Henry VIII clauses, and what he suggests is the best-practice environment in the country is the Queensland Parliament. Maybe we could look at what they are doing in Queensland with explanatory memoranda as guidance in that regard.

I will not paraphrase the whole paper, but essentially this guy's work is based on his PhD. He spent forever thinking about these issues, and his critique involves looking at Westminster systems everywhere as well as surveys of parliamentary staff across every parliament in the country. It teaches you a lot, including the fact that explanatory memorandums have only been used widely since the 1980s. Previously they were used only for complex Bills. It is important, as we recognised yesterday, with the passing of the Attorney-General's omnibus Bill—unanimously on the voices, I might add—that we agree that laws and legal processes cannot remain static; we have to adapt to the times.

The final paper I submitted is called 'Breaking New Ground: Expanding the Scrutiny Function of the New South Wales Legislative Council's Regulations Committee'. It is drafted by the Liberal Upper House member, Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones. It was based on the 2020 report that asked them to inquire into the making of delegated legislation, and it led to the creation of bipartisan support for the creation of a regulation committee chaired by the opposition with self-referral powers and expanded remit to look at all legislative instruments regardless of their form.

Further work was done in 2022, and the key thing I draw attention to is recommendation 9, which asked that a dedicated legal adviser be appointed to support the regulation committee in its technical scrutiny function. Suffice to say, there may be merit in this legislature also starting to consider the merits of having dedicated legal resources in-house, independent of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, to assist the Legislative Scrutiny Committee with its work but also the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee with its work—perhaps one that could even contribute towards guiding legislative drafting instructions when we are so required to undertake such tasks under the terms of inquiry terms of reference.

We are lucky, but quite vulnerable, when it comes to seeking guidance from external counsel when deliberating. If it was not for the assistance of Professor Ned Aughterson, a number of us would frankly be at a loose end in a lot of our committee deliberations.

In closing, I will reflect on a couple of sentiments. One was by Lynda Voltze, the long-serving New South Wales MLC and MLA Member for Auburn, who is widely respected for the fact that she has been in the game for so long. She has noted that scrutiny committees are only as robust as the democratic processes that surround them. She did so talking about the famous 1987 Fitzgerald Inquiry, which all of you should look at if you do not know about the about inevitable tendencies towards corruption unless you invest in scrutiny.

Finally, I would say in the words of the Hon Robert French, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia:

> *The importance of pre-enactment scrutiny… cannot be underestimated. It is obviously far better to address problems of unintended legislative overreach, doubtful expression or impact on basic rights and freedoms that the pre-enactment stage, than to rely on the mitigating effects of judicial interpretation.*

I am pleased that this government has restored the scrutiny committee after it was removed by the last government. I encourage my fellow parliamentarians to reflect on these documents I have provided tonight to consider practical ways in which our jurisdiction might take more positive steps in the direction of strengthening our democratic governance.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, it is obvious to me that we have had a long week with very emotional debates—the road safety one certainly got to a lot of people's hearts.

I hear the emotion of the Member for Nightcliff. I hope that once we get out of here everyone can take a step back and look after themselves because, in the end, we are all human beings, and we need to look after each other. I wish everyone in this House all the best.

I tried to listen to the wonderful Member for Fong Lim, but it was a bit heavy for me to take in all that serve. It is probably the wrong time of the day to give me all those stats and figures, but I am sure those professors are right in whatever they said.

I will get on with something that I want to share. I have told people in this House before that I am a former elite F-grade athlete. I was good at backyard cricket at mum's and all that stuff. I have never played a game of soccer in my life, so I was privileged that the Darwin Olympic Sporting Club approached me to be its patron. Obviously, it wanted me to get out there and kick some goals.

Last Friday as the new patron I was pleased to go to Malak Oval which had the under-18s competitions from around Darwin and Palmerston playing; it was fantastic. There were a couple of hundred people. It would have been bigger, but there were some bigger matches being played by the senior teams. The families and friends from the teams across Palmerston and Darwin came to Malak Oval and were cooking food and passing it out.

I spoke to the committee members to see how I could help them; they were looking for a couple of things from their new patron. One of those was an upgrade of the security fences around the buildings, because they are getting broken into. I will see what I can do to help with that.

I then walked around the edges and talked to the families and friends; it was a beautiful evening and it was all about participation. We did not care about the score; it was about participation. There were young kids from ages five to six playing, eight to 10-year-olds and 16-year-olds. It was great, and everyone was enjoying themselves. It was a celebration of the lifestyle we have in Darwin.

It is a fantastic club, which was founded in 1967. As I said, I have never played for the club, which is probably why it is successful. It is a great community club, and it was great to meet the parents, carers and the kids playing.

I promised that I will invite the Chief Minister, the minister for Sport and the Darwin and Palmerston MLAs to go there one Friday evening for half an hour or 45 minutes to walk around with me. They will meet families from their own electorates, which is a good reason to do it. Let us stay connected.

Last Tuesday the club's senior team had a match against the Darwin's Mindil Aces, which was the qualifier to get into the final 32 of the Australia Cup, which is the knockout competition around Australia. Darwin Olympic won, but it was a tight match. It was 1-1 and went down to a penalty shootout, 7–6 on penalty, but who cares? We got that seven and they got six. I am glad, and they are excited; they tell me they are one of the most successful clubs in terms of the Australia Cup for the teams up here. I believe them; it was fantastic.

I encourage everyone to get out to your sporting clubs and enjoy it. Get out of this place, connect with your electorates, smile and—as I said in my maiden speech—let us not forget the three values of love, compassion and time.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, like the Member for Fong Lim, I will speak about the conference we attended last year. I will touch on some personal reflections and the things that I got out of the conference, because it was an important conference, which I valued and personally got a lot out of it.

I acknowledge the Members for Wanguri and Fong Lim. We all attended the Australian-New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation Conference, which was held in Melbourne at the end of last year. As a member of parliament I found the conference insightful; it was a jam-packed agenda as the Member for Fong Lim touched on.

The conference brought together a panel of experts, from parliamentarians and legal minds to policy professionals across most jurisdictions. I believe Queensland may have been the only jurisdiction not represented; the election may have been happening around that time. The conference included parliamentarians from across the ditch in New Zealand; I thank them for attending and sharing their insight. Many countries around the world look at their parliament and legislature for best practice for scrutiny.

The agenda went over three days, with about six sessions. The three of us attended every session; we listened, learned a lot and asked questions. I thank my parliamentarians from the Northern Territory for engaging in that.

The Member for Fong Lim briefly touched on some of the sessions, including emergency legislation, what should be scrutinised by scrutiny committees and what its success looks like, including with artificial intelligence. During that session we had a professor from Canada speak about whether artificial intelligence can scrutinise pieces of legislation, which I found interesting. I was fascinated by it and probably need to do more research on it. It was fascinating as we go into the modern world with the technology of AI and potentially how it may or may not assist in scrutinising or developing and drafting legislation.

We touched on what parliaments did not say and new ground such as AI and the traditional scrutiny of legislation and other subject matters. I prefer the more traditional scrutiny of legislation because it is actual minds looking over pieces of legislation, hopefully cooperating amongst the different political parties and the Independents as well.

Other directions were interesting regarding animal rights scrutiny. At one dinner I sat next to Professor Jeremy Gans from the University of Melbourne. He is a prominent academic at the Melbourne Law School who specialises in criminal justice, human rights and animal law. He has made significant contributions to the legal field, particularly in areas of evidence law and the jury system.

In 2007 he was appointed as the Human Rights Adviser to the Victorian parliament's Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee where he provided expert analysis on the compatibility of legislation with human rights. The work Professor Gans has done on Australian rights law—he speaks about how it does not necessarily protect the rights of non-humans who are protected themselves, which was fascinating because as parliamentarians we usually come in here and centre our laws around ourselves and humans, so it triggered my mind in the whole ecology of the system; whether it is animals, plants, water or land.

He did a lot of work with the Victorian parliament, including on a private member's Bill when it came to duck hunting. The Deputy Chief Minister is into duck hunting, so he might want to block his ears because this is about the protection of ducks. I found it fascinating, and I learned a lot from him in that all animals are born with an equal claim on life and the same rights to existence. Looking at the rights of animals, like for human rights, they should enjoy the protection of the law; all wild animals have the right to liberty in their natural environment, whether land, air or water; and no animals should be ill-treated or shall be subject to cruel acts.

It was interesting and, as First Nations peoples, our laws look at it in a similar way. It is not just about humans; it is about all life forms on Earth. The water, land, sea or sky are all connected and guide our values as well. Professor Gans has put it into a Westminster system, and it got me thinking about different ways we could establish laws and First Nations knowledge, rights and laws. I will not go into the details, but you can google Jeremy Gans and have a look at his academic work; he is a prominent person in that world.

The other clear message I took from that conference was about the use of scrutiny legislation and that it must remain non-political. I am not here tonight to have a dig at the government or us. We know what happened with scrutiny committees in the previous government; it is no secret, and we have made it clear that we agree with these committees. It is more about how we can get national best practice into this legislation. The Member for Fong Lim touched on that and gave examples in his speech.

Not to throw flames at the government, but I need to acknowledge what has happened. I acknowledged that the previous government got rid of scrutiny committees. For example, from the standing orders debate, the opposition or crossbench can no longer refer a new Bill introduced into this parliament to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee. I do not agree with that; it should be reviewed, and I hope the government will look that. It takes away what we think should be scrutinised. We should be able to put that forward to the parliament, regardless of whether it is voted down. There was a process, but now that process does not exist.

I was disappointed that members of the scrutiny committee—Justine sits on that—cannot give dissenting reports in the House.

This is not to have a personal crack at the government; we have spoken at length about previous governments. It is about systemic changes we need in this parliament so that we can represent people to our best ability and ensure we have good governance in this House. A quick example of good governance and cooperation between leaders was when Michael Gunner was the Chief Minister and Gary Higgins was the Opposition Leader. I believe they have become good friends; Gary Higgins looks after Michael Gunner's

kids every now and then. That is a good example of cooperation at the start, and I hope to see that here leading into the future.

Mr EDGINGTON (Barkly): Madam Speaker, I recently celebrated the exceptional achievements of Territory nurses and midwives at the 2025 Northern Territory Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards. The awards, which recognise and celebrate the invaluable contribution nurses and midwives make to enhance the health and wellbeing of Territorians, were announced on Saturday 10 May.

This year 370 guests celebrated the 21st anniversary of the awards at the gala ball held at the Mindil Beach Casino Resort in Darwin. There was a record number of 428 nominations, which represents an increase of 130 nominations compared with the previous year.

The awards are about celebrating excellence in healthcare services and those who go above and beyond in contributing to the community and health system in the Territory. As the Minister for Health in our 2025 year of action, certainty and security, it was an honour to present these awards. All nurses and midwives are incredibly important for the Territory, and the awards were a way of saying thank you for their amazing work and contribution to the healthcare system.

We all know that working in the health sector can be challenging and that nurses and midwives are fundamental to delivering high-quality healthcare across the Northern Territory. Their expertise, dedication and compassion enable us to tackle the unique healthcare challenges faced by Territorians and ensure that they can receive the best care possible.

Nurses and midwives in the Territory are adaptive and resilient. As the Member for Barkly I understand firsthand the importance of remote nursing and midwifery. Nurses and midwives in Tennant Creek deliver healthcare in some of the most remote settings in Australia. Each day can be unpredictable, and challenges are met with determination, empathy and expertise. This is a testament to our workforce.

Recruiting and retaining skilled nurses and midwives is an ongoing global challenge. NT Health continues to undertake significant action to address workforce shortages, ensuring that we continue to grow and strengthen our health services.

I acknowledge the achievements made so far, such as increasing student placements across the Territory by 33%; introducing fast-track pathways to transition registered undergraduate students of nursing and midwifery into graduate programs; tertiary and regional hospitals providing broader career experience; introducing a nurse practitioner progression scheme in the Northern Territory to support current nurses into nurse practitioner candidate positions while they study to gain their qualification; and designing, developing and implementing a custom nursing and midwifery culture and leadership development program for 184 emerging, new and experienced leaders.

Nurses and midwives make up a staggering 38% of the NT Health workforce. NT Health's vision is simple: 'Great health for all Territorians'. Without nurses or midwives that goal is not achievable. Their compassion, confidence, capability and commitment are essential to achieving our goal and to provide accessible healthcare for those who need it. This vision is more important than you may realise. If Territorians are healthy our economy grows and subsequently our lifestyle improves.

The recent awards provide another level of recognition for those nurses and midwives who continue to excel in their profession. The event celebrated nominees, finalists and winners for the 2025 awards across 12 categories and provided an opportunity to recognise the Territory's early career, enrolled and registered nurses and midwives working in any healthcare setting. This year's sponsors for the awards contributed more than $92,000 to make it an unforgettable night.

Winners of the 2025 Northern Territory Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards were:

- Registered Undergraduate Student of the Year—Kate Eddy from Ward 2A Surgical, Trauma and Burns Unit, Royal Darwin Hospital, NT Health

- Excellence in Early Career—Stuart Yiwarr McGrath from Galiwin'ku Clinic, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation

- Charles Darwin University Excellence in Education—Joeleen Brown from Education Team, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs

- Excellence in Research/Quality Improvement—Megan Duck from Division of Emergency Medicine, Royal Darwin and Palmerston Hospitals, NT Health

- Excellence in Aged and Residential Care—Taryn Carson from Thamarrurr Aged Care Services, Wadeye, Thamarrurr Development Corporation

- National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre Excellence in Leadership—Rani Tharumalingam from Critical Care and Surgical Division, Alice Springs Hospital, NT Health

- Northern Territory PHN Excellence in Aboriginal Health—Catherine Connor from Ramingining Clinic, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation

- Team Excellence Award—Men's Health Outreach Team from Primary and Public Health Care, Central Australia Region, NT Health

- Client Appreciation Excellence Award—Gladys Wambui from Pediatric Cardiac Care, Maternal and Child Health Division, Royal Darwin Hospital, NT Health

- NT Administrator's Medal for Lifetime Achievement—Judy Ratajec from Aged Care Unit, Top End Region, NT Health

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation NT's Nurse of the Year Award—Rebecca Schultz from Executive Services, Alice Springs Hospital, NT Health

- Midwife of the Year—Victoria Elborough, Core of Life NT. I was fortunate enough to present that award.

I recognise and celebrate all the nominees and finalists of the 12 award categories. Their hard work and remarkable efforts to deliver the high standards of care and leadership are appreciated not only by me but also the rest of the Territory. Thank you again to all the nurses and midwives across the Territory. You are integral to our healthcare service delivery. Thank you for your service.

Ms BOOTHBY (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I celebrate National Volunteer Week by giving a shout-out to my community members and organisations who do a fantastic job across Palmerston and probably Darwin and the rural area as well when it comes to sporting clubs being out and about.

As we all know, National Volunteer Week is a celebration and chance to recognise those volunteers for the hard work—with volunteering, you do not get paid; you spend your evenings and weekends doing the things you love to do for your community and for your passions. The community does not actually work unless we have volunteers; that is obvious. People who volunteer find that rewarding. If you speak to them and ask why they do that and get up early on the weekend when they can sleep-in or why they spend long nights volunteering for those organisations, they tell you that it gives them satisfaction and helps them connect with other people of like mind. It is part of their social clubs, social wellbeing, the families they hang out with and the time they get to spend with their children and loved ones; that is important to recognise.

I shout-out to all the businesses across Palmerston and the Northern Territory that support the volunteers in the way of financial contributions, goods in kind and other ways they volunteer—often people will come from those businesses and help groups to volunteer. Well done to all the people who do that.

We have a few sporting clubs in Palmerston who all of us local members—the Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro; Member for Drysdale, Clinton Howe; Matthew Kerle, the Member for Blain; and I—support and involve ourselves as much as we possibly can with. I will mention a couple of those because they do an amazing job.

The Palmerston Magpies Football Club president, Carmine Rauseo, is incredible; he has been president for a couple of years and puts his heart and soul into that club to create not only a family environment but also a winning culture. I know they are keen to take home a few more premierships for this coming season. I acknowledge their vice president and public officer, Daniel Murden; secretary, Char Murden; treasurer, Nicky Fisher; and the general committee members, who I also know do a mountain of work, Ben Price, Kaitlyn Anderson, Tara Atkins, Michelle and Craig Jones, Harrison Fraunefelder, Megan Hayes and Junnell Moore.

We also have the Northern Sharks Rugby League Football Club. It is up and coming; it has been around for a number of years, but it is growing from strength to strength. The club has so many teams now—when you watch the players train at the Moulden Oval—coming from everywhere. It is an amazing club. I give a shout-

out to its president, Gordon Hounslow; vice president, Cameron Versteegh; secretary, Davianne Gunn; treasurer, Emma Lasker—Emma has been around for a long time and does a great job; registrar, Chelsea Walter; committee member, Tamara Madzika, who is also the public officer; and committee member, Hildy Hounslow.

The club also has sub-committees: merchandise/uniforms, Aaron Tilley; social media, Taylie Pulman—its social media is the next level these days, it is doing such a good job and definitely knows exactly what is going on at the club—well done to Taylie; assistant treasurer, Felicity Mathews; grants, Damien Mick; sponsorship, Gordon Hounslow; senior player representative, Tamara Madzika; junior players representative, vacant—if anyone wants to help out and become a volunteer, get on to it; and general committee, Nigel Doyle.

Well done to the Sharkies. Hopefully it is having a good season; it certainly seems like it.

The Palmerston Cricket Club is a fantastic club; the Chief Minister is the patron. We have been to plenty of its functions, and it does a mean junior presentation. One I went to was at the FreeSpirit Resort, and the club members all went into the pool; not that I did, but it was fantastic.

It has amazing events; I went to the women's day cricket match—the women did not play that day, although I have watched them, and they were fantastic—it was a function of all the women of the club enjoying themselves and celebrating while the men played, and we watched them. There were a lot of people involved; lots of young females through to mothers and grandmothers of the club. It was a great afternoon.

The volunteers of the Palmerston Cricket Club who are heavily involved are president Adrian Gallagher, who has been a stalwart; vice president, Glen Chatto; secretary, Joel Carter; treasurer, Daniel Fett; junior coordinator, Briony Gallagher, another stalwart of the club, she has been there a long time; women's rep, Sarah Fowler; and general committee members, Damion King another stalwart, Brendan May, Brendan Rudd, Clare Forsyth, Christie Cann, Anthony John Schuppan and Melanie Osborne. They are all amazing people and do so much for Palmerston.

The Greater Palmerston United Football Club is another fantastic soccer club—football, or whatever you like to call it—I call it soccer. My son plays for the GPU; I have been going to the training sessions at GPU for a long time. It is a club of growth and has gone from strength to strength. When we first started going to training sessions, when my little fellow was much smaller, there were a few teams and coaches showing them around, and it was quite intimate. Now the Howard Springs campus of Good Shepherd Lutheran College is chock-a-block full of juniors training. That is the future of our football stars; they may end up playing for Australia one day, and they should be proud. The volunteers who have been there for a long time and spend hours at the club helping the juniors are role models for them. All the clubs have volunteers who are also role models for juniors.

I acknowledge the club's president, Shaun Ansell; treasurer, Chris Kimani; coaching coordinator, Nathan Tomaszewski; registrar, Stacey Kroonstuiver; social media coordinator, Annika Bell; general committee member, Peter Giles; general committee member and public officer, Fiona Tomaszewski; and secretary and member protection information officer, Nerissa Singh—I am not sure what that is, but it sounds important, so well done to Nerissa.

All the volunteers of the sporting clubs—that is not everyone but some I can talk about in this short amount of time. I imagine they do a lot of work not only as the committee. They are often also the coaches and parents who bring the gear out and pack it up again at training and games. They travel all over Darwin to play games over the weekend.

The Member for Karama talked about going to his local oval and watching the team play that he is a patron of. I have done that with those teams; it is fabulous, especially on a Friday night when the juniors play, it is great weather with many families and everyone having a great time. Well done to everyone.

The Heart Foundation's Heart Week was held from 28 April. Many heart walks were held across Australia by the foundation as well as informative heart health information sessions. A special shout-out to volunteer Jenny Conelius; she is the walk group organiser for that group outside my office at the Palmerston Shopping Centre. Every Friday morning she and a group of people all in their shirts go walking around inside the shopping centre, having a fantastic time, then treat themselves to coffee at Bean Juice Cafe. It is great to catch up with them when I am in the electorate office on a Friday morning. The group is growing. A lot of people enjoy getting out and walking around. They are probably checking out the shops as they are walking

around, which is not bad because it is a local shopping centre owned by locals. A big shout-out to them for letting the group do the walk every Friday.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I have a quick thing to say. The Member for Daly talked about people working together across the Chamber. I give a special thank you to the Member for Goyder who, on his birthday and in an act of cross-parliament assistance, helped me change my flat tyre. Thank you.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I will speak about a wonderful school in my electorate of Blain, Woodroffe Primary School, which is celebrating its 30th birthday this year.

On Thursday 19 June 2025 Woodroffe Primary School will be celebrating its 30th anniversary. The school was opened in 1995 by the then Member for Blain, Barry Coulter. The school has been in partnership with The Smith Family since 2018. The principal is Kristy West, and the assistant principals are Michelle Moodie and Jacqui Saunders.

Woodroffe Primary School has a fantastic special education unit called the Pandanus Unit, which was opened in 1998 to cater for students with high support needs. At the time there was one teacher, one special education support officer and three students. Since then the population has expanded, and staff numbers have grown to meet the requirements of our students.

Pandanus caters for students from preschool to year six who meet specific entry criteria determined by the Department of Education in line with its disabilities policy.

I congratulate young Miranda, who was the recipient of the inaugural Blain Most Improved Reader award for Term 1 of 2025. Hopefully there will be many more awards to come.

I also presented two lucky students, Beau and Jayson, with tickets to go and watch the Gold Coast SUNS versus Western Bulldogs AFL game on Saturday 10 May 2025.

Another lucky student, Antonio, received tickets to see the Gold Coast SUNS versus Hawthorn game on Thursday 15 May 2025. Antonio is from one of the other schools in my community.

These students have been working hard in achieving school values and have great attitudes. Well done.

I also presented the school with a Mother's Day raffle prize. Congratulations to the winner.

The motto of the Woodroffe Primary School is, 'Together we Learn'. Well done, Woodroffe Primary.

It is National Volunteer Week, and I honour an amazing volunteer in my electorate, again from the suburb of Woodroffe, Diane Dunphy. Diane is a legend who, off her own back, has been volunteering to paint numbers in front of houses in the suburb of Woodroffe for many years. This did not start as part of an official organisation; she just thought it would be a good thing if people had numbers in front of their houses. She put the call out and posted on the community group. Anyone who wanted a number painted on their driveway would let her know and, like an angel in the night, she would pop up, paint a number on their driveway and move on.

I thank Diane for all her hard work around the community. Diane has now coalesced with her the Woodroffe Care Community. Now there is a group of people in Woodroffe who are dedicated to helping others and giving back to their community. Well done and thank you, Diane.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I will talk about one of the great organisations Territory-wide, the Down Syndrome NT, led by Executive Officer Rachel Kroes. I speak about it because I want to remind everybody that the Cash for Containers is in my electorate on Leanyer Drive. The team there does an exceptional job. The facility provides employment for people with disabilities, and they do an amazing job. They go around and collect the containers, sort them out, and it is providing a good space for them.

They are trying to move away from collecting from businesses because, unfortunately, people do not sort out the rubbish in those containers. Some participants have told me that it gets a bit mundane and a bit smelly.

I reach out to the community and anybody who lives at home and recycles. If they want to provide some to Cash for Containers, please reach out to it; contact it and say that you would love to be one of the houses it can collect from because the kids at the houses like to sort them. If there are at least 10 families in the area

who need some containers, I am happy to provide them. I have the stickers at my office, so you know which containers need to be sorted.

Another event held by the organisation was the Down Syndrome Association NT Inc Symposium. There were two sessions. The first session earlier in the day was for families and some medical staff. Unfortunately, I could not attend that one, but I did attend the evening event, which was for the medical staff. Dr Joaquin Espinosa was the guest speaker. I learned a lot about Down syndrome and the challenges that families have. The research that Dr Espinosa is doing to create better outcomes for people with Down syndrome is exciting. I am thrilled to see there are people in the community and the world who try to work in that space doing a lot of research to help people with Down syndrome.

Member for Karama, unfortunately, I am a sponsor for the Casuarina Football Club. At one stage we will be on the sidelines with competing teams. You will see me more at Wanguri Oval and Bagot Oval cheering on my team. Look out for the Casuarina Football Club; we are coming to get you.

I was there on Tuesday night after parliament, as there was a game at Bagot. Unfortunately, it was 2–2—the young girls came back from behind. They are on their way up.

The Red Cross connects women through The Joy of Many Colours event. Over months of preparation there were over 90 models on the runway, which was an amazing feat. The Member for Fannie Bay and I were privileged to be part of the evening-wear runway. It was great to see young people and women connecting with each other and sharing knowledge.

One of the highlights was the junk theme, where they had to create dresses and outfits out of recycled materials. The Administrator participated in a workshop to create material prints by steaming vegetation, which turned out beautifully on silk and other materials. They were then sewn into wonderful outfits. I congratulate the team at Connected Women on another successful event. Each year gets bigger and bigger. This year they had to split the food festival from the event as it became a big project.

Congratulations for running both events back-to-back and to William Daw, the Director; Sabeeha Nihad, the Senior State Manager of the program; all the staff at Connected Women; Mohomed Nihad; Sarani Muthunayake, who I know is having her baby soon, but she was running around with a heavy tummy; and the choreographers, Jonah Playford, Lee Plowman, Rae Navarro and Srijana KC. The other facilitators were Helmy Suryani, Dwi Hartini, Angie Solet, Kalani Wijayawardana, Bibi Ahmed, Anggie Wibowo, Yanthi and Peter Shepherd. Congratulations to all of them.

At the food festival, normally when there is a raffle on, I like to choose someone in my phone as the recipient—I never buy raffle tickets in my name—but on that day it was my husband's birthday, and I bought a ticket for him. He won a teapot, which he collected yesterday on International Tea Day. I am sure he will make me a nice cup of tea later.

Congratulations to the Australian Red Cross and Connected Women; they do a wonderful job. I encourage everyone to go to their fantastic cooking lesson as well. I have learned a few things as a member who does not cook well, unfortunately. I had siblings who cooked for me. I put that on the record and offer my thanks.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, this weekend is the Freds Pass Rural Show, which is an icon of the rural area. I look forward to seeing you there, Madam Speaker. Cancel your flight and stay for the weekend; it is a fantastic rural show, and it would not be there without the volunteers like Shirley Preston, who has been there for a long time; Tim West; Nicole Hamilton; Colleen Yiallourou; Lizzy Foggarty; Helen Spiers; Kylie Wilson; Wendy Connor; and Chantal Fischer. They are the committee for the Freds Pass Rural Show and dedicate their time and energy, good on them.

I also shout out to Liz, who ran the NT Chilli Fest last weekend at the Berry Springs Community Market. She put in a lot of work and is a fantastic person putting back into the community.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I will speak about events I have been to in the last couple of months.

The Northern Territory is home to the second-highest per capita veteran population in Australia, with a community of approximately 20,000 veterans and families. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all award recipients and finalist for the exceptional service to the Northern Territory's Defence industry and veteran community.

I had the pleasure of presenting the NT veteran awards. The employer of the year was INLOC Group, recognised for fostering a veteran-positive workplace and offering robust leadership development opportunities.

The NT Veteran Employee of the Year Award went to Dr Peter Zimmermann and Dr Christopher McLean from Veteran Medical Group, who were commended for translating their military experience into a pioneering healthcare model tailored for veterans.

The NT Veteran Community Member Owned Business of the Year Award went to Veterans Medical Group, which was acknowledged for its holistic, veteran-led approach to healthcare, advocacy and community support.

The Young Achiever Award went to Joshua Lobb from NORSTA Maritime, recognised for his exceptional contribution as a young professional under the age of 30 working within or in support of the Defence industry.

On 6 May 2025 we marked the 83rd anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, a defining moment in the defence of Australia and the broader Pacific region during World War II. We gathered to honour the extraordinary courage of the sailors and air crews who risked, and in many cases gave, their lives in this decisive naval engagement. I extend my sincere gratitude to the Australian American Association of the Northern Territory for hosting a most dignified and meaningful commemoration service.

I acknowledge some inspirational people within our community. In the Sanderson electorate, at Northlakes Shopping Centre, we are lucky to be home to Bert's. Bert is famous for his coffee, friendly conversation and big heart. It was a privilege to help celebrate Bert's 10th anniversary with Bert and his staff. We thank him for his support and wish him luck and good fortune for another 10 years.

NT Tenpin Bowlers with a Disability was proud to receive sponsorship from our northern suburbs CLP parliamentary colleague team. Along with Oly Carlson and Khoda Patel I also sponsored the team. This enthusiastic fun-loving group will be heading to Perth for the nationals next week. I look forward to catching up with the group's members upon their return. Their enthusiastic fundraisers are led by Karen Rohoza and have raised more than $30,000 for the trip. I am grateful to have played a small role in assisting their endeavours.

This Mother's Day I hosted a sausage sizzle for approximately 30 Heart Foundation workers. We enjoyed beautiful weather at Anula Park. I thank City of Darwin Councillors Sylvia Klonaris, Kim Farrar and Mirella Fejo for their wonderful assistance and support at the event. Thanks to Allan Mitchell for his hard work in assisting in organising as well. Thank you to Amin Kahn at Xpresso coffee. I was delighted to be joined by Sanderson Middle School students, Veronica and Matilda, who were accompanied by their teacher, Tom McCall. Volunteers Paul and Pranish were experts at the barbecue, and it was a good, fun event at Anula Park.

I update the House on my recent visit to the Red Centre, where you are from, Madam Speaker. I had the distinct privilege of travelling to Alice Springs last month to see firsthand the great work taking place there. I started the day with a coffee at Base Cafe, a great local business.

That morning I held a press conference with my good friend, Minister Burgoyne, at Albrecht Oval where we announced a $2m investment in NT Cricket for growing Aboriginal engagement. We are delivering on our election promise to support NT Cricket with a funding commitment of $2m over four years starting in 2025–26. This funding will specifically support Indigenous participation in sports programs across the Northern Territory.

I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of NT Cricket CEO Gavin Dovey, the staff and all the volunteers who make cricket an enjoyable and viable sport in the Territory. I wish them well in their endeavours.

At the same press conference Minister Burgoyne made the exciting announcement that the CLP will deliver on our promise to fully support the iconic Alice Springs Masters Games in 2026. The iconic event will see swimming return to the games after last year's absence. Many old sports will return, and new sports, such as pickleball, will make its debut. Pickleball Alice Springs founders, Greg and Norelle Clark, said that they were excited for the sport's inclusion. The Masters Games will be held from 10 to 17 October 2026.

To round up the sports component of my visit, I stopped by Anzac Oval in the evening to see the return of the night-time rugby. Thanks to the CLP government saving the Anzac Oval, this is back in action.

As the Minister for Disability I thank the good people at RDA (Riding Develops Abilities), known locally as Riding for the Disabled Alice Springs. Thank you for showing me around this excellent facility that is doing great things in the community to support people from a variety of disability backgrounds. Its programs offer a unique approach to helping people with mental, physical, emotional, social and learning disabilities or disadvantage. Its therapeutic services create a sense of community inclusion, access and quality of life for many people in Alice Springs.

For the first time in its 100-year history the 2024 Archibald Prize exhibition is in Alice Springs at the Araluen Art Centre. This is a once in a generation opportunity for Territorians to see Australia's most celebrated exhibition in Alice Springs.

To mark this notable occasion I was honoured to take part in the Young Archie Mparntwe Awards. Inspired by the Archibald Prize, it recognises exceptional portraiture by young Northern Territory artists aged five to 18. The competition received an impressive 155 entries, with 46 finalists, five highly commended awards and four winners across four age categories.

The Member for Braitling and I proudly presented the winners for the 2025 Young Archie Mparntwe Awards to Devansh Pathik, for 'My Dad' in the five to eight-year-old category; Scarlett Dennison, for 'My B.F.F' in the nine to 12-year-old category; Azariah Martin for 'Self Portrait' in the 13 to 15-year-old category; and Martha Livingstone for 'Lines of Wisdom' in the 16 to 18-year-old category. The competition was a wonderful opportunity to recognise and celebrate young Northern Territory emerging artists and showcase their work alongside Australia's most esteemed portrait artists. I encourage all Territorians to see the exhibition before it closes on 15 June.

I had the privilege as the Minister for Arts to visit the True Story exhibition at the Tangentyere art gallery, which showcases work from multiple Central Australian art centres through a brilliant collaboration with Artback NT. In my brief visit I was informed that many of the artworks were created by senior Aboriginal members of the Central Australian community. The art centre positively engages with seniors to make sure that they are included in the art space and the environment is suited to their needs. Unfortunately, at the time of my visit, no artists were present; however, their colourful creations were.

As the Minister for Veterans, the importance of Anzac Day cannot be underestimated. It is a significant day in the nation's history and especially significant in the Northern Territory due to our World War II history and our strong military presence of local and international forces. It was heartening to see schools actively participating in the commemoration of Anzac Day this year. It speaks volumes about the strength of our community and the values we continue to pass on to our future generations. I had the privilege of attending the Anzac Day commemorative services at Wagaman Primary School and Casuarina Senior College. My electorate officer Suzi represented our office at Anula Primary School. We were both moved by the respectful and heartful ceremonies delivered by students and staff alike.

In my capacity as the Minister for Veterans I also attended a memorable afternoon of footy for the Anzac Shield matches. I extend my congratulations to the ADF men's team for securing the Anzac Shield and to the NTPF and NTFES women's teams for their well-deserved victories. The matches showcased a fantastic display of strength, skill and sportsmanship from all the players; a true tribute to the ANZAC spirit.

A special thank you to the Member for Drysdale who joined me for this event. As a veteran from our parliamentary wing, it was wonderful to share this occasion with a man who has served our country with pride.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.