Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION AMENDMENT (BANNED DRINKER ORDERS) BILL
Serial 48

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Alcohol Harm Reduction Amendment (Banned Drinker Orders) Bill 2025 and table a copy of the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017* to change the length of police-issued banned drinker orders, known as BDOs, from seven days to 28 days.

The *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017* also contains powers for police to issue three, six and 12-month BDOs for alcohol-related offences and alcohol-related domestic violence orders. The Bill is not amending the timeframes or triggers for those longer orders, only the timeframe of the current seven-day BDOs.

The current seven-day BDOs are issued when a person, on less than three occasions, is taken into alcohol-related protective custody, issued with an alcohol-related infringement notice, issued with a banning notice and/or found to have consumed alcohol in a prohibited public place. A breach of a seven-day order may also lead to another seven-day order being made. These seven-day police BDOs will now become 28-day police BDOs.

The Bill intends to reduce crime and tackle problem drinking by extending the time that problem drinkers are banned from purchasing, possessing and consuming alcohol. Being placed on a BDO is an immediate consequence for alcohol-related antisocial behaviour, and we are sending a clear message that these consequences are being increased.

The current seven-day police-issued BDOs are not long enough to deter people from the alcohol-related behaviours that are causing harm to others and repeatedly placing them on the Banned Drinker Register.

We know that when people are on a seven-day police-issued BDO they are less likely to contravene their order or engage in problematic behaviours. By increasing the length of time that individuals on police-issued BDOs are banned from drinking we are seeking to reduce the number of alcohol-related incidents requiring police attendance, as well as reduce the number of alcohol-related emergency department presentations. This will allow essential resources to be redirected and invested into other areas of policing and the health system.

We also know that when people are on a BDO they are more motivated to make contact with the BDR office and more likely to engage in meaningful discussion about their alcohol use and the conduct which has triggered a ban. The extended duration of bans gives individuals more time to become treatment-ready and allows further opportunities for engagement by health staff to help individuals reflect on how their alcohol-related behaviours are impacting on others and connect them with therapeutic support services and generalist healthcare services.

All Territorians have the right to live in a safe community, and this government is taking a refreshed approach to tackling problem drinking. Problematic alcohol use will have stronger consequences, and lengthening the duration of police-issued BDOs for certain conduct is one part of a suite of measures that are being introduced.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be declared urgent.

We have conducted a review of the Banned Drinker Register. One of the recommendations is to increase the BDOs from seven days to 28 days. As we lead into the summer in Central Australia—we know that over the years there has been an increase in crime and alcohol-related violence. As a result of that review we had conversations with police, who are supportive of increasing BDOs from seven to 28 days. It will give more time for police to get on with other duties, give some reprieve to our emergency areas and provide an opportunity for people who are on BDOs to access treatment through therapeutic programs that they would not normally have in a short period of seven days.

Moving this on urgency is important. This is the last sitting of the year, and we are approaching a time in Central Australia when history has shown that violence and drinking increase. Going back to 2022, we saw what happened when the Stronger Futures legislation lapsed without the Labor government at the time taking action to change alcohol-related behaviour.

Today we are moving this on urgency. It is important that we do not look at this from a political aspect because the former Labor government made changes to BDOs and the Banned Drinker Register that were passed on urgency. The reasons for urgency have been clearly articulated. If Labor was to oppose it today the only reason would be for political views rather than the needs of the community in Central Australia and across the Territory.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I move the following amendment, omitting all words after 'that' and inserting the following words, 'the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 29 January 2026'.

It is concerning that this government has moved another piece of legislation on urgency; this is the ninth time. What is concerning is that Bills on urgency are supposed to be for extraordinary circumstances, such as war, natural disasters and immediate threats. It is clear that the Minister for Health cannot get his own house in order. He has had all year to introduce this Bill, yet here he is rushing around scrambling for his papers just before Christmas, trying to sell it as a Christmas treat for the constituency.

The truth of the matter is the CLP government is not organised. What is the point of having a scrutiny committee when the government is not using it in the first place? It is disrespecting the Chair, the Member for Wanguri; the Member for Drysdale; the new member of the scrutiny committee, the Member for Fannie Bay—because the Member for Goyder has been demoted from the scrutiny committee—and the Members for Johnston and Gwoja. What is the point of setting up the scrutiny committee if it is not being used? Every report that the Member for Wanguri has handed down from the scrutiny committee with important recommendations has been ignored by her own government.

It is just an optical illusion that the government suddenly brought back the scrutiny committee but does not even use it.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the interjections.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up on the interjections. The Members for Fong Lim and Wanguri and I went to Melbourne for a conference on legislative scrutiny committees. It was clear that the scrutiny of legislation in the Northern Territory is in a poor state.

You can yell out all you want and huff and puff, but this is about good governance and practice. All governments should be doing it, whether it is CLP or Labor. There is no point setting up a scrutiny committee if you do not use it. What is the point?

I am for scrutiny committees, but I am for them being used in the right way, with good governance systems in place as other jurisdictions have. That is the point we should be making.

I have spoken to the Member for Drysdale on many occasions about good governance for committees. I know he is for this. I hope he will speak to this today.

Urgency is only for extraordinary circumstances like natural disasters, war and immediate threats to the community. If this was such an issue for the government, why would it bring it in on urgency? It does not make any sense. It shows how disorganised the Leader of Government Business is.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, you have not circulated your amendment.

Mr YOUNG: It is here. I said it at the start, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: I know you did, but you need to circulate it, and it has to be signed.

Mr Maley: Getting his house in order.

Members interjecting.

Mr YOUNG: No, it was not about my house not being in order; he grabbed the wrong paper.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat, Member for Daly. I think you have concluded your speech. The Member for Braitling has the call, and he will be heard in silence.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I thank Minister Edgington for bringing this Bill to the House, especially under urgency, which is what we are debating this morning in regard to the Alcohol Harm Reduction Amendment (Banned Drinker Orders) Bill 2025.

We have seen what happens across the Northern Territory when we do not act urgently when it comes to alcohol legislation. We have seen what happens when those opposite renege and do not do the right thing. We saw it in my home town of Alice Springs more impactfully than anywhere else.

The matter of urgency today is that we have just received the review into the BDR, and recommendations were made. I applaud Minister Edgington for acting swiftly and decisively in ensuring action against the immediate threats posed to the community across the Northern Territory, especially in my home town of Alice Springs. We saw the alcohol policy failures of the previous Labor government.

We must all seek to ensure that vulnerable people in our community can be protected. By urgently extending BDOs from seven days to 28 days we can ensure greater protections for people from those who would seek to abuse alcohol. That is worth doing.

When the Stronger Futures legislation lapsed and the former Labor government did nothing to protect the most vulnerable, in Alice Springs there were 179 domestic violence-related callouts in the first week. That number is embedded in my memory—one for every hour of every day of that first week after those protections lapsed.

Our government has a review that has come before us and a minister who is not waiting to act. He is looking at those recommendations. It is always difficult as a government and legislature to know what we can do immediately so that we are not sitting idly on our hands and leaving those who are most vulnerable unprotected.

We worked out we can bring in this Bill quickly to extend BDOs from seven days to 28 days. That is the importance of the urgency. I commend Minister Edgington for acting decisively to protect those most vulnerable in our communities. I hope others support this urgency today so that everyone across the Northern Territory can be better protected from those who would abuse alcohol.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I oppose this Bill being moved on urgency. This will now be the 19th Bill this government has pushed through on urgency. I have said many times in this Chamber that the purpose of urgency is for when there is a serious threat to our democracy, not for routine things.

We all know that alcohol is a huge issue in our communities, and we need to do something about it. We need to do it in a way that will work. This morning we had an incredibly inadequate briefing on this Bill with no real information given. We do not know what this is based on or have any evidence or information that it will make a difference.

Mr Edgington: You got a copy of the review.

J DAVIS: The review does not contain that information, minister.

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the commentary across the floor, please.

J DAVIS: As I said, urgency is about genuine emergencies for natural disasters, pandemics or when we are all at risk. This is not a new issue. The tool is not new. There is no reason to once again undermine the democratic processes and stop us from doing our job properly, which is to understand the implications of a Bill before we vote on it.

I oppose this being moved on urgency.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I support the Bill on urgency. This is about the safety of the community and the problem drinkers who drink too much and cause harm to themselves. This will give them an opportunity to have the time to reach out and get support to deal with the alcohol issues

that they face. The Minister for Health is acting to protect not only the community in general but also problem drinkers.

It is an important topic. This is an urgent matter because people are harming themselves. As the Member for Braitling said, there were 180 domestic violence incidents in that first week. They harm themselves and then harm their partners—the people they are supposed to love. We are here to fix that, which is why it needs to be moved on urgency.

This comes from a review of the BDR. The police support it, and we are about changing it. At the moment the police have seven days, and to break the cycle of alcohol abuse we are making it 28 days. It happens across the Northern Territory from the north to the south and the east to the west. Community safety is our number one priority, and this government is not afraid to act on urgency to make sure we protect the community and problem drinkers.

Summer is coming, and we know it is an issue across the Northern Territory. After receiving the BDR review we decided to move this on urgency. If we do not, it will not happen until quarter 1 next year, and there will be a number of months over Christmas when people harm themselves and the community, especially in Alice Springs. That is why this matter needs to be dealt with on urgency.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I support the amendment to put this to the scrutiny committee. I will explain why. The idea is that we can argue this on the merits of, 'We just want to protect the community'—of course we do; I do not want to argue whether we do or do not want to protect the community. That kind of falsehood of, 'We just want to protect the community' lowers the quality of the debate. We are actually talking about whether something should be passed on urgency.

I will not argue whether the seven days versus the 28 days is worth it, but I point out that there were four recommendations. This is the reason it is insincere for the government to say, 'We want to pick one; this is the one. We care about community safety; we are just pushing this one.' Why not all four? That is the question, and that is why it needs to go to the scrutiny committee. We have this review; there were four recommendations. For some unknown reason, the government has just picked one. It picked the only one that does not have an impact on the profits of bottle shops. The others are population-wide measures—things such as clubs having sign-ins—that impact everyone. The government—very selectively—did not choose those three and chose only this one. This is why this needs to go to the scrutiny committee.

I agree that the issue is pressing. I am devastated by the amount of alcohol harm here. I feel strongly about this. I would much rather see a lot of strong population-wide measures on alcohol in the Territory. Alcohol, quite frankly, does not work here; it is causing so much harm.

When we are putting in laws it looks like it is for a headline or a media grab. It is not well thought out. This is why the scrutiny committee exists. It is so offensive that the government will continue to pick the most uncontentious Bills—we have to scrutinise whether we should recycle and put that to the scrutiny committee; what a joke. Pick the ones we need to be scrutinising, like this Bill.

There were four recommendations, and the government has hand-picked only one. It is frustrating to try to do our job. We had a briefing this morning on this. I have no ability to look at what the evidence says or reach out to organisations. No-one has had a chance to respond to this.

The Member for Johnston is right; it is not a pandemic or a natural disaster. Urgency is supposed to be used for specific things, not this. I agree that it is a matter of pressing need. I wish we had seen proper action on alcohol in the first month of the CLP government. It had 15 months to put together a good plan on how to tackle alcohol abuse in the Territory, and it has not done that. This screams cheap political stunt.

I am frustrated. I am pissed off, quite frankly, because I am sick of the way the government is running roughshod over democratic process. It cannot just pick one recommendation and claim it is doing that for the community while ignoring the other three. Put it to the scrutiny committee.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, in this House over the past few days we have heard a lot about listening to and talking with experts. I like to name our experts instead of having faceless men.

I have a quote from Police Commissioner Martin Dole, who has my full backing:

> *Increasing the number of days from seven to 28 will be an important tool as we head into our summer season …*

This is the final day of sittings for 2025, and the summer season is upon us. We cannot wait.

We received a review of the BDR and, yes, there were four recommendations. I appreciate the Member for Nightcliff's passion for cracking down on alcohol-related violence. This is the recommendation that we could roll out right now. There is implementation and other problems with the other three recommendations that will take time. This is something the police have said, 'Can we do this now? Get this tool in our pockets.'

There are already seven-day BDOs on offer; we are increasing that to 28 days, so instead of police having to deal with the same people four times in a month, they will deal with problem behaviour once in a month. Twenty-eight days will give people the time to reflect on their decisions and access treatment.

Technically the Member for Daly cannot spell 'scrutiny'; looking at the amendment, I am not sure where the 'scruitnary' committee is. Even if the Bill was referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee to report back by 29 January, we would have missed the entire summer season.

While those on the other side are potentially not fussed about more domestic and alcohol-fuelled violence, public drinking and public problems over the summer period, we on this side certainly are. The police asked us to do this as quickly as possible, and we are backing our police, giving them the powers they need to do their job.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, it has been a big week, and that is precisely the point I will make.

You are the government, so you get to set the political agenda for the parliament and the timelines for your reviews. You get to decide when things come back and when they pass. You have known that there has been a review of the BDR and the alcohol reforms, and you could have made a decision to bring it back into parliament 12 months ago. You could have brought it back earlier, but at the eleventh hour in this sitting week you are bringing in something on urgency and asking members to try to make an informed decision when they have not had the opportunity to talk to local stakeholders and organisations.

I heard about this Bill yesterday, as we all did. I started to ring around stakeholders who had no idea what we were talking about and what was going on. They said, 'We haven't heard what the government is doing'. I support the need to send this to a scrutiny committee to allow us to talk about this with stakeholders, victims and people who have voluntarily put themselves on the BDR.

We heard that there were four recommendations, but this government is ramming through only one today. What about the other three? Where does that leave them? What is happening with that process? This is why we should send it to a scrutiny committee, to allow us to do the work. There is more than one expert in this field. We need to talk to Congress, Danila Dilba, the Menzies School of Health Research and organisations like DASA that deal with people who suffer from chronic alcoholism. We need to do that work and should not be rushing it through.

This government should plan better, because as we have heard in this parliament time and again, everything is coming through on urgency as a way of avoiding scrutiny. I make it clear that this is about urgency. This is about the need for the minister to bring the Bill back for us to debate it. That is important.

I reject the assertion made by the Member for Goyder that we on this side of the Chamber do not care about domestic, family and sexual violence. That is disgusting, and I ask him to think about it, because this is a motion about urgency. We are not discussing the actual Bill yet; that debate has not come to parliament. Do not make assertions that the members on this side do not care about domestic, family and sexual violence, because that is a disgusting, horrific and low-life attempt to try to diminish and make a group of people look like they are saying something they are not. I stand with the victims of domestic, family and sexual violence.

When we debate this legislation I will have more to say on it, but we need to make sure the voices of everyone in the community, stakeholders and experts are heard and elevated. I want to know why this government has not chosen to look at the other three recommendations. I want to know why it does not want to hear from the other stakeholders who have experience in this and deal every day with people suffering from chronic alcoholism. I want to hear what people in my local community think about this.

We are being asked whether this should be debated on urgency. We are saying that it would be nice to have some time to talk to people who will be affected by this—good and bad. We want to hear it, but we are not because the government cannot manage its own agenda. It cannot look at the number of weeks we have set for the year—we all get a calendar of how many days we are sitting, and this government chooses at the

eleventh hour of the last day to bring something through on urgency. If it actually knew how to do its job and plan properly, this could have been debated last sittings, the sittings before or the sittings before that.

If you are going to set up a review, time it so that you know you have plenty of time for discussion with stakeholders and organisations. That is your job. Plan better. Set the parliamentary agenda and lead. You are not leading; you are just running a machine of chaos.

We want to debate and have robust discussions. I agreed with and supported you on some legislation this week. I need time to talk to my local community about these changes, but you are bringing them through today and expecting people to make decisions.

Real leaders talk to their communities, engage and understand the issues, not this authoritarian dictatorship you are running over there, shutting people down and not giving them the chance to understand what is being debated in this place.

Ms CAHILL (Prevention of Domestic Violence): Madam Speaker, this Bill is needed on urgency because any action we can take, any approach that can be put forward, that will give us an opportunity to reduce the harm from alcohol in our community is urgent. When it comes to our parliament, I understand that we like to debate and so on, and there are times when we have the time to do that, but sometimes—this government is not afraid to do this—we have to make the tough decision and put things in place as quickly as possible, particularly when it can help alleviate one of the greatest challenges we face in our community, as the Member for Gwoja commented, which is domestic, family and sexual violence.

Extending the order from seven days to 28 days will give true breathing space to work with families, understand what is going on and work with someone who is struggling with alcohol abuse to see whether we can start to break that cycle of violence and have a real result. Seven days is not long enough; it will not give us the opportunity to do that. That is why we are putting forward this Bill on urgency.

I will use every tool available to me as we fight against domestic, family and sexual violence. This tool has been recommended to us by the review that was done. Police are saying that this will make a difference to their work and that it will make our community safer. This is a weapon I want to put in our arsenal and which we need to use to break the cycle of violence and alcohol abuse. Sometimes you have to make the tough decision.

We do not take matters of urgency lightly. We do not do it on a whim; it is carefully thought out and done when we know something has to be dealt with today, not tomorrow, next week or next year.

We have the opportunity to do something significant as we come into one of the most challenging times for families who are struggling with violent relationships, when the pressures of holidays, Christmas and all those things that sometimes exacerbate what can be a difficult situation come to the fore. We have an opportunity to give those families and potential victims some respite by saying, ‘If you are having issues with alcohol, and you are being issued a banned drinker order, we will not just do it for a week; we will give you close to a month.’ During that month, the Department of Children and Families will work with those people.

The Minister for Alcohol Policy is doing a lot of work on what we can do to reduce the harm and where we can offer programs. A huge amount of work is being done in the background, and a lot of effort is being put into this space.

There is no doubt in my mind that our community will support the concept of moving this on urgency to increase the BDO period from seven to 28 days.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, the Member for Daly and I share a belief in good governance. With good governance there is a time for debate to guide us and a time for action to define us.

I will not go back to the constituents of Drysdale and say that I played the fiddle while alcohol destroyed our community over the summer period. People of Drysdale, I will support this on urgency because I know that it is an urgent problem. Our community is being ravaged, as we speak, by alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour associated with problem drinking, so I will not wait until February next year to pass legislation that I believe can help.

I not only stand firmly with the minister but also actively encourage the minister to put this on urgency because the people of Drysdale need relief now. If this gives relief, I will gladly defend its need for urgency. I thank the minister for taking this problem seriously, listening to the people of Drysdale and understanding that we

need action now, not next year. We do not need debate on this topic; we need action. This government promised action, and today I thoroughly support the minister in pushing this through on urgency because I will ensure the people of Drysdale get the action that I promised them.

I have been consistently firm in my electorate on the problem of alcohol. I was the first member of parliament to make a referral to the Liquor Commission, and now seven takeaway liquor stores will go to public inquiry for review. I will add to that by supporting this urgency motion to ensure that we can get banned drinker orders from seven to 28 days today, not next week, month or year. It will happen today, and I stand by that the whole way.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I will make a couple of points on this matter, given it has been raised. I have already spoken about this process and the circus we go through every time about what needs to be sent to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee, the fact that our system is imperfect, that Labor did not have one and that we have one that does not work quite to its liking. We cannot keep going around on this issue.

I will say a couple of constructive things. Two things can be right at the same time. It is not a secret; I have said that I broadly agree with a lot of the principles that have been raised by the opposition and crossbench, but I am also compelled by what Minister Cahill had to say in this space. The fact is we are not introducing a new and novel policy element. Yes, this matter has come in on urgency, without notice, but we all know what happens over summer in the Northern Territory in relation to alcohol harm.

We have a clear and specific recommendation about moving BDOs from seven to 28 days. We have a body of evidence about what the BDO does. Some of that is contested; there is some indication that the BDO is imperfect and that we could do more in other spaces, and more will be, and is being, done. Minister Edgington, the Alcohol Policy minister, has alluded to that being the case.

Mr Young: Come on, Tanzil; it is about governance.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Dr RAHMAN: I take the interjection from the Member for Daly. I care deeply about governance, process and precedent. This government has set a precedent about how it operates in relation to scrutiny. By and large, I am not disputing what has been said by the opposition and crossbench; we use urgency powers when we feel they are necessary, and we have used them more than other people have for a while. So far, it has done more good than harm; it has done no tangible harm.

In my perfect world—as I made it clear to the Member for Daly when we attended the legislative scrutiny conference—it would be better for us to introduce more robust governance mechanisms and standards for processes across a range of matters. However, this is not the issue to die on a hill for in relation to that principle; sometimes you cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

The Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence made a compelling case. We are not afraid to make the tough decisions. On this issue, yes, it has become clear to us late in the year that there is an opportunity to do some good by making this change rather than waiting another three months when we know that, actually, we would have missed the boat on doing anything useful over the summer period. That is the reality.

I am not getting up here to just pound on the opposition and the crossbench and say, ‘What you are saying is nonsense’. It is not nonsense; there is some merit to what you are saying, but equally have a mind to the fact that the government has thought this through as well. There is logic and reason to this.

I do not know about the remainder of the recommendations. I know that more things can be done in the alcohol harm reduction space, but I am also mindful that I am not the minister. The minister has made a calculation based on what we know from a long period of using the Banned Drinker Register. The register has broad bipartisan support. People have knocked it at various times, but generally speaking, this government is—as the former government did—still using the BDR to try to minimise harm and mitigate damage in the alcohol and DV space. Two things can be right at the same time, which is what I think is happening today.

As a matter of high principle there is a lot to be said for the fact that we could do better on scrutiny processes and the mechanisms of this parliament; there is no doubt about that. However, we have a reasonable body of controlled evidence that suggests the BDO, when we use it, does good and that if we extended it from seven to 28 days, it would do more good. Over the Christmas period when, quite frankly, we know there has

been carnage with alcohol-related violence and DV, it would be a useful arrow to add to the quiver of the archer.

I think it is worth us getting behind this and not fighting this matter on principle. If you want to fight for the principle, fight for it separately. We cannot keep having the same argument every time we want to send something to a scrutiny committee. If you want to change the mechanism, bring something to the table, move a motion—move something in GBD when we can talk about that as a specific issue—but on this issue the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Minister for Alcohol Policy are right, and I support us moving this on urgency for that reason.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 7	Noes 16
Mr Brown	Ms Boothby
J Davis	Mr Burgoyne
Mr Guyula	Ms Cahill
K McNamara	Mrs Carlson
Mr Paech	Mr Charls
Ms Uibo	Mr Edgington
Mr Young	Mrs Finocchiaro
	Mrs Hersey
	Mr Howe
	Mr Kerle
	Mr Mackay
	Mr Maley
	Mr Patel
	Dr Rahman
	Mr Yan
	Mrs Zio

Amendment not agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the second reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for a later hour, having precedence over Government Business Order of the Day number 1.

Motion agreed to.

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

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill entitled the Trade, Business and Asian Relations Legislation Amendment (Streamlining Licensing Schemes and Other Matters) Bill 2025, and I table the explanatory statement.

I move that the Bill be read a first time.

The purpose of the Trade, Business and Asian Relations Legislation Amendment (Streamlining Licensing Schemes and Other Matters) Bill 2025—hereinafter, the Bill—is to make minor amendments to various Northern Territory legislation under the administration of the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations.

The Bill removes unnecessary regulatory and administrative burdens for individuals and businesses who carry out occupations or trades, as well as associations. The range of occupations and industries that will benefit include real estate, commercial and private agents; pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers; plumbers and drainers; and security officers.

The Bill focuses on streamlining processes to achieve efficiencies. The Bill also modernises outdated provisions and corrects typographical errors in various legislation.

I would like to highlight a few key amendments in the Bill.

Firstly, the Bill reduces regulatory and administrative requirements by allowing longer validity periods for licences and registrations for particular occupations. It also enables licence holders to continue providing services while awaiting licence renewal, providing certainty for both businesses and customers.

The amendments allow for the validity periods of one, three or five years for registration for agents' representatives under the *Agents Licensing Act 1979*. Currently, agents' representatives need to pay for the registrations and submit paperwork each year to stay registered. Extending the duration of registration will reduce the administrative impost on agents' representatives and make the registration process easier.

The Bill also removes the common licence expiry date for pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers, which will remove bottlenecks and allow for more efficient processing.

Incorporated associations will also see a reduction in regulatory and administrative requirements. The *Associations Act 2003* establishes three tiers for incorporated associations, each with different auditing requirements for their financial records. An association's tier is determined by its annual gross receipts amount. These prescribed amounts were set in 2004 when the regulations came into force and have not been reviewed or amended since then.

The amendments to the tier levels will reduce the audit expenses and lower the risk of delays in receiving audited financial statements for associations. This in turn helps associations hold their annual general meeting on time and reduces the risk of noncompliance and losing eligibility for funding or grants.

Furthermore, the *Essential Goods and Services Act 1981* (the Act) seeks to control and manage prescribed goods and services during periods of shortage. The amendments in the Bill clarify the definitions of 'goods' by removing the specific mention of bread, eggs and milk, reflecting a more modern and broader approach to what is considered essential under the Act.

Overall, I note that the amendments reflect the Northern Territory Government's commitment to rebuilding the economy by streamlining processes and achieving efficiencies in the areas of occupational licensing and incorporated associations, making it easier to do business in the Northern Territory.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

HOUSING, TRANSPORT AND SURVEILLANCE DEVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS) BILL
Serial 44

Continued from 23 October 2025.

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

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, every Territorian deserves to be safe at home, out in the community and on public transport. Antisocial and violent behaviour in public places and against our hardworking bus drivers is unacceptable. There is too much of it.

I have sat down with public housing tenants and heard horror stories, as I am sure many members have, about the behaviour that goes on in some public housing spaces. I make it clear from the outset that a vast majority of public housing tenants are responsible and do the right thing. They are good tenants, and I do not want to demonise any of our community members who are in public housing.

The issue is when some tenants, or visitors to public housing tenants, behave poorly and make life unpleasant, unsafe and not enjoyable for everyone living around them. Similarly, recent instances of our bus drivers being attacked while doing their job have been horrifying. We saw that horrific event where a bus driver was attacked whilst driving; this is unacceptable in every way, shape and form. Our bus drivers do an important job in our community, and they do it with care and integrity for our passengers. Bus drivers deserve

the best possible support to be safer on the job, and passengers should be able to travel on a bus in peace and harmony.

I commend a number of initiatives by the CLP government to improve safety for bus drivers and passengers, including safety screens and upgraded duress alarms, following on from some of the safety work that we started as the former Labor government. These are all proactive steps, which we support, that will enhance safety and responses to incidents.

What is less clear is having inexperienced, minimally trained public safety officers carrying live guns on buses. Will this enhance safety or will it present a further risk to the community? Like so much of what we see the CLP government doing, it is out for a headline and out to rush ideas. The government goes out the door without proper consideration of detail or, perhaps, an understanding of the potential risks and consequences to workers and the community because it lacks the process of genuine consultation with stakeholders. This should be of concern to all of us.

The timeframe for rolling out this change has been ridiculously tight. Police have had to move extremely quickly to work through the practicalities of what is a significant change that carries a number of inherent risks to Territorians, particularly when guns and tasers are in the equation.

I will step through some of the concerns of our Labor opposition in relation to this Bill. It is not clear whether transit safety officers or public housing safety officers who have previously failed police vetting or training applications can be employed as police officers through this model.

There is no certainty of future employment for public housing safety officers or transit safety officers who do not want to transition to becoming a police public safety officer. We understand from meetings and consultation over the last couple of weeks that some of the positions that people are in will be extended until, we believe, the end of next year, but there is no certainty past that date.

Currently there is a range of disqualifying offences for public housing safety officers (PHSOs). This provision has been removed, so prospective police public safety officers (PPSOs) will have to disclose any previous offences, but it will not automatically disqualify them from becoming a PPSO. We want clarity on that.

Another concern is inadequate training. PPSOs will undergo 18 weeks of training across a wide variety of responsibilities. In only 18 weeks they will need to learn how to safely use firearms, tasers and heavy-duty OC spray; undertake defensive driver training and four-wheel drive training; learn de-escalation and defensive tactics; learn the auxiliary duties in watch houses and front counter work; undertake police auxiliary liquor inspector training; learn about the housing and transit laws that affect their role; and learn detaining and arrest skills.

It sounds to us that they have nearly all the powers and responsibilities of a constable but will receive only 18 weeks of training compared with the 30 weeks of training for a constable. How can a new recruit be expected to be proficient in all these areas in just 18 weeks? We believe that there is a real risk in putting these officers on our streets without the skills or experience they need to manage some of these difficult and complex situations across the Northern Territory. We are concerned that PPSOs will be out in the community with guns and tasers after just several weeks of training.

We are also concerned that PPSOs will have arrest powers. Again, there is potential for adverse outcomes if PPSOs with inadequate experience or without the full training of a constable are put in the situation of having to arrest someone who is potentially violent. This, combined with inadequate vetting, could lead to problematic outcomes for the community. We want to think about the safety of the officer as much as the safety of the community.

The ability for body-worn camera footage to be widely shared without the proper checks and balances presents concerns about safety and inappropriate sharing of footage. What risk mitigations are being put in place by the government to ensure that the footage taken by these PPSOs is not inappropriately shared between agencies or individuals?

There is the potential for inappropriate responses. This approach puts more people requiring a mental health response in contact with uniformed police rather than being diverted to services that can better address their needs and get them off the streets. Evidence shows that when guns are more prevalent, it is likely to heighten and increase aggression and violence in the community. This can be seen, unfortunately, across the world.

We are concerned about pay and conditions for the PPSOs. Apparently, PPSOs will be a brand-new rank within the police force. Effectively they will be required to have virtually all the same skills, powers and responsibilities as an auxiliary police officer and not quite the same amount of training as a constable. There is still no clarity on their pay and conditions. This is a big concern. In the briefing I received at the end of last week, I was told by the briefing officer that there is no consent agreement in place for these new officers.

There is a genuine concern that this is an attempt by the CLP government to introduce a new, cheap form of constable. It is unacceptable that the government is trying to give these new officers poorer pay or conditions for the same workload as their future colleagues and the same stress loads, complexities, challenges and responsibilities as their fellow police constables. We believe this is further evidence that what the CLP has proposed so far is deeply flawed. It is a rushed policy that has not been subjected to proper scrutiny or consideration of all the potential implications.

Now we come to the budget. How are these positions being funded? We understand that some of the positions will come from two other different agencies, so how will it be funded? How much will these positions cost taxpayers? How much will it inhibit the working budgets of the two other agencies as those positions transition across to the police force? Territorians deserve to know the financial implications of these changes.

It is a rushed policy that has the potential to create more harm than good. We want the community to be safer. We also want the details of any legislation to be set out correctly and robustly, and there are just too many gaps and unanswered questions for us.

Thinking of questions, first and foremost, is there a risk that this legislation will make our community less safe? If the answer is anything other than a definite no, the government needs to take a step back. It needs to take a breath and take the time to ensure these PPSOs are set up for success; that they are not put in dangerous situations without adequate training or support; and that they can carry out their job without risk to the community, themselves or their colleagues.

We have asked time and again: where is the investment or focus from the CLP government on prevention and early intervention? This is another kneejerk reaction; it is a reactive response. This is another rushed law and policy that is only dealing with the problems after the fact. We want to see the government on the front foot in the areas it promised Territorians it was committed to addressing.

After just over a year of being in government, it seems more and more that the CLP is incapable of understanding—or caring, for that matter—that for every bit of investment or focus on arrests and jailings there needs to be a comparable investment and focus on the upstream factors that cause people to behave poorly or commit crime. There has to be that duality in funding, and we do not see it.

We want more investment in the mental health and domestic violence co-responder models. The government has rebranded it as Circuit Breaker—whatever; that is up to the government—but we need more investment in the co-responder models and programs. We want the expansion of co-responder models across the NT in not just urban centres but also regional towns and remote communities. We believe that these co-responder models will make a huge difference in responding to these sorts of incidents by getting people the help they need and deserve and supporting them to get off the streets where they can cause issues for other community members and more harm to themselves.

We applaud the government's continued investment in a domestic and family violence co-responder model—which it renamed Circuit Breaker—and for the work being done, particularly in Alice Springs and Palmerston, which started under the former Labor government. We thank the CLP government for continuing that work.

The model brings together police, child protection practitioners, victim–survivor specialist support services and specialist support services for people who use violence. We strongly support expanding this initiative across the Territory so that we can be on the front foot in addressing the root causes of crime and antisocial behaviour. It allows more targeted approaches at early intervention stages, particularly for young people, families and individuals before things escalate. That is the whole idea of bringing together all those agencies. It sees more people connected directly to housing, mental health and alcohol and other drug support services.

It is early days, and there needs to be more strong evaluation of this approach to make sure it is achieving the outcomes intended. That needs to be done in conjunction with specialists and experts.

Similarly, the co-responder mental health model operating in Darwin is having positive results. Under this model, NT Health clinicians, St John NT and the Northern Territory Police Force provide a collaborative

approach to mental health emergencies. It means people having a mental health episode receive an immediate health response, not just a police response.

Similarly, we need a greater commitment from the CLP to affordable and social housing to reduce overcrowding and wait times in the Northern Territory. The CLP's approach to action is silence, and we urge it to be proactive in this space.

Think about what housing offers people. It ensures that Territorians have a decent roof over their heads and can focus on addressing other challenges they may be facing in their lives. Housing is critical to making sure families, couples and individuals are well supported.

We heard nothing from the CLP about alcohol policy before today. This is not an area that you can set and forget. We know the causes of alcohol-fuelled harm in every one of our electorates. For the government to work on alcohol policy legislation on urgency today—15 months in—shows again it is reactive, not proactive, and is not planning for the community safety that we, our constituents and visitors to the Territory deserve. Close to half of all assaults in the Northern Territory have alcohol as a factor, yet the only thing the CLP did with alcohol policy before today was to remove the minimum floor price and allow cheaper grog back on the shelves of our stores.

We know a lack of adequate housing is the other massive underlying cause of crime and antisocial behaviour. Again, the CLP does not care about this—or perhaps does not even understand it to be able to care about it. This is an incredibly big concern because the CLP's poor track record on social and affordable housing will continue to push back the Territory. We will be many years behind our jurisdictional counterparts on social and affordable housing. It seems that the CLP has no interest to drive and build social and affordable housing.

There seems to be a familiar theme because it is the same minister who is responsible. The CLP either loaded up Minister Edgington with things he cannot commit to or that he does not understand or care about, or it has overburdened him so much that he does not know what to do and cannot prioritise those important portfolios. I spoke about this already in the last sittings.

We do not hear a word from government about the Northern Territory's target of 11,000 new homes by 2029 under the National Housing Accord. That is because the CLP immediately scrapped that target and intends to build only about one-third of those houses. How will we see the Territory improve and plan for the future if the target has been reduced to one-third?

We are at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to social and affordable housing in the country. We will continue to be the worst-performing jurisdiction by a country mile under the Country Liberal Party. This is disgraceful. It shows a lack of regard for Territorians doing it tough.

The key workers who earn too much to be in public housing but may not earn enough to have the private rental market at their fingertips are a key bloc of Territorians who are being shut out and ignored by the CLP government. They live in all our electorates; it is not that people seeking social and affordable housing live only in the Labor opposition or crossbench electorates. A lot of the workers we are talking about—the families, couples and individuals—live across the Northern Territory.

If there is no plan for housing in the future we will continue to lag. Territorians will suffer if we do not get on top of housing. In the remote housing space there is already lots of work that started many years ago. The urban and regional centres will continue to suffer if the CLP government does not set in place the same type of programming. Regardless of 2029, that program could continue, and Territorians would be the beneficiaries.

I get excited when I talk about housing.

There is the national Social Housing Accelerator program. The Territory was signed up to build about 100 new affordable homes over the next few years. So far there have been four out of 100, so another 96 are left. Today I call on the CLP government to get serious about housing issues across the Northern Territory. If it does not want to see antisocial behaviour and crime because of housing, it needs to address disadvantage and poverty.

We need to ensure the key workers I spoke about have access to affordable and social housing so that they can provide Territorians with the services they deserve. Decent housing is fundamental to all this.

The Labor opposition urges the CLP government to invest in mental health and domestic violence responses and to support programs that can help Territorians address the often complex challenges they face. This is

how the Territory will see a sustainable difference in addressing crime and antisocial behaviour across our communities. This will create a safer community in the long run.

The PPSO initiative is another punitive approach by the CLP that does not aim to necessarily stop poor behaviour or aggression in public housing complexes, on buses or in shopping centres. It is another punitive measure to ensure more people are kept off the streets and locked up, but it does not address the root causes of why this happens in communities across the Northern Territory. It is another example of the CLP saying, 'Crime and antisocial behaviour are inevitable, and we will not worry about investing in prevention'. That is what CLP members are telling the Territory in their own different words. It is the wrong set of priorities for a government and is lopsided with policies that ultimately will do more harm than good.

We talk about the alternatives to justice. There has been no extra money or work done to create more law and justice groups that can provide the insight, local expertise and skills in relation to law and justice consequences, whether it is for a community, town, region or homeland area. We are not seeing any upstream investment in dealing with those core and complex issues at the start; we are only seeing the government shift its focus downstream to the end of the pipeline, the bottom of the justice pile, where there is churn in and out of our Corrections facilities. There are no new work camps or youth justice alternatives. There is only detention as the be-all and end-all of justice for the Territory. That is a shame because if we continue to see this concerning pattern of a lack of regard, understanding and care by the CLP government there will be no improvement for the better over the two-and-a-half or three years that we have left of this government. It means that people will have to play catch-up and the Territory will be in more dire straits at the end of this term of the CLP government.

We do not see the early prevention intervention mechanisms. This is where the government needs to also provide focus.

This will be lopsided, a form of imbalance, and it will not create harmony or unity in the Northern Territory and make our community safer.

It does not matter where you live—what town, community or homeland—we will start to see dire consequences from the lack of policies, funding, investment, resources and care that the CLP government is bringing to every piece of legislation. It is concerning that, for big and complex Bills like this, the government does not even get community scrutiny or anybody else's input to make the legislation better.

What about the workers? The government says, 'People, come and sign up as a PPSO. We do not know what your pay and conditions will be. By the way, we want you to do half the training that the constables do but we want you to have pretty much the same workload and responsibility, and here is a gun for you in the role.' That is what the CLP is doing today, so we do not support the legislation.

Too many questions have not been answered. There is too much rubble with all the shine that the government is trying to push to the community in its communications. We do not see the CLP taking the care and regard that legislation like this needs. The workers and the community should have input into this important forward planning. We see only the kneejerk reaction of the CLP government to try to tick another box—perhaps to show off before Christmas—and push things through without having the proper thought, care and process that lawmaking in the Northern Territory deserves.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I have already raised my objections to this increased policing that the CLP government is creating. We do not need more guns and arrests; we need more attention to solving problems and addressing underlying issues. We need more services like the Larrakia patrol and outreach services for people who are struggling with drug and alcohol addictions and mental health, physical health, financial or housing issues. We need more services that help people to address the problems they are experiencing.

This Bill will make the NT a place with the greatest poverty and disadvantage. It will be the most policed jurisdiction in Australia, with police in public housing, on buses and as liquor inspectors, as well as all our current police force. These new police will carry capsicum spray, tasers and guns, and they will have less training than our current police force. Even though the issues on our streets and in our communities are complex, these new PPSOs will have less training. We know that racial profiling occurs and that Aboriginal people will be the most negatively impacted group by bringing in more police and guns.

We have significant problems in our communities. We see these problems in not just Darwin but also our remote communities. That is why I have been standing in this place for so long—almost nine years—asking the government to work with us to fix the problems in our communities.

We want to work together across all our communities to fix these problems, but these kinds of punitive pathways do not build a partnership, trust or respect. We do not feel safe when we see more guns on our streets; it is intimidating and threatening. I have said clearly that in our remote communities we do not want police carrying guns as they move about the community. This is not something that builds trust.

I grew up on Elcho Island. That is where my *wawa* was shot by police in 1990 and where a teenager had a gun pulled on him by the police in 2007 to scare him. This resulted in a police apology through community mediation called the Meshach agreement.

We need to address the underlying issues, not lock anyone up. We need to address the problems in remote communities and have new housing and infrastructure in our homelands so that we can bring people home. As an elder I want people living on our country, and we need increased health services and other support services for people to return to country where they are safest.

The government needs to focus on working respectfully with Aboriginal nations, acknowledging our authority, listening to what we need and working in partnership so that we can bring real change for our people.

It is clear that Aboriginal communities and people are suffering greatly in the Northern Territory. We see it clearly in every community every day, but this government continues to show no care for the suffering that we feel.

This Bill continues to bring punitive responses. It does not address what communities need for change. It is just increased policing without any sustainable, real change.

This government needs to do better, and I will not support this Bill.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I support the Housing, Transport and Surveillance Devices Legislation Amendment (Police Public Safety Officers) Bill 2025, Serial 44. I congratulate the Chief Minister, who is also the Minister for Police, for bringing forward this Bill.

I welcome this initiative and can say that the majority of the constituents in my electorate also welcome it. As people would be aware, I have just finished three weeks of walking every street in Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon distributing my newsletter. In doing so I met, talked with and listened to a lot of residents and heard their concerns.

As I have said many times in this House, the biggest issue raised with me by constituents revolves around antisocial behaviour in our neighbourhoods, particularly those associated with certain—and I say certain—public housing tenancies. That is the issue people keep coming to my office to complain about. Constituents have even emailed me today, and I will read one out. I get these every day, and I have to listen to my constituents. We have to serve them and address this major issue.

I keep going back to this, but the CLP had a big plan at the start. It had three core focuses: reduce crime; rebuild the economy; and restore our Territory lifestyle. I think that was a wonderful plan, and I have said it before. We have done a lot of work in all three areas. We have heard about those achievements. There is optimism back in our community because of this government's work. The community sees that we are on the right track, but it knows we have a lot more to do. I and every member of our team knows that too.

As I have pointed out, one of the gaps in that plan—it is a good plan—is that we did not have an explicit, up-front public housing reform policy. There is lots of work going on behind the scenes; Minister Edgington and his agencies are doing a lot of work, and the Attorney-General is looking at public housing reform.

I state again that I am all for public housing. I also note that there is an eight to 10-year waiting list for public housing, and that is a shame. We have to try to reduce that. We probably need further investment and all that. I am all for it. At the same time we need a social licence for this to happen, for the community to support that investment and get behind it. That social licence disappears with all the antisocial behaviour that goes on, and we need to address that.

I have said before—as has the minister, and I agree—that from my perspective public housing is a privilege, not a right. There are plenty of people on that eight to 10-year waiting list who would cherish the opportunity to get public housing support if they could.

I say that it is a privilege, so I cannot handle or tolerate going around the streets fully aware that some of these public housing tenancies are being used as drug-dealing houses. People can put their heads in the sand and pretend it does not happen, but it does.

The other thing that annoys me is when I see extensive damage. This is not wear and tear; this is $50,000 or $60,000 worth of damage being done to a public asset, destroying it, and then expecting the public, the taxpayer, to fix it up again. That is not right. We need to have consequences for that type of behaviour.

We have continual examples of people partying every night or having lots of visitors that they may not need—two-bedroom units will have 20 people drinking, fighting and carrying on, destroying the neighbourhood. The neighbours, including other public housing tenants, are traumatised by this. It is destroying their lifestyle. We need to do something about this.

I quote an email that came in only this morning from a tenant in Chambers Crescent, Malak. I will not mention the house they are talking about. It says:

'Brian,

'We have always had issues with tenants at this address previously. Everyone that Housing gets into this house have been issues. It is fine giving people a chance, but where there have been police/Housing complaints almost daily for four months, they should have been evicted.

'The current tenants have been nonstop partying and fighting almost every night for the past four months. I have two young kids and live directly behind them. On two occasions—one only two nights ago—they have jumped the fence and come into my yard. This is not okay at all, and it worries me for the safety of my kids.

'My kids love being in the backyard. Having the worry that people may be jumping the fence at any moment, I barely allow my kids to go out and play in their backyard now, as I fear for their safety—not to mention my children hearing and seeing people drunk and fighting. My children should not be exposed to this daily.'

The resident then quotes seven or eight police PROMIS notes as evidence of the regular complaints they have put in.

That is one of many examples I can give you. That is why the police public safety officers initiative—these officers are sworn police, a new stream of police—is important. They will have additional powers. They can go in, make arrests if required and issue breaches on the spot. This is much better than what we have. Our public housing safety officers do a great job, as do the transit officers, but this strengthens the response to this issue. The initiative will focus on public housing, neighbourhoods and shopping centres in our suburbs.

Recently, police took a multi-agency response with Operation Safer Homes. It was a good initiative where agencies worked together. I will quote a report from the police operation that was conducted in Karama and Malak at the end of October:

> *A coordinated multi-agency effort in Darwin's northern suburbs has resulted in over 580 community engagements and the seizure of more than 300 litres of alcohol, as part of Operation Safer Homes.*
>
> *The focused initiative aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour in housing hotspots ran from 22 to 25 October, bringing together members from the NT Police Force; Department of Housing; Larrakia Nation Night Patrol; Territory Families, Housing and Communities; and Transit Safety Officers.*
>
> *Through combined enforcement, outreach, and support, the operation delivered a visible presence in key public areas, including housing complexes, rough sleeping areas and transport hubs.*
>
> *In total, 42 Banned Drinking Orders were served, 15 infringement notices were given out and 10 arrests were made for various public order offences.*
>
> *Operation Safer Homes is designed as a repeatable model for future deployments across the NT, ensuring that agencies continue to act together to prevent harm, uphold community standards and support those at risk.*

Superintendent Kirsten Engels commended the partnership between each agency for Operation Safer Homes. 'Every agency played a role in making our community safer, whether that meant direct enforcement, engaging respectfully with residents or connecting people to the help they need.'

'We haven't solved the problem, but we've made a strong start,' said Superintendent Engels.

This is the bit I appreciate her saying:

'We will not stand for poor behaviour in and around our homes, bus stops, or streets. The message is simple. Respect your neighbours, respect your community or face the consequences.'

That is what we need to be doing. We need to do more.

This initiative gives us a new stream where we integrate some of the housing and transport powers into a single stream of sworn police, and I think that will be a great opportunity. When we see police come in—not just in public housing but around parks and shopping centres and so on—proactively trying to tackle antisocial behaviour before it becomes a real mess, I think that is fantastic.

I heard the Member for Mulka's concerns about guns, and I appreciate that. My understanding is that these are sworn police, and the Police Commissioner will decide which accoutrements they carry. It is not for me to decide what is best; professional police will decide that. If they decide that guns are needed, so be it. I will back the police every time, as I am sure many of my colleagues will.

I was briefed on this Bill. We had questions because a number of public housing dwellings in Karama and Malak are operated by community provider Mission Australia Housing. Mission Australia was welcoming of the changes, but it was uncertain. It said, 'Will this focus only on NT public housing homes? What about our homes?' We raised this issue. These are police, and they will tackle whatever is the problem. They are delivering a public community service, and if it happens in a Mission Australia home or a public housing home, so be it; the officers will tackle it. They are there to make our community safer.

I am conscious that a number of my colleagues wish to speak. I could go on about this, but I will give them the opportunity to share their views.

I congratulate the Chief Minister, who is also Minister for Police, on this is fantastic initiative. I look forward to the first squad coming out. I know we are going into a recruitment phase; we probably need to recruit up to about 200 officers over two years. Let us do it; let us transition into this. I believe it will be a positive interaction. My constituents will welcome the initiative, and I back the Bill all the way.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I support this Bill and believe it has exciting capability. I will echo a lot of what the Member for Karama said, but I will go into the capability that the PPSO stream will bring.

As we have seen, police are flat out going from job to job, so much so that young officers have not even had the ability to train by walking the beat, being out and doing proactive policing. Since coming out of college, officers are going on shift and responding from one crisis to the next, and the ability to proactively police has become extremely limited. There are flow-on effects from that; if the capability to do proactive policing is not there, it leads to more crises.

A classic example in my electorate is daytime drinking. If we can get on top of that early, we will not have the same level of domestic violence, assaults, nuisance drinking and parties in housing that go late into the night. If we deal with it early in the day, we avoid those crises later in the night. I am excited that the PPSO role creates an ability to crack down on that behaviour early so that we can stop those crises that occur later.

How will that happen? The powers that the PPSOs will have given them the ability to enter housing, common areas, parks, the bus network and shopping centres and operate within those environments, which are the major areas where there is antisocial behaviour. PPSOs will interdict those behaviours early. They will have powers to arrest, issue infringements and tip out alcohol. These are all things that will proactively stop the escalation that occurs due to alcohol and other drugs. Importantly, officers will be straight back out on the road. If officers have to make an arrest, they will drop off the person to the watch house and go back on the road to proactively police. I am genuinely excited about this because I believe that is where we need to make ground; this is the area we have to target. I fully support the initiative.

Housing is a huge issue for people in my electorate, including my Housing tenants. As we have heard in this Chamber, the majority of Housing tenants are good tenants, with long-term, stable tenancies. They pay their

bills and are valued members of the community. It is driving tenants insane that they have a neighbour in either a unit or house who is destroying their life and their way of life. These tenants think, 'Why am I paying my rent and keeping my property clean and tidy when my neighbour keeps me up all night? My kids are tired in the morning when I drop them at school, and I am tired at work.' This has created a genuine division among Housing tenants. I want to tackle that and look after our Housing tenants because the vast majority are excellent, and I want them to have the best opportunities available to them. That means having a peaceful and quiet sanctuary they can call home. With the PPSOs, we can crack down on antisocial behaviour in Housing to ensure that happens.

It is the same with public transport. Many Drysdale residents rely on public transport. It is a major mode of transport for my entire community, from school-age children to workers and seniors. The bus system became so dangerous that seniors no longer used the bus. A year ago I spoke about the impact that this has on individuals, especially seniors. They cannot have their social connections and will not go to medical appointments because they do not want to be an impost on their family, saying, 'I need to see the doctor on Thursday, but I do not want to put my son out because he is busy working, so I will not say anything'. We cannot accept that situation. Getting these PPSOs in the transport system to ensure everyone in our community can have a safe bus ride is important.

A genuinely heartbreaking moment I had in this role was when I went to the Palmerston bus depot to catch the 71 at 9.30 on a Friday night. Coming back from Gateway, I saw a family in my electorate from Gray and about 10 Gray Primary School students with one of their aunties. She had her kids and nieces, and they were coming back from a film. These six to 10-year-old girls, who I see at Gray Primary School, were surrounded by alcohol-fuelled violence. There was open violence throughout the bus depot. The children were excited to see me and were waving and talking to me, because what was going on around them was normal to them. It was a heartbreaking moment for me.

Bringing the PPSOs in will make sure that those kids can safely go to the Gateway Event Cinema over the school holidays, watch a family movie, come back and have a safe bus ride. I am proud to see the Chief Minister and our government create an environment where we believe we can make change and make it safe for our communities.

There are a few reasons why this role was created. I raise this issue for both sides of parliament because it is a discussion we need to have. Our police are tied up with domestic violence, and rightfully so. I was honestly surprised at what we define as domestic violence in the Northern Territory. The definition is quite broad and covers not just the physical but all the other forms of abuse. That part of the definition is good. It is worthwhile for everyone in this Chamber to think about the domestic side of the definition. I did not know, and a lot of Territorians will not know, that there is an incredibly broad definition of domestic violence that goes all the way out to extended family.

I asked a question recently: if the Member for Blain is a distant cousin, and we are having views and get into a punch-on, does that constitute domestic violence? The answer is yes. I was genuinely shocked at that because when most people think of domestic violence, the first part of the definition names intimate partners—married, de facto, dating and same and opposite sex couples. That is a massive tick, because that is what most Territorians think of, along with domestic violence occurring between intimate family members, parents, carers and children. I found out that if two adult men, such as the Member for Blain and I, have a fight on the weekend after having a few beers, that constitutes domestic violence for the police response. Here is the important piece and why I ask everyone in the Chamber to think of this as a worthy point to discuss: the police have to initiate the entire domestic violence response, which is incredibly resource heavy.

It is resource heavy for what I believe is genuine domestic violence. We do not want to remove that. Everyone in this Chamber agrees on a greater response to genuine domestic violence, but I believe we need to tighten the definition to community expectations of what constitutes domestic violence. The broad definition means that any form of family relationship constitutes domestic violence, so our police just move from one domestic violence incident to the next. We are not a big community. Oh my God, so many of us are related; the definition is so broad.

I ask all members to think about that and consider whether it is worthy to narrow the definition. Most Territorians, if asked would say, 'It needs to focus on intimate relationships in the home or where abuse is occurring, definitely not for two adult males who are distant cousins'. That is not a domestic violence situation in my opinion.

On the topic of guns, I note the Member for Mulka's contribution and appreciate where he is coming from on behalf of his community, but I come from my community, which expects the officers to be armed. I expect

them to be armed. The public housing safety officers (PHSOs)—the Member for Blain and I have watched them operate—currently need a PORU and a police escort. That is crazy; public housing safety officers need an armed police escort to conduct checks on properties. We talk about arming our police public safety officers, but they already need an armed escort as it is. Let us rest on that fact: we need armed escorts checking on housing properties. What a crazy situation. If we are creating this position to be proactive and deal with this, of course they need to be armed because they currently need an armed escort.

We have an obligation to those officers. The Member for Karama was correct. It is not a decision for parliament; it is a decision for the commissioner. I have an expectation that they will be armed because I expect when people call police, an officer will arrive who has the full suite of capability to respond appropriately. I want officers to be confident that they will come home safely. People are putting their heads in the sand if they think that risk is not there. I can assure you that residents all over my electorate know that the degree and level of violence we have seen is shocking. There has been arming with knives and machetes; the risk is there. It is plain and simple. I will not be sending officers to risk their lives and not have the ability to defend themselves, and my community has that shared expectation.

Community members expect that when they call police, an officer can deal with whatever threat is posed. If that threat is highly dangerous—a threat to a person's life or that of their family and friends—people expect that when police get there they can deal with it. It is extremely rare, but it does happen and it will in the future; an officer will need to pull their gun and pull the trigger. No-one is sitting here saying, 'That is great'; it is the harsh reality the world over that police officers rock up to and face every day. They put themselves in danger and should not have to worry about their lives and not being able to defend themselves because the parliament said, 'No, that does not feel right'.

It is easy for us in the safety of this Chamber to make decisions like that, but when officers rock up to hostile, chaotic and violent people on alcohol or drugs who are being unpredictable in their behaviour—there could be a range of issues going on—they need to be confident that at the end of the day they will go home safely to their partners and children. I support and will always back them in being able to fulfil that. Therefore, I support the commissioner's decision for PPSOs to have guns. I would not send our officers to face danger and expect them to serve and protect the community without a full suite of options.

I touched on a few things. I think that this is a good Bill. The two biggest issues that Drysdale faces are disruptive tenants and nuisance public drinking. The PPSOs are a direct response to that.

I go to the Palmerston bus depot regularly. I was there with the Member for Blain a few weeks ago and we spoke to the security guards. The same line I have heard from the campaign until now is, 'Give us more power. We cannot do anything.' This new PPSO stream offers an opportunity to those security guards. It was great to hear that many of them have already put in applications and shown their desire to join the PPSO stream. They are looking forward to it; it is a career change, and it is exciting. They think they will be able to do their job better and have a much larger impact on what they are trying to do, which is keep commuters safe. They think that, through this, they have a far greater chance of achieving it. That is fantastic.

The Member for Blain and I met with a group of current public housing safety officers. It was fantastic to hear how many of them have interest in this. I asked, 'Who is interested in it?' Quite a few said, 'It is not an interest; I will become a PPSO.' Others are waiting to see how negotiations go with pay and conditions. They had a few questions for us, but the interest was across the board. Everyone was excited about it.

These public housing safety officers told us that they have been rocking up to the same tenancies, shift after shift—some of them for more than a decade—and that was not easy. They were supportive of the changes we have made because, as they said, they would rock up to a tenancy and what could they do? If they have no powers, what can they do? The policy under the previous government was not to kick out tenants, so these individuals learned that they could behave however they wanted to and there would be no consequence. These officers are excited that consequences will now be enacted through police public safety officers. They can join up, take a more proactive approach and see that Housing is starting to take action on problem tenancies.

I sincerely thank the Chief Minister for this huge body of work. I thank the NT Police Force for its commitment to carrying on with the government's agenda and cracking down on law and order.

This provides a genuine opportunity to get proactive policing happening. I support officers' carriage of guns to protect themselves and the community. I think it is time we, as a parliament, genuinely ask the question of what domestic violence is and make sure it is in line with Territorians' expectations.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

NOTICES

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

1. acknowledge the Banned Drinker Register review undertaken by the CLP government's Alcohol Policy Taskforce comprising NT Health, Licensing NT, the department of the Attorney-General and Justice, NT Police and other subject matter experts

2. note:

   (a) that the taskforce, as part of the CLP government-initiated review, has recommended the use of enforceable undertakings to require on-premises ID scanning for licensees who repeatedly breach their liquor licence conditions; the development of an opt-in system for clubs that choose to participate in on-premises scanning; and the broadening of data-sharing arrangements between key agencies to support collaboration alongside increased training for authorised persons to improve referral pathways to the Banned Drinker Register

   (b) that implementing the CLP government's own Banned Drinker Register review was a key election commitment made during the 2024 election campaign

3. call on the Minister for Alcohol Policy to provide the Assembly by no later than Thursday 12 March 2026:

   (a) a ministerial report outlining progress on the implementation of all recommendations arising from the review

   (b) a timeline for the introduction of any legislation required to give effect to the taskforce recommendations.

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

- notes the importance of safe, respectful and professional parliamentary workplaces

- acknowledges that all members have a responsibility to model integrity, dignity and respectful conduct in every setting connected to their role

- recognises that bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation and misuse of authority have no place in the Northern Territory parliament

- supports the establishment of a clear behaviour code for members, with independent oversight, confidential complaint handling and a range of proportionate sanctions

- calls on the government to implement such a behaviour code as a priority to ensure parliamentary standards reflect community expectations and is consistent with best practice across the Commonwealth.

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

- notes that while the Northern Territory has the Mental Health Strategic Plan 2019–2025 and the 2024–29 mental health and wellbeing plan, many Territorians, especially in remote, regional and Indigenous communities, still face major gaps in access to culturally safe and timely mental health support

- acknowledges calls from mental health advocates for long-term funding, better access to psychosocial support, earlier intervention and stronger cultural and community-led models of care

- calls on the government to:

- fully fund the current Territory-wide mental health strategy with a focus on prevention, early intervention and remote accessibility
- expand culturally safe, community-led mental health services

- commits to targeted consultation and engagement with the mental health sector and lived experience sector to ensure the effective implementation of this plan, as per the commitment made at the Health and Mental Health Ministers' meeting in June
- reports annually on service access, wait times and outcomes across the Territory.

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

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I present a petition not conforming with standing orders from 204 petitioners praying for a review of the safety conditions for pedestrians and cyclists on Bagot Road. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

It's time to make sure everyone is safe in our community.

The Territory has the highest number of pedestrian fatalities per capita in the country. According to the latest Menzies report on the matter, Road crashes involving pedestrians account for 23.1% of road fatalities in the NT compared to 13.7% nationally.

From 2019–2022, every pedestrian fatality was a First Nations person. In 2023 … 1 in 3 of these fatalities occurred on Bagot Road alone. This must end.

We're asking the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for an urgent review of the safety conditions for pedestrians and cyclists on Bagot Road.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): 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.

VISITORS
Charles Darwin University Students

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, before we got to Question Time, I draw attention to the presence in the gallery of three social work and humanitarian studies students from CDU. On behalf of honourable members, welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTION TIME

Corrections Facility – CDU Rural Campus Katherine

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING referred to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

I have been contacted by your Katherine constituents who are concerned that your government plans to turn the Charles Darwin University Rural campus into a Corrections facility without community consultation. Can you confirm whether this is true? If so, what is the timeframe for the CDU Rural campus to be turned into a Corrections facility? Why have you been hiding this from your constituents and community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is not something that has been hidden. I will answer my bit as Education minister and then hand over to the Corrections minister.

Labor members are sitting on the opposite side of the Chamber because they did nothing in this space. Law and order was out of control. We have a legacy where no work was done in the prison system. There is no space.

The minister has been working tirelessly with the Corrections Commissioner regarding the space in jails and making sure we are upgrading facilities.

Corrections has worked with CDU on this for quite some time. There is a lot going on at CDU …

Ms Uibo: Then why did you say to your constituents …

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mrs HERSEY: It is not something that has been left quiet. For a long time, maybe six months into being in government, the Corrections minister has been working with Corrections staff and CDU.

Ms Uibo: So you knew six months ago?

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Mrs HERSEY: I will hand over to the Corrections minister. Opposition Leader, if you ask the question you can at least have the decency, on our last day of parliament, to listen to the answer. Is it just another political stunt for you? You can tick that box.

Ms Uibo: You told people you did not know about it, so you have obviously lied to them. They came and asked you about it.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Opposition Leader, you are on a warning. You have not stopped talking the whole time.

Mr MALEY: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question because it is a great opportunity to tell people in the Northern Territory that we are about rehabilitation and training for our prisoners. We are focusing on making sure that offenders go to prison, get some education and training and learn some life skills to come out the other side as better people, which is better for the community.

As previously announced in our master plan, we are using part of the CDU campus in Katherine as a 200-man work camp. It will be an open-rated work camp. It will not be the whole of the CDU facility; it will be part of it. CDU will be able to offer training and skills development to these prisoners who are at that work camp …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I appreciate that part of the question has been answered. I want to make sure that the Corrections minister also heard the request was about the timeframe.

Mr KERLE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! In the interjection previously, the Leader of the Opposition called the Member for Katherine a liar. I object.

Ms Uibo: No. I did not call her a liar. I said, 'Why did you lie?'

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. I did not hear her say that. I have just heard her refute that. I will let it go through to the keeper, but I have my ears open this afternoon. It might be the last Question Time of the year, but I will be strict.

Mr MALEY: Thank you for the opportunity to talk about this wonderful initiative in Katherine. We have been working hard with CDU. The CDU board has made its own announcements about this. There is a memorandum of understanding that will be signed in the near future; we look forward to announcing more details about this in the near future. We are focused on rehabilitation, and there will be an open-rated work camp in Katherine next year at some stage.

Nursing Students — Hospital Placement Fees

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

We are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and you have a desperate shortage of nurses and other critical health staff. Why is your CLP government charging local homegrown nursing students, including VET in

Schools students, a hospital placement fee of up to $80 per day to undertake their practical training, even though many are already struggling to make ends meet? How do you justify this prac tax on nursing students when we desperately need more qualified and well-trained nurses in our hospitals?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, those fees should be paid by the university. I do not have any more information, but I will find out and get back to the member.

Law and Order — Support for Police

Mr MACKAY to CHIEF MINISTER

The former Labor government turned its back on our police, providing inadequate funding, stripping their powers and reducing police to a taxi service. As a result, officers left in droves and attrition blew out to an historic high of 10%. Can you update the Assembly on how the Finocchiaro CLP government is strengthening law and order through record investment, improved support for police and increased frontline officer numbers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, people in the Member for Goyder's community in the rural area are keen to see our police supported. Everyone wants to live in a safe Northern Territory. People in the member's community talk to him a lot about this, and they can see the improvements we have already made one year in.

Backing our police is critical to our mission to make the Territory a safer place. That is why, as Chief Minister, I hold the Police portfolio. We want every man and woman who pulls on that blue uniform every day, leaving their families to protect ours, to know that they are front of mind and number one in the mind of this government.

Community safety is our number one priority. That is not cheap talk like the police used to cop from Labor. This is a completely different circumstance where we have backed police with a record budget, a $1.5bn budget across Corrections, courts and police to support the entire justice system. We have delivered the best pay deal in 20 years for our police, sending a clear message that we value their work.

We also made sure that they have the laws they need to do their jobs. Every time I am in a police station I talk to people on the front line and ask, 'How is it going? What do you need? What powers can we change? What would make your life easier? What is taking the longest? What is a hassle? What can I fix? Tell me what we need to do to make the Territory a safer place.' I can tell you, boy, do they love it when I ask them that. I usually walk away with a long list, and we come here and pass it in parliament. That in and of itself is rewarding for our police, to see their ideas in the parliament and becoming law to make our community a safer place. We did that from the first parliament going back to October last year when we passed our reducing-crime package.

The work we are doing is having a huge impact. We have reduced Labor's hideous attrition rate of above 10%; it is down to 5.9%. That is more cops on the street immediately because they are not leaving. They are happier. We have graduated 182 police since coming to government and have 77 more frontline officers than we did before we came to government.

Tomorrow we will have the banned drinker order legislation, which is another tool for our police. This afternoon we will debate police public safety officers, which is another game-changing reform to deal with antisocial behaviour and poor behaviour in public housing and on our public transport network.

We are a government that backs our police. I thank them for everything they have done to date, everything over the cyclone and everything that is to come. We support them 100%.

Territory Economy — Resource Sector

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for MINING and ENERGY

This year, 2025, has been called a year of action, certainty and security. Nowhere is that clearer than in the resource sector, which continues to drive jobs, investment and royalties across the Territory. Can you update the Assembly on how the government's strong focus on cutting red tape, streamlining approvals and

reforming resource laws has delivered new mining and energy projects this year? How are these actions creating greater certainty for industry, new opportunities for Territorians and helping to build a stronger, more secure Northern Territory economy?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina knows how important the resource sector is to the Northern Territory. It is rebuilding the economy that was destroyed by the previous Labor government.

The resource sector is the backbone of our Territory economy; there is no question about that. It delivers billions of dollars every year through jobs, royalties and the supply chain. It provides jobs for local Territorians. No matter where people are in the Northern Territory—north, south, east or west—the resource sector is there, employing Territorians and buying local products for the mines in the land of opportunity that the Member for Barkly speaks about so much.

Rebuilding the economy is not possible without a growing resource sector. One of the main reasons for resource sector growth is confidence. This side of government has given companies in the resource sector the confidence to invest and explore because they know this government backs them and the resource industry.

We have been laser focused, driving new products and streamlining processes. For example, the minister for Environment changed the merits review laws. Then we changed the sacred site certificates and payroll tax. Those little things add together to build confidence in the resource sector. We established the Territory Coordinator because that is what we are about. Those changes allowed us to have the first goldmine in Tennant Creek in 20 years, at Nobles Nob. I have been there on a number of occasions to see the local people working and the money they are bringing in.

Operations recommenced at GEMCO, one of the world's largest manganese mines. The Nolans rare earths project is getting ready to kick off; there has been a lot of interest in that in Australia and internationally, and the final investment is expected early next year. There has been the first Beneficial Use of Gas agreement signed between Tamboran and traditional owners. This landmark agreement gives real opportunity and benefit to the local people around the Beetaloo area, allowing traditional owners to work onsite, stay on their country and live in their community.

APA has given confidence, investing $70m in the new Sturt Plateau Pipeline and creating 150 jobs. I have been out there to look at the work it is doing, putting the pipeline in the ground and using local suppliers who can support the pipeline's construction.

We have had record petroleum expenditure, including the new wells at the Beetaloo. Millions of dollars have been spent drilling there, getting ready to supply gas to give us energy to keep the lights on in the Northern Territory.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries CEO

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

Andrew Kirkman is still listed in the Northern Territory email system as the CEO of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The status of Mr Kirkman's employment is one of the Northern Territory Government's greatest life mysteries. In April Minister Maley said that he had resigned. In June Minister Maley said that he had not resigned but would still be paid. You said that his contract would not be renewed when it expired in August. In September Minister Maley announced a new CEO at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, but now it appears that Mr Kirkman never stopped being the CEO.

Can you confirm whether the government is paying two CEOs to run the department? If so, was Mr Kirkman's contract renewed in August after all? Are there any other departments with shadow CEOs on the books being paid at taxpayers' expense? What is the status of Mr Kirkman's involvement with the Northern Territory Government?

Madam SPEAKER: The question included some inferences and imputations. If the minister is prepared to answer that, then so be it.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I was going to say that I do not think it is up to me to comment on people's contracts or anything that they do. If the Member for Gwoja has some information on those people, maybe he can ask them directly, but it is not for me to be commenting on individual contracts.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries CEO – Supplementary Question

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

Can you confirm whether Mr Kirkman is still employed and being paid by the Northern Territory Government?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, again, I will not comment on someone's personal and working status. This has come from an article in the *NT Independent*, and I will not make a comment.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The status of a CEO is important. Is he employed or not?

Madam SPEAKER: No. There is no point of order. You cannot debate when you are asking a question.

Mrs HERSEY: My understanding is that his employment has ceased, and that happened in August.

Visitor Economy Strategy

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

Territorians want an economy that delivers jobs, confidence and opportunity. Tourism plays a major role in keeping local businesses strong, from affordable flights and choice in hospitality to retail and events in our regions. Many of these local businesses are in my electorate of Wanguri, and many of these constituents work in the tourism and retail industry.

You recently launched the Territory's new Visitor Economy Strategy, and this year we have seen record crowds at events, strong interstate visitation and renewed confidence across the sector. Can you update the Assembly on how tourism is contributing to rebuilding the Territory's economy, what the strategy will deliver in the years ahead and how government reforms are strengthening the Territory's position as the best place to live, work and invest?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I give a big shout-out to Bill's Bar and Grill, which is in the Member for Wanguri's electorate; it does the best steaks in the northern suburbs. It is an important part of our tourism and hospitality industry.

When tourism thrives, the Territory thrives. Tourism is one of our five key pillars. There has been a big change in tourism over the last 12 months or so since we came to government. We recorded the strongest growth in visitor numbers and expenditure against the rest of the country. Tourism and visitation are up, with a 19% increase in overnight trips and a 13% lift in visitor spending. Territorians can already feel the difference. Our plan is working, and our work is delivering for Territorians.

We launched the Visitor Economy Strategy a few weeks ago, which is a whole-of-economy plan. It does not just focus on leisure tourism, which is what previous tourism plans did; it makes every dollar work harder for the Territory and Territorians. Our goal is to increase visitor spending to $2.2bn and the number of visitor trips to 1.5 million by 2032.

The Territory is back, and we are only just getting started. Yesterday we passed the legislation to merge Tourism NT and the NT Major Events Company to form the new entity, Tourism and Events NT. Like it has over the last 12 months, that powerhouse team will continue to deliver major events that bring together all the amazing things that the Territory has to offer visitors.

We want people to know that the Territory is the place to come to work, live, invest and visit. I say again that when tourism thrives, the Territory thrives. That is important.

I thank the industry participants who came together over the last 12 months, talking to me about what they want for their industry. I have seen them in Central Australia, the Barkly, the Big Rivers region and the Top End. They all said to remove the silos and let industry lead the tourism sector, and that is what I am all about. They are an amazing group of people.

This is what action, certainty and security look like.

Jabiru – Transition

Mr BROWN to TREASURER

Your government has clawed back the last $35m from a $135.5m commitment to transition Jabiru to a tourism town. This is despite the funding being committed through an MOU between the Mirarr traditional owners, the NT and Commonwealth Governments and ERA. It means construction of the Bininj resource centre and other projects have stopped in their tracks despite being greenlit by TOs and other stakeholders. Can you explain how the Territory government can renege on a signed commitment involving traditional owners, the Commonwealth and the major mining company?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I think we spoke about this earlier in the year, and I gave an explanation back then. We have been working with the mining company on that transition, and funding was put aside for Jabiru. Due to the dire situation that we found ourselves in upon coming into government and the level of debt we face—I go back to the $1.5bn black hole we found in unfunded liabilities—we had to make some difficult decisions leading up to this year's budget. Part of those decisions was reprioritising funds to where they were best needed.

Some work has been done at Jabiru, and we continue to work with the residents there. We are also working with other remote communities across the Territory; however, the bucket of money is not endless. That is why we had to make difficult decisions about how we reprioritise that money and spend it over the coming years.

If I followed Labor's way of budgeting, we would be increasing debt year on year by more than $1bn. For the eight years that Labor was in government, it increased debt by more than $1bn per annum. I could go on about all the different things that Labor did that worked towards increasing that debt.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the interjections, please.

Mr YAN: We are doing the responsible thing. We are looking at the budget as it stands. We had to reprioritise some money to make sure that we are delivering for all Territorians. We are working towards delivering for every Territorian, no matter where they live, within the fiscal restraints that we have. That is the responsible thing to do.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the Member for Arafura's question was specifically: how can the NT Government renege on a commitment that is signed with traditional owners, the Commonwealth and the major mining company in that area?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes. Treasurer, you have almost a minute.

Mr YAN: I was answering the question before I was interrupted, and I was talking …

Ms Uibo: No, you were talking about the budget. We asked how you can get out of an agreement.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Mr YAN: I was talking about the fiscal position that we were left in by the previous Labor government.

My department is working with the mining company on what the future of Jabiru looks like as it pulls out. The team from the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure …

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Mr YAN: I keep picking up on the interjections from the Leader of the Opposition. Maybe if she closed her mouth and listened, she might actually hear what I am talking about. It seems she cannot help herself; it is like a little budgie over there going, 'Chip, chip, chip'.

Anyway, we continue to work with the mining company.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; I find it disorderly that the Treasurer comes in here and tells a woman to shut her mouth. That is offensive, and he should retract it.

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I think we commonly tell each other to be quiet.

Mr Young: That is shocking! It is terrible behaviour!

Madam SPEAKER: He did not tell her to shut up.

Rebuilding the Economy Strategy

Mr KERLE to TREASURER

This year the CLP Finocchiaro government introduced its first budget. It included a record $1.5bn law and order spend, cost-of-living support and investment in rebuilding our economy. To right Labor's budget wrongs, our government has invested in programs like the HomeGrown Territory Grants that make a real difference to Territorians' lives and rebuild our economy from the train wreck that our government inherited. How has the CLP rebuilt the Territory's budget and its economy in 2025?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is great to talk positively for once about the economy. It is the first time in a long time we have been able to do that.

I am proud to put on the record that this has been the best year for the Territory economy in many a long year, with the Territory leapfrogging from last place to fourth in the most recent CommSec State of the States report. The previous Labor government would throw that report in the bin as it did not believe in it. The Territory is back on the scene as the investment destination of choice and the best place in the country to do business.

It all started with the CLP's HomeGrown Territory Grants. In October last year, a little over a year ago, the CLP rolled out its election commitment delivering the most generous first homeowner grant scheme in the country. In addition, the CLP government offered an Australian first as part of this program, the $30,000 FreshStart New Home Grant that supports those looking to make a change and put down roots in the Territory. To date more than 130 families have taken up the CLP's FreshStart support, with more than 30 of these families settling in the rural area to experience the Territory lifestyle that the CLP has fought so hard to restore.

Across the HomeGrown Territory Grants program our government has now approved more than 1,200 applications, with more than 350 new builds in the pipeline and counting. That is great news. With a boost to the Territory's property market not seen in years, housing prices have recovered and are starting to grow for the first time, not because the Territory has become unaffordable but because under the CLP government, homes in the Territory are now worth something.

With our construction-fuelled economy on the move, we see this positive economic ripple across different sectors and into our population, which increased by 1.3% over the year to March. This is great news that we have not heard in a long time.

As we look forward to 2026 and finally leave behind the years of Labor's economic decline, the CLP is ready to keep building and delivering as we continue to rebuild the Territory's economy for every Territorian, not just a select few.

We extended our HomeGrown Territory Grants for another year, continue to slash red tape so that our economy can grow unbounded and are already gearing up for our next budget. We are placing the Territory on a new path to keep building on the CLP's economic wins in 2025 and keep them going in the future.

Youth Justice

J DAVIS to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Media reports today state that children in Alice Springs are being essentially vanished off the streets. These reports say that your government has changed a critical policy regarding the transfer of young people from Alice Springs to Darwin's Holtze Youth Detention Centre, specifically that parents or responsible adults no longer need to be notified before a child is moved.

A member interjecting.

J DAVIS: I note that there is laughter on the other side of the Chamber.

Can you confirm whether this policy has changed? If so, why was it changed? On what basis does the government believe it is acceptable to relocate a child 1,500 kilometres away without informing their parents or the people responsible for their care?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not sure what world the Member for Johnston lives in. People do not just vanish. If they do, report it to the police because I am sure that it is some sort of crime.

Looking after young people in the Territory is a responsibility we take seriously because we know that it is our best chance to get in early to offer young offenders some rehabilitation, training and structure in their lives.

Unfortunately, they are not getting that in their communities or where they come from; that is why they go into detention. From my experience, children are not put into detention the first time they steal a bag of lollies; there is normally a lot of work and intervention done before they end up in detention.

I think it is time for some of these parents to take personal responsibility for the decisions they make about their family that put these children in situations where they are in custody. I have done care and protection matters in court, and I have read these affidavits. I am almost in disbelief that this is happening here and now, but it is. It is time for some of the parents and communities to step up and take responsibility for their children.

When they are put with us …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question was: has the policy been changed and, if so, why?

Madam SPEAKER: The minister has plenty of time to answer.

Mr MALEY: These children do not just vanish and end up in jail; they go to court. The court process normally takes months. The Member for Johnston says that the parents do not know about it. How would a parent not know that their child has been going through the court process over many months? If they did not know about it, maybe it goes back to that personal responsibility. What have they done to look after that child who has been to court on numerous occasions over many months? It is time for some personal responsibility from parents and the community. The government cannot fix everything; we need a joint partnership with parents and the community. Unfortunately, that is not happening.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question was specifically about the removal from one detention centre to another without parents or guardians being informed. Can the minister respond to that?

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

Mr MALEY: These children are not just vanishing. This is part of our master plan; we have publicly announced many times that there is a new detention centre in Holtze. The young offenders come from wherever they are in the Territory and go there because they get to go to school and learn about things. Again, back to the …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Johnston, there is no point of order. He has been answering the question. If you are going for relevance …

J Davis: The question is: has the policy changed and, if so, why? It is not everything else you are talking about.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, it is your call.

Mr MALEY: We are about providing these services. That is why these children 'vanish' and end up in education; they end up in school because that is what detention is about. At Holtze they have wraparound services and go to school; they have opportunities to listen to people, go to educators and get the medical assessments they need. This is about making sure these young offenders have an opportunity to come out a better person. We are trying to break the cycle of reoffending so that children can go back to the community and have a meaningful life.

Early Childhood Education – Safety

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for EARLY EDUCATION

Our government is steadfast in its commitment to safety for all Territorians. Whether it is on our streets, in our homes or in early childhood education and care services, safety remains a top priority for our government. Can you update the Assembly on the measures our government is taking to protect our youngest Territorians, ensuring their safety and wellbeing, while their parents and carers engage in employment and training?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as a younger person with younger children, the Member for Drysdale knows all about the importance of making sure we keep our kids safe in care while parents go to work. Our government remains steadfast every day in its commitment to the safety of our most vulnerable Territorians in care. Their wellbeing is not just a priority; it is our responsibility. As minister, I take this with extreme caution and care.

Recently I made it clear to QECNT that every child in an education and care service must be protected and safe. We have strengthened our oversight, with five additional authorised officers from within the department. Every service will be required to meet or exceed Quality Area 2, Children's health and safety. We have 235 services across the Northern Territory, and our goal is that by 30 June 2026 all services will meet or exceed this quality area.

I have set firm clear expectations and guidelines from the start. Unlike those opposite, we will enforce them. Under Labor, early childhood services saw waiver after waiver. There are services that have not met compliance for six to eight years. That is disgusting. Ultimately, that is putting children's lives at risk and is unacceptable.

One of the most heartbreaking examples of this failure is the tragedy of the passing of Ebony Thompson, the 22-month-old child. Her parents dropped her off to care one day and got the tragic news that their little girl did not survive. It is a parent's worst nightmare. I recently met with Floyd and Jade, Ebony's parents; their pain is unimaginable. It was traumatising for me meeting with them.

After reading through the coronial report, I immediately wrote to the federal Minister for Early Childhood Education, Jess Walsh, and all ministers around Australia to put this on the national agenda when we go to the Education Ministers Meeting in February. I was pleased to get a response from the Early Childhood Education minister, and it will be on the agenda in February.

At present there are no national standards for fencing height or type, and that must change. We will make sure that all centres are safe. By 30 June next year they will meet those qualifications.

Oyster Farming Study and Research Trip

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Oyster farming is a growing multimillion-dollar industry for the Territory, supporting jobs and ongoing economic development. We have four oyster farms: the Tiwi Islands; South Goulburn Island; Groote Eylandt; and Wadeye. The Darwin Aquaculture Centre, which is part of your department, was coordinating an important study and research trip for these local businesses to visit the best oyster farms in New Zealand.

They raised their own funds for the trip, but you refused to sign off on Darwin Aquaculture Centre staff attending, so it cannot go ahead.

Your government claims that it is all about backing local businesses, so why have you made such a short-sighted and thoughtless decision? Will you reimburse these local businesses for the money they have lost on bookings because you have deliberately sunk the ship?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, when we came into office I did a deep dive into the department. The previous government had worked on oysters for 10 years. We found out that the oysters have been growing for the last 10 years, but you cannot sell them. For some reason the previous Labor government did not take the steps to allow these oysters to be sold to the public.

We have come into office and looked at the department of Agriculture in its entirety. We are supporting oysters. The program is still going, and research grants are available to ensure that these oysters can continue to grow. An application to make these oysters saleable in Australia is before the federal department. That is now in the hands of the federal Labor government to approve, so I suggest that those opposite ask their federal colleagues about what they are doing to make sure that these oysters can be sold to the public.

We are making sure that this program continues, but we are not wasting taxpayers' money. We need to make sure that oysters are available, and we are waiting on federal approval. I suggest that those opposite speak to their Labor representatives in Canberra and ask them what they are doing in relation to this application and then we can get these oysters up and going.

We do not have an endless bucket of money. We are focusing on crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. For 10 years this program was run under the previous Labor government …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mr MALEY: It failed to act. The previous Labor government let this whole program disintegrate into nothing and wasted time and money.

We are making sure that taxpayers' money is spent wisely. I make no apologies about that. We do not have a bucket of money. The Treasurer's hair is falling out because debt is through the roof …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence! Cease the interjections.

Mr MALEY: The status quo cannot remain. We are spending taxpayers' money wisely. That is what the previous Labor government did not do.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was specifically about whether the minister will look to reimburse these businesses now he has made the decision to cancel the trip.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call.

Mr MALEY: I am not sure what decision those opposite are talking about. I am talking about making sure that taxpayers' money is spent wisely.

We know that the previous Labor government overspent by $1bn a year. That was $1bn of taxpayers' money each year for eight years in a row. This is about taxpayers' money being spent wisely.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: It had better not be relevance; he is saying that he did not know.

Ms UIBO: Standing Order 110; concise answer. Will you reimburse the businesses?

Madam SPEAKER: The minister already said that he does not know what you are referring to. You can answer that yourself, minister.

Mr MALEY: We are about taxpayers' money. If a private company has booked a flight, that is a matter for it.

Restoring the Territory Lifestyle – Sport

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for PEOPLE, SPORT and CULTURE

This year, 2025, has been an amazing year to remember for sport in the Northern Territory. I know from the many events I have attended, there have been huge, sizeable crowds, with a fantastic atmosphere. A sense of optimism has abounded around our sporting sector again on the basis of the diversity of the events we have had and the huge crowds. Can you outline some of the fantastic achievements that our government has made this year in the area of sport that deliver on one of our key pillar election commitments to restore our lifestyle?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the community response has been overwhelming regarding the government's decision to bring the Sport portfolio back into the light from the dark recesses and corners.

The CLP Finocchiaro government's creation of the Minister for People, Sport and Culture was in response to us listening to Territorians. They told us that they wanted their lifestyle restored, and 2025 has proven that we are delivering.

At a grassroots level we have invested $11.92m in all peak sporting bodies, industry support organisations and through activities in our remote communities program. Our local sport and Learn to Swim vouchers, a CLP initiative, have been a huge hit. We have announced new ongoing recurrent funding of nearly $3m per year to ensure that government-owned facilities are well maintained for the community to use. Why? The previous government neglected them.

We are also investing in grassroots sporting facilities across the Territory, including a number of election commitments. We have already seen a few games under the lights of Norbuilt Oval.

In Alice Springs we have reclaimed Anzac Oval as a truly community multi-sport oval, with rugby league, rugby union and soccer already underway. There is more to come with the new Gillen multi-sport precinct pending.

We have delivered an election commitment of $2m to cricket over four years to support Aboriginal participation.

Local sports have thrived in this environment, and we backed them. We have made improvements to the Hidden Valley Motor Sports Complex and seen the introduction of the incredible MXGP.

TIO Stadium made its mark in 2025 as a multi-sport international venue with the Anzac Day NRL game, two AFL games, the AFLW Dreamtime game and the bumper crowds for the return of international cricket that was broadcast to millions of viewers around the world.

I could not mention cricket and the highlights of 2025 without again congratulating the Territory's own Jake Weatherald for debuting in the baggy green in the first Ashes test last week. I add a couple of quotes from him that came out on the NT Cricket website today:

> *Growing up (in Darwin), you had your club role models, but you never had any great representation in the international or domestic scene to aspire to …*
>
> *For me, to be able to provide that for some kids back home would be awesome. The boys and girls there, to be able to show that there's a pathway from playing in the NT …*

This is what restoring lifestyle looks like: grassroots sport support; world-class sport in our backyard; economic benefits for Territory businesses; and opportunities for every Territorian to be part of the action, all while inspiring the next generation of Territory athletes.

Housing — Nhulunbuy

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

How is the government working with Rio Tinto and other stakeholders to increase housing stock in Nhulunbuy where there is a significant shortage of housing for our service providers and businesses that service the north-east Arnhem Land region?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, Housing has a base in Nhulunbuy. At a departmental level, housing is a priority for not only Nhulunbuy but also Yirrkala and all the surrounding homelands.

When it comes to Rio Tinto, conversations regarding the Gove Futures transition at Nhulunbuy are well and truly underway. We want to ensure that there is sufficient public housing available in that area through that transition. That work is being monitored. GEH housing is there, so there are opportunities for government staff. When it comes to public housing the work being done is part of the overall transition.

Member for Mulka, I assure you that housing is at the forefront of what we are looking at across the board. Housing is a priority in all parts of the Northern Territory. Remote housing is picked up over the next 10 years under the $4bn housing agreement, and we are working to build 2,700 homes over that period. We are still committed to $40m a year for homelands and the remote housing package. In Nhulunbuy we are working as part of the Gove Futures transition to ensure that there is sufficient housing for everybody living in that area.

Member for Mulka, I am happy to speak to you offline about any concerns you have in that area because I know from some of our past conversations how interested in and committed you are to ensuring that all those issues are dealt with as part of the Gove transition. I am happy to sit down with you and go through any concerns or issues you have about housing in Gove, Yirrkala and all those areas nearby. That is where things are up to with housing through the Gove transition.

Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment's Portfolios – Achievements

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

Noting the recent practical and commonsense legislative changes that you have delivered through the Assembly, for the benefit of all members, including those opposite, can you outline the key initiatives and legislative achievements that you have delivered in the first year of government as Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment; Minister for Corporate and Digital Development; and Minister for Water Resources?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, since taking office 15 months ago our Finocchiaro CLP government has taken action, shown decisive leadership and continued to deliver real results for Territorians. It is clear that we are moving in the right direction. We have implemented major legislative reforms to streamline processes, cut red tape and rebuild the Territory economy. On this side we are all about delivering our promises to Territorians.

For years under Labor, key development projects with the potential to supercharge growth in the Territory stalled. We have changed that. I have said it before and I say it again: we have fixed it over here. Under Labor, third-party merits reviews were weaponised time and again by individuals with no genuine stake in these projects, delaying progress without any evidence or accountability. Amending the *Petroleum, Planning* and *Water Acts* has ended unnecessary delays, making it clear that when a project is approved it can proceed. The results speak for themselves.

The latest CommSec report confirms that the Territory is now leading the nation in economic and population growth, driven by strong investment, increased construction activity, record housing approvals and a growing workforce. We are firmly on track to rebuild the economy and restore confidence in the Northern Territory.

We are securing our water future by implementing the Mataranka and Western Davenport Water Allocation Plans, protecting the Aboriginal water reserve through important legislative changes and promoting responsible bore management through the Know Your Bore campaign. My rural members will know all about looking after their bore.

We are also delivering on our promise to restore our unique Territory lifestyle. Hunting and conservation remain supported. We have locked in waterfowl limits and season dates for the next five years …

Mr Maley: Honk, honk!

Mr BURGOYNE: Honk, honk, Deputy Chief Minister, indeed.

We acquired Silkwood, the largest addition to the national park estate in 25 years, opening up new recreation opportunities for Territorians and visitors alike.

As Minister for Corporate and Digital Development, I continue to focus on delivering services that are easier and more convenient for Territorians. There is a range of things that people can now apply for online; it is about making things easier for Territorians no matter where they are.

To finish, I had a thought about the question, 'What have we delivered over the last 12 months?' It got me thinking about the 12 days of Christmas. I will talk about some of those things we delivered. Do not hold me to account on the numbers; I am just trying to get it out: 12 houses built; 11 projects fast-tracked; 10 major events succeeding; nine Mack Trucks parading; eight supercars a-racing; seven crocs as pets; six schools a-changing; five mines employing; four fairs a-faring; three oyster farms a-farming; and a nyinkka lizard delivered in Tennant Creek.

Banned Drinker Register Review

K McNAMARA to CHIEF MINISTER

The review of the Banned Drinker Register has four recommendations, two of which apply to venues supplying alcohol. These types of mechanisms that impact the supply of alcohol have the strongest evidence of effectiveness in reducing alcohol harm, yet these were not taken up by your government. With a former alcohol lobbyist as your chief of staff, how can Territorians be sure you are making alcohol policy in the best interests of the community rather than the bottom line of pubs and clubs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it must be time for the bottom of the barrel from the queen of bottom of the barrel herself. The gutter trash on the other side has still not been taken out with the rubbish from Cyclone Fina.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, please withdraw for the sake of Christmas spirit.

K McNamara: Try to be a tiny bit professional if you can—just try.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The pot calling the kettle black over there. She asked me to try to be professional; you could take a leaf out of your own book.

K McNamara: I have never called you gutter trash.

Madam SPEAKER: Please withdraw, minister.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: What am I withdrawing?

Madam SPEAKER: Gutter trash.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I withdraw gutter trash.

You can give it, but you cannot take it. A bit of a glass jaw action is happening on the other side. That is okay; it is Christmas, there is chocolate all over the desks, but it is a bit sensitive on the other side. That is okay, because you know what …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: We will have silence for three seconds.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: On the other side they are happy to come into parliament and tear down other people, public servants and people who do not have a voice in the Chamber. When the scrutiny is put back on them, they stand up and feign offence.

It speaks volumes about the quality of the questions in this parliament and the quality of the debate.

About the only thing of any sense that the Member for Nightcliff said is that we did a Banned Drinker Register review. Correct. Tick—election commitment delivered. Four recommendations were made as part of that review which we are now working through. One of them we could deliver straightaway. What Territorians like about our government is that we deliver on what is important to them. We will now work through that review and engage with industry. We are not making any snap decisions; we have to consult on that.

On changing banned drinker orders from seven days to 28 days, our police are keen which means we are keen. It will be done. This will mean, particularly over the summer period, that if someone is put on a banned drinker order they will be on the Banned Drinker Register for 28 days. That is a significant period which supports a reduction in alcohol-fuelled harm.

Speaking about alcohol-fuelled harm, we are seeing the crime data drop. The other day we announced that the number of victims has reduced by 8.3%, and that includes the Member for Nightcliff's community. People want less crime, and alcohol-fuelled harm and violence is a major part of that.

We will go through the remainder of the recommendations and provide public commentary on that when we come to our decision. One thing we have acted swiftly on is better powers for our police and better law and order and community safety. Leading into summer and the Wet Season, that is exactly what Territorians want us doing.

Delivering Better Healthcare

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for HEALTH

It would be remiss of me not to mention somebody in the gallery who has developed quite a taste for politics—my beautiful daughter, Ella. Thank you for coming today, Ella.

A strong health system plays an important part in ensuring an attractive Territory lifestyle and helping grow our population. The Territory's health system was left in a dire state by the former Labor government. Surgery wait times blew out to the worst in the nation. There were regular and seemingly endless code yellows and reports of regular assaults on our hardworking, dedicated healthcare workers, many of whom reside in the Fannie Bay electorate and make up an integral part of our primary and allied healthcare system. The CLP committed to addressing these issues to improve the Territory's healthcare system. Can you highlight how our CLP government has delivered better healthcare during this year of action, certainty and security?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Fannie Bay for her support for the government as we have worked to deliver our election commitments to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our Territory lifestyle.

One of the things that has not been mentioned is we are still fighting for $400m in the Health budget. We not only have been delivering our commitments but also are taking up the fight for $400m that nothing was done about under the former Labor government. It had eight years—Labor had 19 years in government over the last 23 years—and we are facing a $400m hole in the Health budget.

Within our first eight weeks the CLP government passed a suite of stronger laws, including minimum mandatory sentences for assaults on frontline workers, helping protect the Territory's hardworking healthcare professionals. Our staff are regularly delivering on a commitment to care for Territorians in our hospitals and health clinics. The CLP government is backing them.

In our May budget the Finocchiaro government provided an additional $100m per year in ongoing base Health funding, although we continue to be short-changed by $400m by the federal government. We have heard nothing but silence on that from the other side of the Chamber.

We are constructing the new $18.2m, 32-bed multipurpose ward at RDH, due to be completed in June 2026. We are providing multimillion-dollar funding to operate the new mental health unit at Royal Darwin Hospital. Funding of more than $16m per year will be provided for operational costs at the 24-bed facility from 2025–26,

and there is a further $500,000 to purchase medical equipment. When those opposite were in charge, nothing was set aside to operate the mental health ward. That is why we are committing $16.5m to do that.

We have also delivered for people below the Berrimah Line, with cutting-edge surgical innovation in Central Australia enhancing services for patients with a new hybrid operating theatre at Alice Springs Hospital.

We delivered for Territorian families. More than 15,000 young people are now protected through the free meningococcal B vaccine program. That is another of our election commitments delivered. The free vaccine will protect lives and prevent families from experiencing profound loss. When we talk of the meningococcal B vaccination, we think of people like Sally and Ash Lawrence, who sadly lost their daughter Skylar to meningococcal B in 2017.

We are taking action to improve our health system. We will work just as hard throughout 2026 as we have done in 2025 to deliver for Territorians.

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

HOUSING, TRANSPORT AND SURVEILLANCE DEVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS) BILL
Serial 44

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I support this Bill.

I will follow up some of the points that the Member for Drysdale made in his contribution. Antisocial behaviour in and around public housing continues to be the greatest issue in my electorate. It was the biggest issue during the campaign and when I came into office, and it continues to be the biggest issue.

This morning I went through emails from last night. People who have to get up early in the morning to go to work were dealing with neighbours' loud music, people drinking and making a lot of noise at night. They must deal with the carry-on from people who are not employed, who do not have to get up to go to work and are partying, playing loud music, drinking, yelling, shouting and fighting, carrying on and behaving inappropriately at night in the suburbs. There was another email about an unruly mob in the street this morning. This is not out of character; this is a constant flow of the issues that come to my electorate office which we must deal with.

I support this Bill because we are cleaning up the mess of the previous government. We ended up with a patchwork quilt of different pseudo-enforcement arms which had no real powers. The only power they had was to wear a camera and ask people nicely, which is better than nothing, but we have serious incidents going on with large unruly mobs.

The Member for Drysdale mentioned in his contribution that we went on a ride-along. We went to the muster at the start of their shift and there was a lot of interest from the Housing officers about this police public safety officer program. They were excited and interested. I wish I had more details to give them, but negotiations are ongoing. The Bill today firms up some of the details so that questions can be answered, and the government will be communicating those as the negotiations progress.

There are three different groups that regularly go on patrol. There are the public housing safety officers (PHSOs). The PORU (Public Order Response Unit) provides a measure of physical safety. They are private security officers, but they are highly trained, highly capable and usually with a relevant background that equips them in the public safety area. Third is the police. It was clear that police were there partly for their powers.

Police have powers of entry, powers to tip out and destroy alcohol, powers of search and seizure and powers to issue a banned drinker order, which the PHSOs lack. The PHSOs' powers are extremely limited and prescribed under the *Housing Act*, which inhibits their ability to get their job done. They are fantastic people. All the public housing safety officers I met are extremely dedicated, passionate and wanting to help and to do the best for Territorians, but they are limited in how effective they can be by the powers that were given to them under the Act.

It was clear that they needed police to accompany them to some housing properties purely for their safety. If they go on to the properties unarmed with no ability to escalate and respond to threats of physical violence, that puts our hardworking public servants in harm's way. It is essential that they have more powers available to them and are plugged into the same network, with the radio communications dispatch, that police have. If they attend a situation and have all the required accoutrements on their belt, which the Commissioner of Police—who we have full faith and confidence in—sees fit to issue them with, they can go into appropriate situations, restore law and order and deal with antisocial behaviour, which is a scourge on my electorate as well as the electorates of Drysdale and Karama and, no doubt, many others.

Police public safety officers will have the powers they need. This will streamline processes; instead of having a group of three different parties travelling together, you will only need the PPSOs. They can go in if people are drinking, tip out grog, issue banned drinker orders and do what needs to be done.

Why do we need this? Why can police not respond? The Member for Drysdale touched on this, but I reiterate that we are still rebuilding our police from the destruction of their morale and retention rates under the previous government. The previous government saw police as a club to use against its enemies when Territorians who were hesitant to take an experimental vaccine sought to use their democratic right to protest. We all saw vision of the police rolling out, spraying everyone down. That was a truly embarrassing time in the Territory's story.

Then, when it did not suit the government, when the police were not suiting its narrative, it was quite happy to throw them under the bus and blame them for its own lack of action, decisions and leadership.

This government is different; we back our boys and girls in blue. We support the thin blue line 100%. If they do the right thing in accordance with their duty, in good faith, we will back them all the way.

Our police are flat out dealing with serious offences. I do not know if you know, but at the JESCC there is a tightly prescribed set of rules about when a call comes in and they are dealing with many jobs. Which jobs are police dispatched to? People often ring in and say, 'People are drinking in the park and arguing', or 'There is a house next door and it is 11 pm. I've got to go to bed, and they're playing loud music, drinking and carrying on and there's a no-alcohol sign on the front fence.' I would love it if police could attend every one of those jobs, but we do not have enough. We are still rebuilding our police after the destruction inflicted on them.

They have to prioritise where they go. Domestic violence is indeed a scourge. It is categorised as priority 1, and rightly so. Police will attend a domestic violence incident before they attend antisocial behaviour or a noise disturbance.

As the Member for Karama and many in this Chamber will relate to, sometimes in Palmerston the antisocial behaviour and drinking at 12 am, 1 am and 2 am turns into a disturbance at 5 am, which turns into an aggravated assault and domestic violence, and sometimes even a death. If we can intervene and break this cycle of drinking and antisocial behaviour before it escalates, we can prevent the more serious offending later in the evening.

I am sure those opposite would be happy, because that will keep people out of the justice system and stop them from hurting their loved ones. People might be a bit upset when their grog is tipped out, but do you know what? They can deal with that. We all get upset; we are adults, and if we do the wrong thing we get upset, get over it and move on. Hopefully we learn from it.

I will talk about Luke from Moulden, who has been emailing my office, the community housing provider and the Housing minister's office for many months. He is dealing with a nightmare tenant three doors down from him. We finally had some success, and those tenants have lost their tenancy. Now the people on that street can sleep at night; before that, police were regularly visiting. That property was being damaged more and more, with rubbish everywhere attracting vermin. The poor lady who lived next door to that house came into my office and was on the verge of tears from witnessing drinking, fighting and screaming every night. You would not wish that on anyone.

Residents of Altair Court in Woodroffe who came into my office were at their wits' end because of all the antisocial behaviour going on. These are not well-off people with a lot of resources at their disposal; they live in public housing and are trying to get by, look for work and live their lives. Some of them are retired seniors who want to enjoy the golden years of their life but cannot because of all the antisocial behaviour that goes on. They tell me that as soon as the sun goes down they lock their doors and stay inside their houses. They do not go out; they have become prisoners in their own home.

Emery Avenue—where do I begin? The school principal regularly calls me about knives being found across the road where the schoolchildren wait to catch the bus and people jumping the fence into the OSHC area, running amok, with OSHC having to go into lockdown. He told me that the school is losing enrolments because of the antisocial behaviour in Emery Avenue. The Member for Drysdale and I are working together with the Housing minister to take action. Unfortunately, the properties in question are not directly managed by the department of Housing but by a community housing provider, so we are working through that.

Darren from Transit Circuit in Woodroffe deals frequently with public drunkenness, walking between Emery Avenue and a liquor outlet on Chung Wah Terrace. He has a beautiful new Colorbond fence on the side of Chung Wah Terrace. He is a small businessman who had to put up CCTV because of all the people who walk past and punch, smash and damage it or who perform bodily functions outside of it just because they are going back and forth between antisocial hotspots and the liquor outlet.

People may have read about the unfortunate gentleman who was stabbed at Woodroffe Park, leaving a large puddle of blood. The parents of children dropping off their kids to the local daycare centre in the morning saw police tape surrounding a large blood stain.

These are all instances when antisocial behaviour could be interrupted earlier, when people are drinking where they are not supposed to, as there are laws in the Territory against drinking in a public place or within two kilometres of a licensed premises.

I support the right to drink responsibly. If there is a social club in a community with appropriate rules that the community agrees with and wants, then by all means. I also support the right to drink peacefully in your own home. I support the right to follow the appropriate processes with council and put on a function with responsible service of alcohol in a public place, but when people cannot control themselves and they drink to excess it leads to antisocial behaviour, which then leads to violence and people doing things they would not do when they are sober—hurting their loved ones, sometimes killing or causing permanent injury to their loved ones. That cannot be abided.

I support this Bill because it will enable us to end the patchwork quilt of powerless officers who are doing their best but do not have the powers they need to achieve their function. The people of Blain will benefit from PPSOs when they are rolled out fully. I look forward to this Bill passing and the first squads of PPSOs graduating.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, once again I am starting my speech with the same concern that has become all too familiar; that is, the CLP government did not refer this Bill to the scrutiny committee.

This pattern is deeply troubling. When Bills of real substance, like this one, consistently bypass public submissions and consultation, it sends a clear message to Territorians that this government does not value transparency, is not interested in decisions led by expertise and has no genuine commitment to engaging with policy that could improve our communities. This Bill is exactly the kind of Bill that the scrutiny committee is designed for—serious, contentious Bills. This should have been sent to the scrutiny committee; it says a lot about the intentions of this government that it was not.

The police public safety officers will be deployed in public housing after just 18 weeks of training and will be armed with a firearm, a taser and pepper spray. I do not understand how anyone can argue that this is an adequate timeframe to be trained in de-escalation. How can the public have confidence that these officers will not inappropriately deploy their weapons, especially when the residents they will be working with are often amongst the most vulnerable members of our community?

During the government briefing, when the crossbench asked the police representatives whether they anticipated quicker response times to residents of public housing, they could give no assurance. Therefore, we are not improving response times; we are just adding more armed officers with minimal training.

Also troubling is the aspect of what this Bill removes. The previous framework required public housing safety officers to be suitably trained and criminal history checks to be conducted before appointment. This Bill removes those requirements for authorised officers. The code of conduct that previously governed public housing safety officers has also gone. Do we have to assume that there will be a code put in place later? There are so many gaps like this in the Bill that it does not seem thought-through.

We also learned in the briefing that the PPSOs will largely be working with public housing residents, yet the representative who spoke to us could not provide any plans for specialised training in working with vulnerable community members and people experiencing mental health crises and dealing with instances of domestic, sexual or family violence.

Alongside this lack of training there was also a concern about cultural awareness training. We heard that expressions of interest were sought from across the country, with a number of people from interstate already applying—that is great because we want people to move here—but what cultural competency will these officers have for working with Territory communities?

I turn to the information-sharing provisions in this Bill. This government that claims to champion small government and individual freedoms is introducing some of the most intrusive information-sharing powers that we have seen. That has not been highlighted enough in this Chamber. Under these changes, information can be shared between police, the CEO of Housing, community housing providers and authorised officers, but here is one crucial detail: the Bill explicitly states that these provisions override any other Territory law that prohibits or restricts the disclosure of information, including the *Information Act 2002*. The protections we have in place for people's personal and health information can be overridden by these provisions.

The scope of whose information can be shared is incredibly broad. It is not just tenants; it includes recognised occupiers, people the tenant has notified that they will be living in the premises and anyone who has been issued with a direction by a public housing safety officer. This is what makes it worse: there is no requirement for people to be notified if the information has been shared, so a person's personal and health information could be shared between multiple government agencies and private community housing providers and they would never know.

The Bill also expands the permitted purposes for sharing police body-worn video footage. Previously limited to specific criminal justice purposes, footage can now be shared for acceptable behaviour agreements and for reviewing administrative decisions about public housing.

This is not about protecting victims; this is about fast-tracking evictions. I find it astounding that this government, with its rhetoric about small government and getting out of people's lives, is willing to take such intrusive measures that breach people's privacy. Then again, I am not surprised because I know who this will impact. It has one rule for one set of people and one rule for another.

Let us be honest about what this is really about. It is clear that the information sharing is designed to perform functions under the *Housing Act* and the *Residential Tenancies Act* to fast-track evictions. I ask the government: how can you evict people from public housing with no plan to support them? What do you think will happen to people who are evicted from public housing?

I would appeal to your sense of empathy and duty of care to the people evicted, but we already know you could not care less about them. Instead, I ask: what do you thinks that does for the safety of everyone overall when people are struggling and you turf them out and onto the streets—the same streets you claim to get people off?

Studies show that one of the main factors that drives down crime is ensuring people have housing. Therefore, the inverse must be true: limiting or removing housing drives up crime. I am not only saddened by the way we dehumanise people living in public housing but also concerned that this approach will only institutionalise poverty and condemn people to cycles of crime.

I understand that we have issues with public housing and community safety. I work almost every day in an electorate office with people having issues in and around public housing. I am also saddened by the way this debate is demonising those in public housing. Some of the best constituents are public housing residents. I see them regularly when they are out for a coffee, and I sit down and chat with them. I am sad that this debate has tended to go into lots of avenues about dehumanising and stereotyping these people.

Public housing residents regularly raise concerns with me that police do not respond to their calls. Often these calls are about serious threats to safety, but there is still no response. If we are not improving response times or providing adequate training, what are we achieving?

Instead of having an increased police presence, why do we not invest in having social workers, health workers and other allied health professionals available to support vulnerable residents? In my electorate, I have seen how incredible it is to have an organisation like Mission Australia with an office and team situated within one of my public housing residences. They are there to provide important support to residents. They

have drop-in services and offer more intensive social work support. I cannot emphasise enough the positive difference Mission Australia's presence has made in Litchfield Court—not people with guns, but trained social workers who are there to support and improve outcomes. My staff and I regularly meet with constituents who live in public housing, particularly from Litchfield Court and Venture Housing. Litchfield Court residents have access to social supports, but the Venture Housing ones do not; they are contracted out.

We have noticed that residents who have social work or allied health support are empowered to advocate for themselves and make important changes in their lives. We see the stark difference between the residents who are living in the area with the live-in 9-to-5 social workers onsite versus those who do not have that access. Over the past 16 months I have seen the differences in these two housing groups and what a difference that service makes.

Last month we met someone who had just begun the process of recovery. With the help of their support worker, they were finally taking the first steps needed to get sober and transform their life. The research and firsthand stories like this demonstrate that it is not punishment that our community members need, but support. I understand that investing in these vital services is not a quick process, nor does it provide snappy headlines, but this is the real action we need.

On 20 August this year an open letter to the Finocchiaro government was published, signed by numerous civil society groups, condemning the provision of pepper spray and guns to public transport and housing officers. That letter was signed by many organisations in our community, including Victims of Crime NT, AMSANT, CatholicCare NT, Anglicare NT, Danila Dilba Health Services, the Catholic Diocese of Darwin, the Australian Education Union and the Mental Health Association of Central Australia.

I have lost track of the number of times we have come in here after a Bill has been proposed to be debated and there has been a big outcry with massive public letters. If you are a government which consistently receives public letters of condemnation signed by all the orgs, voices and peak bodies for the health and DV sectors and you continue with it anyway, that is shocking. As a collective group they are saying, 'We don't agree with this; it is terrible.'

It is clear from this letter that leaders in our community and frontline workers who have expertise in this area do not want these laws. However, the Finocchiaro government remains relentless in its mission to enact this so-called tough-on-crime legislation that does not work, is not what the community wants and which aims to harm vulnerable people in our community and will inevitably put everyone in more danger.

I urge the government to start looking at the evidence of what actually reduces crime and start investing in housing and social services instead of constantly turning to the overworked NT Police Force to solve all our problems. The path forward is clear. We need to invest in support services, maintain privacy protections, ensure proper training and accountability for officers working with vulnerable populations and stop fast-tracking evictions without providing alternatives. This Bill fails on all these counts, and for that reason I cannot support it.

I feel like maybe I have not explained it properly. There is a real-life case study in my electorate. Litchfield Court has a reputation; I lived next door to it for three years. Mission Australia was put in there to act as an in-house social work service. It has an office and staff are there five days a week doing many things in the electorate. I compare that with the constituents who come to me from other provider organisations that do not have any social work supports. The different is stark. It has demonstrated to me over the last 16 months that this is what we need. We cannot just dump in one location, into shitty dilapidated housing, a bunch of super vulnerable people with health problems that no-one is helping them with and expect that it will be fine. Of course they need support.

When the people from Mission Australia got in there, they told me the stories of people who had been trying to advocate for air conditioning and who had medical devices which did not work because public housing was not fixing stuff for them. People with cancer were not being seen. The state of the people in Litchfield Court was terrible. Having that service in there has made such a difference.

Instead, we will get guns and pepper spray. It is letting down my constituents. That is a big part of what I do in Nightcliff. I want trained, professional social workers helping the people in my electorate to get access to the help and the education that they need. Help them when they are struggling with how to parent their children, because they have not dealt with their trauma. No, the government's approach is to have officers rock up with guns, spread information around, put a victim on the streets with nowhere to go and then complain that they are on the streets.

I do not support this Bill.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I affirm the importance and positive impact of the police public safety officer model for the Northern Territory and outline what this reform will mean in practical terms for the people of the Fannie Bay electorate.

The establishment of the police public safety officers is a deliberate evidence-informed policy decision designed to strengthen community safety, make better use of finite policing resources and deliver a more consistent visible safety presence where Territorians live, work and travel.

Many people in this Chamber know that my husband is a police officer and has been since 2001, nearly 25 years. We have had many conversations over the years about the implications of police staffing and the resources which are available to them. I know all too well how hard police officers work. There are detectives, dog squad members and police who work in the horse, undercover, emergency response, domestic violence and child sexual abuse units. They go through six months' training to learn how to do different jobs, the legislation and how to use their tools, and have cultural competency training. They are specialised and know what they are doing with policing across the board.

Police are under-resourced, and we know that. We are providing an additional resource to police to carry out the work of social order, which has been missing in the Territory for a long time. Social order is when police can drive past a group of people who are drinking in a public place across the road from a liquor outlet and take the time to work with those people to see what needs to happen next. Skilled police officers who need to be doing investigations cannot be doing that job. We need extra resources, and that is what this Bill provides. Common sense needs to prevail at some point. That means we need to provide support to police, which is what we are doing.

Under this PPSO model, existing frontline safety roles such as frontline police auxiliaries, public housing safety officers and transit safety officers are consolidated into a single, clearly defined PPSO stream in the Northern Territory Police Force. This streamlining reduces duplication across agencies, creates a unified command structure and ensures these officers all operate under the same training standards, professional expectations and legislative framework.

Our role in this Chamber is to pass legislation. It is not to develop operational models or respond to all the questions as to how these people work. That is for the police force. It is for the Commissioner of Police and his staff to work out; it is not for us to work out. We provide the overarching structure and they do the work. The constant conversation from those opposite is about not being provided with all the information about the operational model in the legislation. That does not go in the legislation; it goes in the policies, guidelines, processes and operating procedures for police. They will deal with that.

PPSOs will retain the powers currently held by those legacy roles while operating with standardised training that emphasises antisocial behaviour management, alcohol-related harm minimisation and practical community engagement.

From a policy perspective, this reform is anchored in three key objectives: improving public safety outcomes; increasing operational efficiency; and supporting long-term police workforce sustainability. PPSOs will undertake high-visibility patrols in public spaces, including shopping centres, entertainment precincts, public housing complexes and public transport routes. They have a mandate to prevent and deter antisocial behaviour before it escalates into criminal offending. In the electorate of Fannie Bay, we have many areas where we see this sort of antisocial behaviour happening every day, and I know that the people who live and work in my electorate will appreciate the work that comes from these PPSOs.

In the last sittings, I talked about an incident on a bus at the Gateway shopping centre. These PPSOs will support that work. They will be available to respond to these incidents and there will be more of them to do that work.

By assigning these targeted responsibilities to PPSOs, sworn police officers will be free to focus on their complex investigations as well as serious crime and specialist response work, improving overall response capability and ensuring that the highest level of police expertise is directed where it is most needed.

For Fannie Bay, this translates into tangible benefits on the ground. The electorate includes busy activity centres, key transport corridors, public housing assets, recreational spaces and entertainment venues that experience periods of high foot traffic and, at times, antisocial behaviour.

PPSOs will provide a regular visible presence in and around these locations, supporting safer evenings and weekends for local families, businesses and visitors. Their role in joint operations targeting alcohol-related harms and enforcing liquor legislation will assist in reducing street disturbances and related offending, directly supporting the safety and amenity of neighbourhoods throughout Fannie Bay.

The implementation of PPSOs also carries clear economic and social dividends for the electorate. A safer public environment supports local businesses by making commercial precincts more attractive to customers and tourists and providing more confidence for hospitality and retail workers, who often bear the brunt of this antisocial behaviour. Furthermore, the PPSO stream creates an additional policing-related career pathway for Territorians, including the residents of Fannie Bay, offering structured entry into uniformed service with opportunities to progress into constable roles where appropriate. This supports local employment, retains skills in the Territory and builds a policing workforce that reflects the community it serves.

The PPSO framework is not a symbolic gesture; it is a structural reform to the *Police Administration Act* that formally establishes the rank, enabling proper industrial arrangements and long-term workforce planning. It aligns with the broader government commitments of reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring the quality of life in the Territory, and it does so in a way that is scalable across urban centres, regional hubs and remote communities.

For Fannie Bay, this means more consistent and coordinated safety services, better support for frontline police and a clearer pathway to addressing the issues of alcohol-fuelled harm and antisocial behaviour that residents frequently raise. Constituents regularly come to my office to raise these concerns.

For these reasons and in the interests of safer streets, stronger communities and more efficient use of public resources, the positive implementation of the police public safety officer role deserves the full support of this parliament. The people of the Fannie Bay want this.

I fully support this reform, and I hope the members opposite will vote for it knowing that the people in their electorate will benefit from it.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I take the opportunity to contribute to this Bill because it is important and will have a significant impact across all Northern Territory communities.

I raise concerns again at the CLP government's constant demonisation of public housing tenants.

Mr Kerle: No, antisocial behaviour.

Mr PAECH: When you listen to this government, you would think that every person in public housing is a bad person. It is not true.

Mr Kerle: No, you did not listen. We support public housing.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence.

Mr PAECH: I pick up on the interjections. You have had your turn to speak. Please let me have mine.

We make Labor's position clear: we acknowledge the people who have no other choice than to be in public housing. We acknowledge their hard work and resilience. We say to them we hear you, we see you and we will not stand by while the CLP demonises public housing tenants.

There will always be a select few people who do not follow the rules and do the wrong thing. Yes, there should be consequences for people who do the wrong thing. Yes, we support measures that look at addressing that. We constantly talk about it.

Housing is a fundamental human right. We hear this government saying, 'If you do the wrong thing, we will kick you out'. Newsflash—when you kick people out, they go and stay with someone else and the problem perpetuates. You must address the root causes of the problem and provide people with support.

Rather than hearing about the PPSOs, public housing safety officers and the changes in this legislation, we are hearing some members saying, 'We are not giving them guns'. The government is giving them guns, because the legislation is saying that they will be sworn officers. Every sworn officer in the police force carries a gun. Government members try to bend the truth so that they look good in the areas where they would otherwise struggle in their local community, but they must be honest with their community. They are enabling

people in these positions to have guns. They are effectively expanding that because the PPSOs are sworn officers.

The government is also bringing in second-tier policing. It is not right. The government cannot even tell us what rates it is paying people or what entitlements they will have. It has not even formalised that process yet, but it tries to push this legislation through without doing any of that work. We acknowledge the contribution and the hard work of the force in the Northern Territory. The government keeps saying that it needs to do more, so bring in more fully sworn officers. Why is it bringing in a second-class rate of officer who will not have the same entitlements?

The Member for Fannie Bay talked about her husband doing six months of training to become an officer—30 or 32 weeks. If she had bothered to read her own legislation, she would know that the government will give guns to people who have done only 18 weeks of training, not even six months.

I have spoken with people in my electorate as well as in Malak, Fannie Bay and across the Territory. People in public housing complexes are concerned. They have said, 'We are not America. I do not want someone rocking up to my house. I do not do the wrong thing. I am terrified and my kids will be terrified. People are rocking up with guns; will I open the door to a gun in my face?' That is what we are hearing. That is the real concern. People are asking these questions. We hear their problems.

Then we hear from government, 'We are doing this to clamp down on bad tenants'. There is so much more that could be done to help people in tenancies. If you have problem complexes …

Mr Kerle: You had eight years and it only got worse.

Mr PAECH: The Member for Blain is interrupting again. I did not interrupt you. Have some respect. I am speaking on behalf of people in the Territory. If the government had bothered to identify complexes rather than giving out guns to try to intimidate people—invest.

Where there are complexes that are known to have antisocial behaviour, let us bring in full-time caretakers to live on site. When there are escalations they can say, 'We'll work with the police because it's starting to get a bit hot here and there might be some antisocial behaviour. There is the potential for violence, and for truancy issue with kids.' Bring in live-in housing staff and caretakers to look at it from a holistic point of view, with a comprehensive approach to housing issues.

Mr Maley: Why didn't you do it in the last eight years?

Mr PAECH: Now the Member for Nelson is jumping in …

Madam SPEAKER: Let us be quiet.

Mr PAECH: It is a common theme with government members; when they do not like what we are saying, they interject.

Mr Maley: Why didn't you do it? Eight years.

Madam SPEAKER: Cease interjecting.

Mr PAECH: I am saying this government has a choice. You said that there are problems in those complexes, so bring in Housing caretakers to live in the complexes so that they can work with the children and families when they identify child protection issues, truancy issues, health issues …

Mr Maley: You had eight years.

Mr Kerle: What are they meant to do?

Madam SPEAKER: Silence! Cease the interjections.

Mr PAECH: Madam Speaker, am I right to continue or will they continue to interject?

Madam SPEAKER: Please continue, Member for Gwoja.

Mr PAECH: These are options that we have. We have an opportunity to look at this and say that we will bring in live-in caretakers so that they can help address this. They can have a comprehensive and therapeutic look at this. That is important and we should be looking at it, because that will not just address one issue, but multiple issues such as truancy, child protection, health and economic opportunities. We are looking at mitigating and taking away the risk of antisocial behaviour and domestic violence in our communities. These things could work, but the government is not interested.

The government is interested in a perception-based approach of, 'Let's give some people guns and send them through, but they won't be as qualified as our hardworking police'. We talk to coppers; I know a heap of coppers in the bush, working hard in my electorate, in Alice Springs on the beat every day. They just laugh. They say, 'Why can't they just give us more police? Why create a second tier of police officer?'

Then this government says, 'We are not making the decision about guns'. You are, because you have set the criteria that they will be sworn officers, and they will have guns. Do not pass the buck to the Police Commissioner and say that he will make the decision when you have already made it. You have already said that they will be sworn officers.

It is horrifying for communities that we are talking about guns. Look at Justice for Walker and listen to Uncle Ned Hargraves talking about how we should be working as a community to stop people carrying guns in communities. This government ignores any conversation about it and is bringing more guns into communities.

Everyone deserves the right to be safe; no-one is saying that they do not. Yes, we need to do more work with public transit safety officers. Our hardworking transit officers, bus drivers and public safety officers all deserve to go to work and be safe. No-one is disputing that.

We could be investing in a range of other initiatives. Managing complex tenancies is hard. I acknowledge the work of our tenancy officers and tenancy managers throughout the Northern Territory, whether they manage public housing stock for Territory Housing or provide social and affordable housing. It is hard work, but it is harder when the government continues to move the problem around and not fix it.

We heard members talk about how they love to evict people. When a person is evicted they become homeless. When someone is homeless they seek shelter and refuge somewhere else. That may be in the long grass in Darwin, in the saltbush in Alice Springs, on the streets in our CBDs or in public housing with family. It puts a strain on the housing network somewhere else and does not fix the problem.

We need to fix the problem with intensive family support; intensive tenancy management; providing social and emotional wellbeing and support services; providing education and training for health; tenancy management and looking after a home; healthcare; and intensive child protection services. These are all things that go to address the issue we are talking about.

What will we do when we need more public housing built in the Northern Territory? We need to. The government wants to continue to bulldoze public housing, but there is no plan for new public housing. We hear about numbers and investments being thrown around, but we cannot see any plan to show us where new housing will be or what it would look like. We need that. People deserve to have a safe, secure and affordable home.

The government is going through with this. The government has the numbers, there is no denying that, but it now needs to run a comprehensive consultation, information and education campaign, because when I talk to people in public housing complexes in Alice Springs, Darwin, Tennant Creek, Katherine and the bush, they tell me they do not know about the changes. When people they have never met—the police public safety officers—start rocking up carrying a gun, they will be anxious.

There needs to be a thorough campaign to raise awareness of this issue. It needs to be in language and across the Northern Territory so that people can feel a level of reassurance. Why has this changed? What is going on? That is what we need to see and hear, because many of my constituents are looking at this and questioning it. They ask why the government is doing this and not doing other stuff. Good questions, but we do not know because the government does not communicate well.

Then they say, 'But we are not America'—I know we are not America—'That Lia is carrying on like Lia Trump. This is not the Australian way. We are frightened. We look at America all the time. People are visiting their family in the projects and being killed. What will happen to us?' This is what happens when a government fails to have an effective communication strategy for all Territorians. A void is created, which is filled with fear

because the government has failed. It has not spoken to everyone. It is only appealing to people to lock in their votes for the next election. That is all.

Public housing safety officers say that they do not want to be police public safety officers. They are saying, 'This government has not effectively communicated what I can do after that'.

Mr Maley: You are making it up.

Mr PAECH: Member for Nelson, if you want to have another speech, you are more than welcome to.

Mr Maley: Be truthful.

Mr PAECH: Absolutely truthful.

Madam SPEAKER: No interaction across the Chamber.

Mr PAECH: Member for Nelson, you might want to jump in the car and go to a remote community and speak to black people because they will tell you what they are thinking. What they are thinking is certainly not in line with what you are dribbling now.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Comments come through me, and no interjections across the Chamber.

Mr PAECH: People across the Territory, particularly in the bush and urban areas in Alice Springs where there are public housing areas, are asking serious questions. We are talking about public housing. In the Member for Namatjira's electorate there are seven public houses all in a row that are derelict and have been vacant for longer than eight months. They continue to be vacant and have not been fixed. That is this government's attempt at trying to deprive families of a home because it does not want to put families into those areas anymore. By stealth, the government is trying to move people on; it is not allowing vulnerable families access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

Why are those houses left empty and in a disgusting condition when the department could clean them up? The government talks about bringing pride back to our communities, so clean up the public housing. The government leaves the houses derelict because it suits its narrative to demonise vulnerable people. Get in there and clean them up.

Mr Kerle: What about the tenants who did the damage?

Mr PAECH: The Member for Blain is banging on again. I have always said that when public housing is damaged …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Member for Gwoja. We will have a moment's silence. Cease the interjections. Please direct your comments through me; talk to me, Member for Gwoja.

Mr PAECH: As I was saying, when public housing is damaged the work should be carried out, things should be fixed and the department should do what it has always done, which is build up the case, look at the invoices and if it is not wear and tear, make sure that the previous tenant has a payment plan to repay the damages that were not fair wear and tear.

When you drive through the suburb of Larapinta all you see is a bunch of empty houses that the CLP government continues to leave empty because that suits its narrative. If the government wants to talk about bringing pride to Alice Springs, it should clean up those houses and make them available for families to move into so they can start their life in a new home. Let them have the pride. That is what this government should be doing, but it is not. It is leaving them empty. I have driven around and listed every vacant house I see in Alice Springs because I look forward to Estimates when I will ask this government why those houses were left empty for as long as they were.

We hear people from the department saying that they have to get approval to access the repairs and maintenance budget and they cannot get the approval. Why are we waiting so long to fix up houses? The ministers all say that there is a huge waiting list, yet they are willing to sit there and let houses be vacant for

extended periods. It is not good enough. This government could be doing these things. The government could get these houses ready and run programs with families before they even move in to talk about maintaining a healthy and happy tenancy and see whether they need tenancy support.

Work with the women's shelters across the Northern Territory and see whether there are vulnerable families in a shelter who need to move into a home. Start doing the programs with those families and get them ready for the transition into public housing so they can reunite their entire family—mothers with their children, and aunties and nannas all together. That is what we should be doing, but we are not.

Look at having live-in caretakers in the suburbs where there are huge areas of public housing. Have a live-in caretaker at Aneura Place in Alice Springs. The whole court, bar two housing complexes, is public housing. Have someone living there who can support the entire street, mediate, de-escalate issues and raise concerns about a potential child protection, DV or health issue or people coming in from other areas who might party until all hours of the night. You have someone there who can say, 'Let's get on top of this before it happens', before sending in people with guns.

These are the types of things we should be investing in, but we are not. That is all I am saying. Yes, this government will go ahead with its police public safety officers—and I get it—but do not dismiss other opportunities that can be created to alleviate and address the social determinants in housing before they even get to these situations where we need to do this work.

I think it is concerning that we are offering only 18 weeks' training, when a general constable does between 30 and 32 weeks, and then we give police public safety officers a gun. That is concerning, and there needs to be more consideration.

I raise the issue again with the government to engage the Aboriginal Interpreter Service. Please, make sure everything is in language. Go to Aboriginal media organisations so they can run it on the radio and television networks to inform people what is happening and what you have changed. That is crucial and people deserve it.

Equip our tenancy and housing officers for the changes that will happen, because they are ultimately the ones who will have to help communicate the transition. All we need is to be clear on what this looks like.

People are concerned. I reiterate that there are some bloody good public housing tenants. I have the honour and privilege to be the Member for Gwoja. Most of the housing in Gwoja is public housing in remote communities. Despite what you hear from the CLP, I have many amazing tenants. When we have the annual garden competitions run by the government's department of Housing, you see the pride in place when people do that.

The pride when people get the keys to their first home is incredible. You see people maintain healthy and supported tenancies. I know from firsthand experience, as my own family members got keys to their own homes in remote communities and could then go through the process of a child reunification, where they could get a child out of foster care and back into their care because they had a home to call their own.

We regularly talk about seniors. They are important. Through accessing this investment in housing, our seniors have gone back to their community from Hetti Perkins and Old Timers to be on country, where they want to be, because they had access to a safe, secure and affordable home.

I agree with one thing the Member for Fannie Bay said, and that is how police do an amazing job each and every day. They work in challenging circumstances, and I acknowledge they will be working hard in our towns, cities and regions over the Christmas and holiday season.

I acknowledge all the Housing staff across the Northern Territory who do an incredible job with the limited resources they get. Whether it is in public housing or social and affordable housing, they all do a great job. The Territory's housing system is unique. Let us get behind and support it.

I look forward to other members' contributions. Yes, this is important. Let us make sure we effectively communicate those changes. I would love to see a review of this legislation so we can evaluate how successful this change has been through the number of interactions people have had. Then we will know if it is a worthwhile investment or not.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I agree that we need better processes to support public housing tenants, address inappropriate behaviour and support overworked police. I also believe we can do all of this

without eroding rights or threatening privacy, and with proper accountability. We can represent and advocate for everyone in our community—public housing tenants, their neighbours and the public servants who work for us—in a way that respects everyone's rights and keeps everyone safe.

This Bill, as drafted, does not achieve that. There are no training standards, there are weak information protections and there is no requirement for officers to show ID. It does not have to be like this. We could make a law that addresses the problems we face while still protecting everyone.

This Bill represents another erosion of privacy protections and accountability for some of our most vulnerable Territorians. Once again, this government is embedding policing and surveillance into public housing while simultaneously removing safeguards that previously existed.

I will take you through what this Bill does. It removes all references to 'public housing safety officers' and replaces them with a new category called 'authorised officers'. Under the old system, public housing safety officers had to meet specific integrity requirements. They required specific training, needed police checks and there was a framework of disqualifying offences. They had obligations under the *Youth Justice Act* and operated under a legislative code of conduct.

Under this Bill, all of that is gone. There are no mandatory training requirements, mandatory police checks, disqualifying offences frameworks or codes of conduct. Think about what that might mean in practice. An authorised officer could turn up at a public housing tenant's door with significant powers to enter their home, issue directions and gather information. There is no requirement for them to have training in de-escalation, cultural awareness or even basic tenancy law.

I will tell you about one of my constituents in Johnston. I will call her Mary. Mary is a grandmother raising three grandchildren in public housing. She is doing her best in difficult circumstances. She asked me what this law might mean. She asked, 'Under this law, who can come to my door and what can they do? What are their powers? What kind of training will they have? If I have a child here who is suffering from a lot of trauma and out of control, what can they do in that situation?'

What training will they have? Will they know about trauma and cultural safety? When we make laws in this Chamber, especially laws that we know will impact highly vulnerable people, we need to consider what might happen in every circumstance, not only when everything is going right but also when things go wrong. When the new authorised officers come to Mary's house, everything may be fine, but with no training, code of conduct or requirement to show ID, it may not be.

The Member for Drysdale talked about the need for early de-escalation, and I agree, but with no requirement for training in this, how can we trust that in a potentially volatile situation these new officers will not actually make things worse?

For example, in Mary's case, if an untrained authorised officer arrives to issue a behaviour direction, they may use a confrontational tone, misinterpret a teenager's defensive action as aggression or escalate the situation unnecessarily, causing fear or distress. They may be working with a teenager with anxiety or PTSD without appropriate trauma-informed de-escalation skills. They could put the tenant, their family and the officer at risk.

They may be called to a house with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander tenants who have cultural norms about privacy, authority or family arrangements. We heard that people from across Australia are applying to come to work here, and we welcome people to the Territory, but without appropriate cultural awareness it would be easy to misinterpret this as noncompliance leading to unjustified directions, conflict or escalation. None of this leads to community safety—not for the tenant and not for the public servant.

It would be simple to restore the integrity requirements to these positions, mandate appropriate training—the same training that exists for the current housing officers—and establish a clear code of conduct to protect the tenants and the workers.

Another thing this Bill does is create a huge information-sharing regime between Territory Housing, community housing providers, authorised officers and police. Section 35B allows all these agencies to share information about tenants wherever it may assist in providing a service or exercising a power, which is an incredibly broad test. This covers information regarding NT Housing tenants, recognised occupiers, community housing tenants and anyone subject to behaviour directions or bans.

Clause 14 removes the existing privacy safeguards that protected personal and health information. The regulations that previously required safeguards for sensitive information are now gone. Let me give you a real example of how this might play out. Let us say that Mary's teenage grandson has been struggling with his mental health. He has been seeing a counsellor through a community service. Under this new system, information about his health struggles could be shared between Housing, Police and multiple agencies without specific consent, all because it may assist someone in exercising a power. We need clear definitions of what that means. We must protect everyone in our community.

Information sharing should be allowed when it is necessary and proportionate. Sometimes it is helpful for people not to tell their story over and again and it is helpful for the services working with them. However, 'wherever it may assist' is too broad. It is dangerous and threatens people's privacy. Existing privacy safeguards should be strengthened, not removed.

Under the existing system public housing safety officers have to show identification before exercising their power. Under this Bill there is no requirement for them to do that unless that are expressly asked. If Mary is confused, intimidated or does not know her rights, an authorised officer can exercise power over her without having to prove who they are or what authority they have. Authorised officers should be required to show ID before exercising power; that is basic accountability.

The Surveillance Devices Regulations will now allow body-worn video to be used in Housing compliance processes for banning notices, acceptable behaviour agreements and reviewing antisocial behaviour directions.

Police surveillance technology is now being embedded in tenancy management. The issue is that there is no public guidance on how that footage will be stored, who can access it, how long it will be kept or how it will be used. If Mary wants to know what has happened to that video of her, she has no way of finding out. We need clear, publicly accessible guidelines on body-worn video use in housing contexts, including storage, retention and tenant notifications.

This Bill is the follow-up to the police administration legislation amendment Bill that this government rushed through on urgency last September. I made my views on that Act clear back then. We have heard in this Chamber today that many people in the community were highly concerned about that Act and what impact it would have on our community. Those concerns remain.

If the government genuinely wants to improve safety in public housing, here is what it could do with this Bill. It could restore the integrity requirements, mandate training, require police checks and establish a clear code of conduct. These are basic reasonable safeguards. They exist already and should continue.

The government could narrow the information-sharing provisions. Information sharing should be allowed where it is necessary and proportionate but not wherever there is some broad, vague definition of 'where it may assist', which is subjective, as we heard in our briefing. Existing privacy safeguards should be strengthened, not removed.

Authorised officers should be required to show ID before they exercise any powers. This should be a basic requirement. We need to make sure there are clear guidelines on body-worn video use in Housing contexts. We need to ensure that if there is video of someone, they know where it is, who can access it and what is happening with it.

We also need to make sure there are proper review mechanisms for banning notices and behaviour directions with accessible appeal processes.

If we want to address the issues with public housing and community safety, we must invest in supporting people, not just policing them. Invest in programs that prevent problems before they arise. This includes early intervention for families, mental health support, youth services and culturally safe and trauma-informed programs. Provide tenants with the tools and support they need to thrive, not just the powers to enforce compliance. Work with communities—we heard examples of that—do not impose measures that create fear, confusion or distrust. That is how we build genuine safety for everyone.

When we debate and vote on laws we need to do it for everyone, including people who do not have a voice in this Chamber. The Chief Minister said this morning that she listens to people and then comes to this Chamber to make law; that is our job. We need to listen to everyone, not just the loudest voices or those in positions of power.

We must include the voices of people who are often unheard and the people who are directly affected by decisions yet rarely consulted. We must make sure the laws we pass protect the vulnerable, support the community and respect the dignity of every Territorian, whether they are a public housing tenant or a police officer. We need to make robust strong law that achieves its aims and protects everyone. This Bill, in fact, reduces professional standards. It strips away privacy protections and embeds surveillance into Housing for people who are already vulnerable.

Other people in this Chamber have talked about the demonising of public housing tenants. I echo that and say this to the public housing tenants in my community: I see how hard so many of you work. You are proud of your housing and work to be part of the community and contribute to it, and you are absolutely welcome here. You are also Territorians, the people we are making law for; your voices and your views matter. You deserve privacy and dignity and deserve to be treated and seen as citizens just like everyone else, not subject to surveillance.

Our whole community, everyone, deserves laws that will work for everyone.

I do not support this Bill as drafted.

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister and Minister for Police for bringing forward this Bill. Our government is embarking and delivering on a significant law and order reform to target antisocial behaviour in the Northern Territory.

I pick up on some of the issues that have been raised by those opposite, because these are important issues. There was commentary on all the things we should be doing apart from bringing in police public safety officers. This is always the interesting part that I hear from those opposite—words like, 'Why not fix the problem? Why not deal with the underlying causes? Houses have not been fixed in certain areas.'

All these ideas are coming forward from those opposite, a former government that was in power for eight years. We have now been in government for 14 months and those opposite are suggesting that this government should have fixed every one of those problems in the last 14 months. The reality is they were in government for 19 of the last 24 years.

Look at it this way: from 2016 to 2024 they were in government, and today they are telling us that we should be fixing one problem they did not tackle in the 19 years they were in government. Not only did they not tackle the issue, but coming to government 14 months ago we were left with a debt approaching $15bn. These are the challenges that we have faced over the last 14 months, on top of dealing with a budget blowout by the former government of around $15bn.

It is interesting because those opposite say that we should be repairing houses and doing all these things. We are getting on with the job by working with tenants, remote and urban, doing the repairs and maintenance and managing the tenancies.

The former Labor government members are suggesting all these things that need to be done, but what they are doing is admitting they did not do anywhere near enough to tackle the issues we face today. They left us a $15bn debt and were reckless in the way they spent taxpayers' money during that eight years.

It is important to spell out the opportunities that were missed over the last eight years and the money spent on things that were not needed. Whilst the former Labor government members are saying that there are all these underlying issues that should have been dealt with, at the same time they spent $164m on a bridge on Tiger Brennan Drive. The initial estimates were around $60m, and there was a $100m blowout. That is $100m that could have been committed to tenancy programs or repairs and maintenance, dealing with some of the issues Territorians face.

You only have to walk out the front door of Parliament House and look over to the right to see a building being built that is costing taxpayers about $145m. Labor spent $164m on a bridge and $145m committed to the Civic and State Square redevelopment, which is $310m that could have been put into housing repairs and maintenance and tenancy management.

What those opposite did not want to talk about is that they left us with waiting lists of eight to 10 years for housing and having 12 times the national average of homelessness in Australia. The former Labor government left us with $164m on a bridge, $145m for State Square and close to $13m on a police station at Nightcliff that was manned only between 8 am and 4.21 pm Monday to Friday. That $13m was wasted by the Labor government.

There have been many cases of spending waste over the years, including $35m paid out to youth offenders. Labor kept that secret at the time. Who could forget the $12m on a grandstand at Fannie Bay? These are examples of Labor's failure to spend money where it is needed most, so the criticism from those opposite today is a bit rich, having wasted eight years of opportunities to do something about the housing problem in the Northern Territory.

Labor overspent $14m on Garramilla Boulevard. It spent $432,000 of taxpayers' money to move a bus stop from Cavenagh Street to Smith Street and back again. What could that money have been used for, rather than moving bus stops back and forth in the CBD? There was the $7m budget blowout for the underground/aboveground carpark here at Parliament House. Who could forget the $2.7m spent on the shadeless structure on Cavenagh Street? It is costing about $120,000 per year to look after a shadeless structure, yet the opposition is trying to lecture us about all these things we should fix. The former government left us with a $15bn deficit.

We are going through some of its outrageous expenditure; it spent money on these things rather than commit those funds to fixing housing in the Northern Territory. There was the $4.3m consultancy as a result of Health's COVID response that was referred to ICAC. It spent $80,000 reviewing the shadeless structure on Cavenagh Street. It overspent $2m on the Myilly Point playground. There was a $1m overspend on the demolition of the Chan Building. It spent $220,000 on a renewables targets report which was made public, with every page of that report redacted.

This one is interesting: the previous government had what was called the Boundless Possible tourism strategy. I will give you an example of how Boundless Possible came to finish. In 2018 Labor spent $40,000 advertising Boundless Possible on a rocket that was not even in the Northern Territory; that rocket was launched from Queensland in November 2018 and Boundless Possible was never seen again.

Coming up to Christmas, nobody will forget—the Member for Nelson has never forgotten—the $5,000 spent on a Christmas tree.

We have heard from that side of the Chamber about all the things we should have been fixing in the first 12 months of government, yet Labor governed for 19 of the last 24 years. There was reckless spending. I do not have a calculator in front of me, but we are probably talking close to $300m or $400m of wastage by the former Labor government. That money could have been committed to housing, tenancy management, repairs and maintenance and many of the housing issues we see today.

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Cease the interjections.

Mr EDGINGTON: These interjections generally come when they do not like what they are hearing. This is part of the issue …

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, cease.

Mr EDGINGTON: We know we have hit a nerve in this Chamber from what we hear from the other side. This is a reminder of the amount of money that was wasted, which should have been committed to dealing with proper tenancy management, repairs and maintenance and housing issues. There was wastage after wastage, leaving us with a $15bn debt when we came to government, so it is a bit rich for Labor members to tell us that we should have all these problems fixed in the first 12 months of our government.

The underlying issues were also mentioned. I have spoken about these issues for a long time. What I did not hear from those opposite was one of the underlying issues in the Northern Territory related to health. Not one person over there raised concerns about the fact we are $400m short in the Health budget from the federal Labor government …

Ms Uibo: I told you we were underfunded for Health. Do not lie in here.

Mr EDGINGTON: They want to talk about underlying issues and that is fine, but not one of them …

Ms Uibo: I told you in January.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Let the minister be heard in silence.

Mr EDGINGTON: I know we have hit a nerve over there. They do not want to hear about their failures over 19 of the last 24 years. It was eight years of chaos and confusion under a Labor government between 2016 and 2024. At least two of those members opposite were probably the Housing minister at some point in time. Rather than commit to fixing the issues, they were part of the problem because they left us with a $15bn debt. They wasted $400m on building shadeless structures and bridges, but nowhere near enough money was committed to housing.

There is silence when it comes to dealing with the underlying issues that we see across the Northern Territory, particularly in health. We were $200m short in the National Health Reform Agreement and nearly $200m short for aged care, patient retrieval and primary healthcare. All we hear is silence over there.

Nobody on that side is lobbying to get more money to the Territory to help deal with the underlying issues. It is wastage after wastage. It is high time that those opposite …

Ms Uibo: I was doing your job for you, Minister for Health.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I will put you on a warning if you interject again.

Mr EDGINGTON: Clearly, they are not happy. I know that there have been eight years of failure, but this is the situation we are in. I know the truth hurts, and that is fine. However, we were $400m short and those opposite wasted money which could have been put towards housing. There was $15bn debt. It was failure after failure.

This is an important Bill, but this is just one piece of the puzzle to fix antisocial behaviour in housing. We are trying to tackle all of these issues bit by bit. Having police public safety officers will be part of the overall plan to fix this problem. The Territory has relied on fragmented safety systems that were not keeping pace with the scale or complexity of antisocial and criminal behaviour, and it is no secret that these issues have risen to unacceptable levels over many years.

Liquor inspectors, public housing safety officers and transit officers have converging tasks, similar client interactions and the same patterns of addressing escalating disorder. The PPSO Bill brings these functions into a unified frontline capability within the Northern Territory Police Force, allowing these officers to focus on addressing antisocial behaviour in public housing, on buses and at shopping centres, bottle shops, events and other public places.

The CLP government is delivering our promise to reduce crime and restore our beautiful Territory lifestyle. This reform will see up to 56 officers in the Northern Territory Police Force uniform deployed on the front line by the first quarter of 2026. Public housing tenants who cause repeated disturbances, threaten their neighbours and each other and blatantly disregard community standards with drunken fighting, yelling and noise will be held accountable. Bringing these police public safety officers into the mix will help deal with the issues that we are seeing in the Northern Territory.

This enforcement capability allows the PPSOs to intervene early, deter emerging disorder and restore order in public housing areas when required. It addresses duplication across agencies, confusion around enforcement powers and operational inefficiencies. This Bill strengthens protections by ensuring that individuals who repeatedly compromise safety are met with a coordinated and effective response rather than risk being lost within fragmented enforcement processes. By supporting this Bill, we are backing our Northern Territory Police Force and communities and strengthening a joint safety model that delivers the level of protection that Territorians expect and deserve in housing complexes and public spaces.

As the minister for Housing I have a responsibility to back tenants who do the right thing. We back tenants who do the right thing, but we will not stand by while people do the wrong thing. We need to take action, and that is what we plan to do.

I acknowledge that 90% to 95% of our tenants do the right thing, which the Member for Gwoja spoke about, and I agree. We need to remind ourselves that 90% to 95% of public housing tenants do the right thing and simply want a safe environment like everybody else. They do not want interrupted sleep; they want stability for their families, and this will be reinforced so they feel safe in their own homes and have the confidence to report antisocial behaviour when it occurs.

Territorians were being forced to endure neighbours from hell while the system under the Labor government bent over backwards to accommodate those who repeatedly broke the rules. This Bill and our public housing reform bring trust, authority and responsibility into clear alignment. It ensures community safety is not left to chance and reinforces information sharing that allows for Housing to function effectively for the chief executive officer to meet the obligations as a landlord under the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

Since March 2025 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development has been working hard. I again praise the staff who are on the front line and the staff working in tenancy repairs and maintenance and complaints and inquiries. Everyone on the front line is doing a fantastic job.

Since early this year there have been nine terminations and 76 matters taken to NTCAT, with 58 of these resulting in immediate behaviour change or enforceable tribunal orders. With action now being taken after many years of failure by the former government, our frontline staff are being backed, allowing them to get on with the job and take the actions needed to support tenants across the board. There are 18 cases progressing before NTCAT.

The department continues to work in partnership with the Northern Territory Police and the Attorney-General's Department through the Liquor Licensing division to implement enhanced alcohol restrictions. Historically, the department has supported tenants in applying for alcohol restricted premises declarations for individual tenancies but has not submitted applications as the owner without tenant consent where alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour is evident. I can confirm that four application orders on individual tenancies have been successful regarding restricted premises. Signs have also been erected, and another 23 tenancies have been identified for action.

Ninety-four of the 143 public housing complexes in the urban centres of Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs are restricted and now have 'no alcohol' signs that have been upgraded or erected. In greater Darwin 42 of the 80 complexes are now restricted premises; in Katherine 19 of the 25 are now declared; all nine in Tennant Creek have been declared restricted premises; and in Alice Springs 24 of the 29 complexes have been declared.

This is a massive effort by our frontline staff. I again thank them for the outstanding work they have done, but we are not stopping there because we will continue that work in collaboration with the NT Police and ensure the remaining complexes are also declared restricted premises.

Seventeen public housing complexes have had 'no trespass' signs erected in common areas across greater Darwin to assist with law enforcement and strengthen the powers of frontline officers to move on anyone loitering in those areas.

This government is focused on cracking down on antisocial behaviour and cleaning up the mess Labor left by strengthening policies to fast-track pathways for suitable and successful outcomes for everybody. We are committed to continuing to back our frontline staff by streamlining processes to increase focus on enforcement action and the quality of evidence when it comes to antisocial behaviour.

Policies continue to be reviewed. The termination of tenancy policy has been updated, along with the extended absences policy, rental rebate policies, tenancy damage policy and inspection policies which have all been strengthened. There are a further three to be worked on. Written notices to remedy issues are being utilised to respond to and assist in ceasing antisocial behaviour and contribute to the evidence base required by NTCAT.

We are getting back to basics in housing. We are making sure tenants are doing the right thing. As I said, 90% to 95% of them are. We recognise that and support them. We still have reward programs in place for gardens. The Member for Gwoja touched on those as well. These programs exist. We are rewarding tenants who do the right thing. They are not being forgotten or ignored; we are supporting those tenants, but we are taking action on that small number who are doing the wrong thing.

We are re-establishing ourselves as landlords, not social workers. We are not here to hand out hugs to those who do the wrong thing; we are here to ensure obligations are met in line with the *Residential Tenancies Act*. We are here to make sure that tenants do the right thing and they are complying with the *Residential Tenancies Act* and the *Housing Act*.

As this reform ignites our frontline staff to untangle the weeds of neglect and lack of care for community wellbeing from the former government, it is becoming all too obvious that pre-existing processes and policies

had been sitting in Labor's back pockets, stale and unused. For eight years, it had the resources and powers to take action to address antisocial behaviour in public housing, yet it did not.

I was talked about the eight years of failure under the Labor government. Labor members came here and lectured us about not fixing this or that, but nobody over there wanted to talk about the $15bn debt or the $400m in wastage that I rattled off. Nobody wanted to talk about some of the underlying issues of health funding. Not one person opened their mouth and said, 'Yes, we need to deal with the underlying issues and get $400m into the health system and tackle all of these issues'. Did you hear anything like that? Of course not, because they do not want to deal with the real issues—eight years of failure and wastage under that previous government.

I thank our public housing safety officers who are on the ground every day. As we move through the transition to PPSOs they have continued to give 100% every day. The Members for Drysdale and Blain have been on the front line with the public housing safety officers and police, and they have seen the great work they are doing. We support that.

We want to strengthen that through the police public safety officers to ensure the people on the ground are dealing with the issues they face every night of the week. We want them to have the powers they need to get on with the job and do what is necessary to bring public order back into line where it should be in suburbs around the Northern Territory.

We have increased our joint safety patrols with police and partner agencies across the greater Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs areas to enforce alcohol controls, break up disruptive behaviour and reset community expectations. The public housing safety officers are providing support to tenants in need, consoling victims, mitigating disruptive behaviour and continuing to play a critical role in keeping our community safe.

I look forward to a consistent operating model across the Territory and I am confident that the police administration amendment Bill will continue to reduce crime in our community and restore our Territory lifestyle.

In closing, I thank the Chief Minister—the Minister for Police—for bringing forward this Bill. This is an important step forward for all Territorians. I do not underestimate that because we will have police public safety officers taking on the critical role of looking after public housing and some of the issues we see constantly on the public bus service, assisting with alcohol problems in public places. This is what the Territory needs to tackles these issues firsthand.

This legislation is introducing these positions in the Territory to take the action that is needed. They will have the powers that are needed. That is what we need to see in the Territory. We are here to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. This legislation takes us one step forward to achieving that.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister)(in reply): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank all the members who contributed to debate. It is a flagship, signature piece of reform to policing—the biggest reform we have seen in policing in a long time. This restructure of how we do business and the changing of those ranks will allow police to deploy efficiently to deal with antisocial behaviour.

I am gobsmacked that Labor and the Independent members will not be supporting this, yet Labor created roles for public servants to have qualified police powers without the police framework we have, to put themselves into dangerous situations without a framework that supported them to do the job they had been given.

Our transit and public housing safety officers are incredible and have done an amazing job. Labor continued to walk in and out of this parliament—I watched it for nearly a decade—tinkering with their power. The last iteration was giving them OC spray, and even that was bungled.

We are fixing this once and for all. This is a proper solution. I take great exception to the Opposition Leader running down our police through her media release earlier today, where she denigrated the role that is highly effective in Victoria, South Australia and in the Australian Federal Police. No, the Opposition Leader thinks she knows better than entire police forces around the country and is running them down. It is shameful. What those opposite are trying to paint in their desperate attempts to score political ground and scaremonger is that we are giving transit safety officers a gun and one to old mate down the street.

It is disgusting, untrue and dangerous. It is dangerous public messaging and people in this parliament should know better than to scaremonger.

Members interjecting.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Opposition Leader, you are looking at me now. Open your ears and hear this: our police public safety officers will be the best-trained police public safety officers in this country, with 18 weeks of training which trumps every other jurisdiction which has them. It will leave them for dead.

That is why we are making this reform, because you would rather send public servants without the framework and the training onto our buses and into public housing without the powers to do their jobs. We are giving them an opportunity to be upskilled and trained to the highest level in the country and you diminish and condemn them. Shame on you!

The Opposition Leader is not committed to law and order at all. How many times has this opposition and those Independent members walked into this parliament and told us we were failing on crime when we delivered an 8.3% reduction? How many times have they voted with us? Nowhere near enough.

Next time you are on radio and talking to Katie Woolf having a whinge to the public about what we have done, you should look at yourself in the mirror, Opposition Leader, because you have not voted enough to support the reform that Territorians elected 17 CLP members to deliver. The four of you are sitting over there because you were not listening. You completely lost control of the system. You failed to back our police. In fact, it was worse than not backing our police …

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Chief Minister!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: … you walked away from them and turned your back on them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We will cease the interjections, and the Chief Minister will be heard in silence. Chief Minister, please direct your comments through the Chair.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I will happily direct my comments through the Chair because I know that you care very much about this issue. I am highlighting the absolute hypocrisy.

Opposition Leader, I do not know who is advising you on the fourth floor, but you might want to have a good hard think over Christmas about shuffling that around because this week you have attacked our public servants and the cyclone response—we have 220 homes left to turn on power for days after the cyclone hit—and are scrambling left, right and centre to try to score a point.

Now the hill you want to die on is with our police. Give me a break. Have an independent thought. Tell your staffers to have a good sleep over Christmas and come back with some fresh ideas, because this is ridiculous. If you think you know better than the Victorian Police Force, the South Australian Police Force, the AFP and the Northern Territory Police Force, you are dreaming.

We are proud to deliver this reform. I will say this clearly to the Territorians listening. Our police public safety officers will have 18 weeks of training. Other PPSO models around the country have something like 12 weeks. Ours will be far better trained. We are not just giving guns to public servants to walk around on the bus; we are training a new stream of police officer. These are police officers, people who swear an oath and allegiance to the people of the Northern Territory to serve and protect them above their own safety, to leave their family every day and put on that blue uniform to protect us.

You want to criticise by press release, the cheapest form of politics out. It is a shame on you.

I applaud the members of my team who see the importance of this. How many of your constituents have come to you and said that housing is a huge issue? For that small portion of people who do the wrong thing and cause so much misery and grief to their family, neighbours, friends and communities, this will empower highly trained police officers to manage that better and make sure that when our children are catching the bus, they are safe. Is that too much to ask the opposition to support?

This will make sure that our constables are focusing on domestic and family violence, crime and criminal investigation work. It means we will see our police public safety officers in the mall, down the street and at public events and bottle shops in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. They can be out there in the

community while our constables are doing the investigative work, responding to crimes through the 000 centre.

That makes a lot of sense to me. I cannot understand for the life of me what is wrong with this opposition and why it is so against our police. I should not be surprised because the former government treated police like rubbish for nearly a decade. I thought that would have changed now that Labor is in opposition; it has not.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

I cannot wait to get into consideration in detail. I hope you ask me 10 questions on every clause because this is worth fighting for. This is real reform to drive down crime; we back it every day of the week.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 2:

Ms UIBO: When will this commence? Will it commence only once the operational matters are in place? The consent agreement and the training schedule are the main focus of the question.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, it will not have to wait for anything to commence; it will just be a matter for the Administrator.

Ms UIBO: Will the commencement provide a training schedule to the Administrator before gazettal?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No.

Ms UIBO: What length of training will be provided after the signature from the Administrator?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is not part of this clause, but I made it clear in my summation that it would be 18 weeks' training, which is far more training than any other protective services officer gets in this country.

Ms UIBO: Has there been any assessment regarding the training schedule prior to the assent?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is not relevant to the clause.

Ms UIBO: Can you confirm that the 18 weeks of training will include all three positions of the PPSOs that are combined—the police officer, transit officer and housing roles?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We are on clause 2, Commencement.

Ms UIBO: Will those positions automatically become PPSOs once the Administrator gives assent or is there a time from the commencement that those positions in housing or transit or new police recruits will then become PPSOs?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I am not sure how to say this any simpler: no-one is automatically becoming something. They have to do 18 weeks' training. This Bill will commence, we will settle the EBA, we will put out an advertisement for PPSOs and people will apply. We will then vet them and make sure they meet the criteria. They will then commence 18 weeks' gruelling, rigorous training at the police college and if they pass, they graduate. They will be a PPSO and we will give them the full equipment that you would expect a police officer to carry, as they do right now.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Ms UIBO: When will this become operational and what transition arrangements are being made?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This clause says that it amends the *Housing Act*. Do you have a question about why it amends the *Housing Act*?

Ms UIBO: We do not know when the commencement is, so when will it become operational? Does it rely on the Administrator to sign before that can become operational?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I answered that in clause 2. It is not a question for clause 3, and I have dealt with this in all my commentary about how this works. If you were not listening, you are not doing your job, and that is not my problem.

Ms UIBO: We do not need to get nasty because we are actually looking at the Bill clause by clause. This is the opportunity for any member of the parliament, whether the Chief Minister likes it or not, to look at it in detail, hence the name 'consideration in detail'. If you do not want to answer because you are cranky that we are asking questions and doing our job, that is up to you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will just remind everyone that for consideration in detail, you must ask questions to the relevant clause.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 109; I note that during each question that the time allowed is 10 minutes, so we can make statements before we put a question. The time should be going when the Leader of the Opposition is talking about whatever. She is allowed 10 minutes to speak and then put a question. She can say what she wants within that and then put a question, as long as the time is going.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will say again that the questions need to be directed to the particular clause, so take a seat.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Just for clarity, I am here to answer questions. This is clause 3, and it says, for those playing along at home, 'This division amends the *Housing Act 1982*'.

If you have a question about that, I am happy to take it, but I think it is self-explanatory.

Ms UIBO: Thank you. I did not think you were happy to take it. The question was: when will this become operational? You cannot give me a gazettal date or the signature of the Administrator, so that is the question. When will this transition from that component of that legislation then come into effect after this legislation, which is non-existent yet because the Administrator has not signed it? When will that component become active? When will it become operational? That is the question.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Leader of the Opposition, I say again that is not a question for this clause. For the hundredth time for you, we cannot have PPSOs operational until they have completed 18 weeks of training.

Just so you know, in case you want to keep peddling this ridiculous, destructive narrative in the community, South Australians get 13 weeks' training; Victorians get 12 weeks' training; Queenslanders get six weeks' training; and the Australian Federal Police get 15 weeks' training. For the last time, no-one is just becoming a PPSO. They must do 18 weeks' training, then they will graduate—if they pass—and then they will be operational.

Ms UIBO: To clarify, does that mean the *Housing Act* Division comes into effect once the training squad graduates, or does it come into effect once this Bill is assented to?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The transitional provisions are much further down in the Act. You can ask that in the transitional provisions section, but like any Act, there are transitional provisions.

Ms UIBO: You could have just said that at the start.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Ms UIBO: Why has the bar been lowered on the disqualifying offence?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It is because there will not be the PHSOs (housing officers) in the format anymore. There does not need to be a disqualifying offence for them because they are not undertaking that role. Once people come across and have done the 18 weeks' training, they will come under the *Police Administration Act 1978*. It is just a different system.

Ms UIBO: In regard to the disqualifying offences, to become a public housing safety officer (PHSO) could this be overlooked through the police vetting system? Criminal history has to be disclosed to a panel, which decides whether they are factored in or not. Is this in line with normal recruitment processes in the police force?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The vetting of police is much higher than public housing safety officers.

Ms UIBO: Even though the new positions will be police public safety officers, they are set at a lower bar than what our armed police are, even though these new officers will also be armed.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No. I am truly not sure how you interpreted that from what I just said. You asked me why the disqualifying offence is gone. I said because the public housing safety officer role is being effectively disbanded. There will be authorised officers and police public safety officers. The criteria and vetting of any police officer, including our police public safety officers, is much higher than the threshold was for public housing safety officers. The rigour of who can become one is much stronger.

Ms UIBO: Who can become an authorised officer?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is not this section. It is clear that authorised officer means a person appointed under section 28Q, which we will get to. An authorised officer is the person doing housing compliance and management.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

J DAVIS: Forgive me if this is not the correct clause. Can I confirm that this clause is in relation to the creation, appointment of power, identification and limits for authorised officers? Is that correct?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We are about to do Part 5, which changes some headings. We will then go into Part 7, and different clauses under that have the appointment of authorised officers, identity cards and return of identity card.

J DAVIS: I will wait for Part 7.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Within clause 5 is that section.

J DAVIS: I want Part 7, clause 5. Is that correct?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Are you talking about section 28Q, for example?

J DAVIS: Yes. Can you identify whether this clause allows for the contracting of private security staff and contractors?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, because they must be under PSEMA. They must be a public sector employee.

J DAVIS: There are no plans to hire, for example, G4S staff under this scheme?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 7:

Ms UIBO: In regard to section 28Y(1) this has not been amended and still refers to public housing safety officers exercising powers. Should this have been amended to say ‘authorised officers’ and not police officers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Sorry, where are you reading from, Opposition Leader—section 28YA?

Ms UIBO: Clause 7, section 28Y(1).

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It is definitely not that, Opposition Leader. In the Schedule it shows that the words 'public housing safety officer' have been changed to 'police officer'. It is on page 33.

Ms UIBO: What information will tenants be given about the powers of a PPSO in exercising their rights as the transfer occurs?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This will be a new tier of police. We will do normal public communications around that. When there are new laws there is lots of information about it. For example, when we created nuisance public drinking laws and changed bail laws, we ran a campaign about it, but there is no specific notification.

Public housing tenants will still receive their contact points through the department of Housing. If public housing tenants are causing a major disturbance requiring PPSOs to attend, the PPSOs will deal with it like how police can rock up to any public housing house and not have to make a grand announcement about being there; they are the police.

In terms of everyday interactions and tenancy management, that is done by the authorised officers, but in terms of antisocial behaviour and criminal response, that would be PPSOs.

Ms UIBO: Will the powers of the PPSOs extend to being able to enter someone's premises similar to a constable?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Exactly the same as police.

Ms UIBO: What authority will they have? Will it be under their position or will they need delegation?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Every police officer has an instrument of appointment and that dictates the powers and responsibilities they have.

Ms UIBO: What notice would tenants be given about the presence of an authorised officer or police officer in either a housing complex, if talking about common space and premises, or an individual unit, as an example?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: For the PPSOs, none, because police can arrive and respond as they do in any situation. There will not be notice about that. For an authorised officer, I cannot imagine it would change from how Housing deals with it now. The *Residential Tenancies Act* applies, so however people's tenancies are being managed will continue.

Ms UIBO: Regarding this clause, when talking about the premises specified in the agreement, the sentence relates to community housing providers. Will there need to be a MOU with the providers and the government with the premises?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No. Police just need to be police, which is what we want them to do.

Ms UIBO: Will the PPSOs be able to enter private premises?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: If their powers determine that they need to, absolutely.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 9:

Ms UIBO: How will this information in terms of sharing provision be monitored?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: How will the information sharing be monitored, did you say?

Ms UIBO: Provision be monitored.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We have an Information Commissioner, so I imagine they have a role to play, but there are the usual protections under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. That governs that tenancy and information relationship, but if there are complaints about PPSOs, for example, it would go through normal channels like the Ombudsman.

Ms UIBO: Who signs off on whether information can be shared in regard to which rank of police and what level in the department of Housing with tenancy agreements et cetera?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It depends on what is required at the time. There is provision under section 35C about the disclosure of any information. This is just interagency information sharing to ensure people have the right level of information to respond accordingly.

Ms UIBO: Will the person who is the subject of the information sharing be made aware their information is being shared across agencies?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, not necessarily.

Ms UIBO: Will there be any guiding framework or guidelines about the use of that information?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Let me give you an example. If a police public safety officer has arrived and an interaction has occurred that requires follow-up, the PPSOs will give that to the authorised officer in Housing so that Housing can do the tenancy management follow-ups and all of that support.

It might be that it was visitors undertaking significant disturbance, antisocial behaviour or fighting in the middle of the street. The PPSOs arrive, they deal with the issue. They then pass that information on to the authorised officers who are working 9-to-5 government jobs. They then will be out contacting the tenant, for example, to ask, 'Do you need support with your visitor management?', which happens a lot.

I have talked in this parliament previously about an older lady in my electorate, when I was the Member for Drysdale, whose home was continuously being trashed by her visitors. She was powerless to do anything about it and she came to me and asked what we could do. We reinforced her door, put security screens on her windows and tidied up her place and made it all secure. This was more than 10 years ago, but Housing at that time provided her with all the tools and support to manage her visitors, who were causing her as much grief, if not more grief, than the neighbourhood.

There is plenty of good work Housing could do, and the staff need to be able to share that information to do that work.

Ms UIBO: What reporting requirements will there be across agency information sharing?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: None.

J DAVIS: Are there any limits on what information can be shared?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: There is criteria in 35B, so it has to meet all of those criteria set out in the section.

J DAVIS: Confirming that, as long as it meets those limits, can sharing information happen without the person's consent?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Correct.

J DAVIS: Solely because they are a public housing tenant, will they not need to give consent? This would not apply to someone like me, for example, in my house.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It is a public housing response by authorities, so, no, it would not apply to your house. Let me put it a different way. I think both of you are getting hung up on this idea that someone should consent to their information being shared.

In regard to domestic and family violence, for example, Children and Families and a range of other parts of government share information to either keep people safe or make sure the right referrals happen. For example, even within police and Circuit Breaker—I am looking to the Minister for Children and Families—if police find young children who are not breaking the law but should not be on the street at 2 am, they are sharing that information with Circuit Breaker staff so they can provide an important response.

This is standard practice across government, within the limits of the law, obviously. I wanted to provide that broader context for you.

J DAVIS: If this information is stored somewhere and its privacy is breached or leaked, who will liable?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Section 35C is a restriction on use or disclosure of information. As I said, the *Residential Tenancies Act*, the Information Commissioner and the Ombudsman are all mechanisms that have a role to play.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 12, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 13:

Ms UIBO: Is this a watering down of the requirements, when looking at anything prescribed, regarding disqualifying offences for PHSOs currently who are unable to become a PPSO? Are they only required to disclose past offences which are then considered by a panel?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I will explain this again. The role of the public housing officer will be changed. That role will not be recruited to anymore. It is not an ongoing role. They will be authorised officers, in which case they have specific powers in this Act, or they will have met the criteria and be in the training college and off on their way to become a police public safety officer. This idea of disqualifying offence is redundant.

Ms UIBO: Through the work we have done in opposition—whenever the PPSO positions come into effect—we understand that the PHSOs will be in existence until December 2026, so that is what we are trying to understand. Will the PHSOs still be available while the PPSOs are being introduced, trained, graduated and then out in the field? We understand that the transit officers as well as the PHSOs will still exist until this time next year.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: There are transitional provisions. Even if this is assented to tomorrow, which it will not be, there is no possibility. We are at a minimum of 18 weeks, but in reality it is much further away than that, so we are months away from graduated PPSOs being on the ground. Of course, our PHSOs and our transit safety officers will continue on with that work, and that is in the transitional provisions.

Ms UIBO: I understand there will be a transition, and I appreciate that, because there are people who are unsure of what their position will be this time next year. With the disqualifying offences for a PHSO, just say it sits at a bar level—the concern we have heard is that because it is attached to those positions, the removal of the PHSO position and the disqualifying offences means that the PPSO role creates a new position not attached to disqualifying offences. Essentially, does it lower the bar? That is the question we have been asked to raise with you.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We are not hiring more of those two roles, and the transitional provision says that if you are a transit safety officer or a housing safety officer you will become an authorised officer. That is just a shift in language and treatment in the Act which makes the disqualifying offence redundant, because if you are a PHSO or a transit officer you are becoming an authorised officer. There is no recruitment to that role; you become that. If you are a PPSO that is a whole other story.

Ms UIBO: Thank you for that clarification, because with that transition—which is why I asked when it commences—the new authorised officers, who are a pool of PHSOs and transit officers, were recruited under the criteria that had disqualifying offences. The concern raised with us is that the new PPSOs rather than having the same level of scrutiny with the criteria that they are eligible for with the disqualifying offences—having that removed then lowers the bar of who can apply for that position, which sounds like it will be an important position; there is no doubt about that. The disqualifying offences being removed from that means your authorised officers are at a higher bar level with the criteria that they were recruited to versus the PPSOs.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It is the opposite of that. Even with the disqualifying offence, that it is a lower bar than what we will recruit the PPSOs at. All our PHSOs in Housing have been employed at a lower—the criteria is lower for Housing and Transit than PPSOs. Those roles will go sideways to authorised officers. If those people want to be PPSOs, they have to meet that criteria.

Ms UIBO: We were worried after the briefing last week that the disqualifying offences being removed meant that if you had failed to become a PHSO or a transit officer, you could then apply to be a PPSO with no barrier of having a disqualifying offence.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Nothing stops people from applying, but if they could not meet that threshold they will not meet PPSO threshold.

Ms UIBO: Is there a determination of a threshold that has been set or will that come after commencement?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is an operational matter for the Police Commissioner.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clause 14:

Ms UIBO: Why has regulation 5C(3) been removed and how is this relevant to the intent of the Bill?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That has been removed under regulation 5C, Concurrent leases, because it would be at odds with the information-sharing provision that we talked about.

Ms UIBO: To be clear, that relates to the Housing department's chief executive officer authorising any procedures regarding unauthorised access and modification or disclosures of information.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It removed subregulation (3) which said:

> *The Chief Executive Officer (Housing) must not provide any personal information or health information about a tenant of the premises to the community housing provider unless satisfied the provider has procedures in place to protect the information from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.*

Then subregulation (5) is removed because it said, 'In this regulation', then defined 'health information' and 'personal information'. This has been superseded by our information-sharing provisions.

Ms UIBO: With the removal of those two subregulations, when the clause specifically mentioned removal regarding the community housing provider, does that extend past the NTG as a community housing provider, as in the community housing associations providing public housing? Would it also cover them under that banner?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This was how it operated before. It will not operate like that anymore.

Ms UIBO: As an example, if we have a non-government community housing provider—for example, Venture Housing, Mission Australia or St Vincent de Paul—does this removal also cover them so that they can share information with government agencies?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This says that the CEO could, under certain circumstances. It was in the regs; we have put it into the Act so they still can—again under those criteria we went through earlier. It is in the Act as opposed to being in the regulations.

Ms UIBO: Sorry. Does it cover the non-government providers of housing?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes.

Clause 14 agreed to.

Clauses 15 and 16, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 17:

Ms UIBO: Under what circumstances would an infringement notice be withdrawn?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That would be up to the discretion of the CEO. It might be that there was just an error, or that there was a complaint and it was reviewed and determined not to have met the expectation.

Ms UIBO: Does that mean the change—it was originally the CEO of Housing—that power then goes across to the Commissioner of Police, who could withdraw the infringement notice?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes.

Clause 17 agreed to.

Clause 18:

Ms UIBO: Why are there no disqualifying offences for PPSOs who will be doing the job of PHSOs, who were subject to the disqualifying offence clause?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: With respect, I have answered this several times.

Ms UIBO: Will authorised officers be required to provide an offence history?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: They are literally having a change of title.

Ms UIBO: In the transition period if there is a change of circumstances, would they still, in transitioning to an authorised officer, have to provide their offence history?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We are not making PHSOs reapply to be authorised officers. They will literally stop being called 'transit safety officer' and be called 'authorised officer', pursuant to the Act. There is no re-testing. They have obligations to disclose to their employer if they have a fresh criminal history whilst being a public servant; that is a different matter. They will already be our employees. We are not employing more of them, so there is no process to go through. They are just no longer performing the role with that title; they are moving to a different role. The functions are changing.

Sorry, let me make a correction. The housing officers will be the authorised officers. The transit officer will remain a transit officer. It is just a language clarification, because transit officers will not be managing tenancies; housing officers will. I bundled that together.

Ms UIBO: Is there a transit authorised officer and a housing authorised officer?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Transit will not need an authorised officer because there is no step down from PPSO in the transit role. There will not be another public servant doing any of that role, but for housing …

Ms UIBO: For a housing authorised officer …

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes, because there are two clear housing roles; there is tenancy management and support—I mentioned the lady I helped many years ago—and there is the functional antisocial behaviour and criminal response. That is why we need two.

Clause 18 agreed to.

Clauses 19 and 20, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 21:

Ms UIBO: Why do the disqualifying offences apply to security officers and bus drivers but not PPSOs?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is because it will be a police recruitment process.

Ms UIBO: Under what circumstances would a security officer or bus driver be issued with a suspension notice?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It will be whatever is currently in the Act. We are not changing the rules for bus drivers or any of those other things; we are reforming the roles. Instead of having public servants on buses and in Housing, we are making them police with the exception of tenancy management staying with Housing.

Ms UIBO: How long can a suspension apply to those two roles?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This is not about bus drivers. Any question you have about the status quo is the status quo if you are asking a question about police or housing.

Ms UIBO: I refer to clause 21(2)(b), which says:

> *If the Director suspends an ex officio transit officer who is a security officer or bus driver under section 10(2), the security officer or bus driver is not authorised to exercise powers as a transit officer while the suspension is in place …*

Is that applicable? How long could a suspension be in place?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: If bus drivers and security guards who have those ex officio powers as transit officers are suspended by the director for whatever reason and for however long, they do not have those powers anymore. While they are at work and fulfilling that role and exercising their ex officio powers that is fine, but if they were to be suspended their powers would stop.

Ms UIBO: Is there no limit on how long their suspension could apply?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We have not changed that. The director deals with that.

Ms UIBO: Is additional training or education available for a suspended bus driver or security officer to resolve their suspension?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: They will not get PPSO powers, so nothing changes there. A bus driver will not be able to ex officio be a PPSO, for example.

Ms UIBO: Will there be an internal process for that, which is operational?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes.

Ms UIBO: In the transition period with the first PPSOs, is there a process for bus drivers to be trained as transit officers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It is not relevant to the Bill. However, Transport was doing it before and I imagine will continue.

Ms UIBO: Has the union been consulted about the changes for those ex officio roles?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: There is not much change but, yes, the NTPA—I am not quite up on my union lingo, not being a Labor member—and CPSU unions have been consulted.

Ms UIBO: You are doing well; there is also the Transport Workers' Union (TWU). Have they been consulted as the third and relevant union?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I will take your word for it. TWU might have been—it was not listed in my notes—but I can confirm the two I mentioned.

Ms UIBO: Regarding the security guard positions, will they remain once this Act is gazetted?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: These ex officio roles will remain.

J DAVIS: Will authorised officers operate on buses alongside transit safety officers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No.

Clause 21 agreed to.

Clause 22:

Ms UIBO: Can you confirm that transit officers will continue to exist under the new arrangements for the transitional phase?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: For as long as people are happy to do it; if they all decide to become PPSOs they would attend the training course, and we would provide alternative arrangements. If half did not want to and they stay on, then they will stay in that role.

Ms UIBO: Would that be until the end of next year, as the final date that the positions will exist, while the training for the PPSOs is undertaken?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is an HR operational matter. We are dealing with people's lives and livelihoods; it is easy to talk in parliament about this mechanically, but at the end of the day these are people's jobs, futures

and lives. I will not comment on the change management; it has been happening and will continue as the process unfolds.

Ms UIBO: I agree with you, which is why I asked the question—to try to give people certainty when they are unsure of the standard process once the legislation commences.

Regarding the PPSOs, similar to the Member for Johnston's question, in the transition period will there be nothing stopping people from working in their existing positions and, once the PPSOs start, working side by side until the end of next year when the changes of positions culminates under one department?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: We are focusing on business continuity, and that will be managed.

Clause 22 agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 25, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 26:

Ms UIBO: What restraints can transit officers use and in what circumstances?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Whatever powers transit officers have that you gave them is what they have.

Ms UIBO: Will there be no changes to the criteria for the positions—for the PPSOs?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: PPSOs are different. PPSOs will have different powers. All the training, commensurate with whatever powers they have, will be delivered through the police college. If there are people who do not want to become PPSOs and they stay on as transit officers, they will just have the transit officer level of power.

Ms UIBO: Thank you for the clarity. Will there remain in place the ability to use OC spray and restraints under their current role?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes.

Clause 26 agreed to.

Clause 27:

Ms UIBO: What training will PPSOs have in regard to reasonable force?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This is about transit officers; it is not about the PPSOs. What we are going through now is basically the existing powers and any small changes we have had to make, for transit officers only. It is not about the PPSOs.

PPSOs will have all of the training. For example, if they need dangerous driving training because they will be driving vehicles, that will be delivered through the college, like we do with constables. Weapons training will be through the college, as will defensive tactics, legislation—all those things. If people get through the rigorous process to become a recruit in the PPSO squad, then they will go through all the rigorous training to have whatever powers and gear they need. That is different from people who are transit officers today and will be transit officers tomorrow and in six months. Their powers stay as written in the Act.

Clause 27 agreed to.

Clause 28:

Ms UIBO: How does this differ from current provisions for the use of force by a transit officer?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Again, this is about transit officers. This is not about PPSOs.

I do not know why those opposite are getting hung up on this. Right now there could be a police officer on a bus and that police officer will have a baton, handcuffs, a gun, pepper spray and a whole range of other things on them because that is what police have. They will be able to exercise police powers because they are police.

I would bet money that there is a cop right now at some public housing establishment. They would be standing there with their vest, bodycam—the whole works. It is the same as that; there is no difference. Whatever powers PPSOs are given under the instrument of appointment and how they are to use them will be done by the Police Commissioner. Any powers they have, they must be trained to use through the college.

What they will do has nothing to do with what transit officers do. It will not change anything for a transit officer.

Ms UIBO: Obviously, the process of this legislation has some flow-on effects. We have been asked lots of questions about a position that does not exist yet. We do not know what the criteria are, and it is half the length of training compared with that for a constable. There are police officers on buses and serving out in the community, including in public housing complexes, but we do not understand the powers of the PPSOs, so we are trying to get some of those answers for community members who have asked us.

It is hard to scrutinise a Bill when we do not have the criteria for the new PPSOs and how their powers will function because those powers have not yet been determined. I am trying to get an understanding, because there has been a direction of government, to get the level of detail to provide the community. We cannot do that because you do not have the process set out in the Bill's clauses.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This is how it is done. You are failing to understand that we made the amendments to the *Police Administration Act* last sittings and they will be police. It does not get higher than that. You can be a security guard, a housing officer or a transit officer and then you can be a police officer, which is a different ball game. Our officers will be trained for 18 weeks, which is weeks longer than in other jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions have hundreds of these. When I spoke to the Victorian Police Association it was begging its government to recruit more of these officers because they are beneficial.

They will be fully equipped police. They will look similar to a police officer. There will be some changes to the uniform so that people can see the difference, a bit like for an auxiliary. If you walked past an auxiliary now, you probably would not realise it. There are auxiliaries who have guns and some who do not, and there are JESCC auxiliaries and watch house auxiliaries; there are all sorts of different auxiliaries. This will streamline that.

We will have JESCC auxiliaries who answer the 000 calls, and over time there will be the PPSO stream. PPSOs will have all the gear and powers that police have. The difference is that the use of their powers will be in limited circumstances. That will free up our fully sworn constables to do the serious business. It is all serious business, but if you attend a DV callout you will be there for hours. That is rightly so—I am not criticising that—but the volume of calls and the demand on our constables keep them busy for long periods because they are doing sophisticated work.

Let us say there is a van on the street with two police. Those officers are walking up and down Mitchell Street but then all hell breaks loose on the Esplanade and they go to deal with that, which will tie them up for hours. Who is on Mitchell Street? There is no-one. That is where this delineation happens, whereby PPSOs can be out on Mitchell Street, doing proactive work and managing issues if and when they arise while our police are dealing with the pointy-end stuff.

Ms UIBO: The section titled 'Director to manage use of force' will not apply to an ex officio transit officer who is a police officer. They will have their stream of training through the college, but a current transit safety officer would still be under the directorship of their department rather than the police force.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is correct.

Clause 28 agreed to.

Clause 29:

Ms UIBO: What training do transit officers receive in the search and seizure of dangerous articles?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That would be a question for the Transport minister. It is detailed in section 28 of the Act. It is not the focus of the Bill. The Bill makes a small change to subsection (7), but subsections (1) to (6) in the Act outline it all.

Ms UIBO: Would storage of the dangerous articles be managed by the transit officers or would that move across to PPSO powers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Subsection (7) will say that they must hand over any dangerous article seized in the course of a search to the police officer. It used to say 'member of the Police Force', but we are changing it to 'police officer'.

Clause 29 agreed to.

Clause 30:

Ms UIBO: Are banning notices issued now or is this new?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Now.

Ms UIBO: How many banning notices have been issued in the past year?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Hopefully plenty.

Ms UIBO: Do you have a figure?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, because this is a Bill. Transit officers are not my people; they are Transport people. Police are my people and I can tell you that we are handing out BDOs like there is no tomorrow. Hopefully the transit guys have been doing the same thing.

Ms UIBO: How is the banning notice issued?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It says in section 28A that they may issue a banning notice if the officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person engaged in offensive, threatening, violent or disorderly conduct at a bus stop, on a bus, in a bus zone or the vicinity of a bus station. This was part of what made life for transit officers so difficult; their jurisdiction was excruciatingly narrow. If someone was one metre off the path at the bus stop, was that in or was that out?

It goes on to say that the notice can be issued if someone damaged a bus, a transit safety vehicle, a bus stop, a bus station or property on a bus. It is clearly listed there.

Ms UIBO: In terms of the enforcement powers for the ex officio transit officers, would they still report through Infrastructure and Logistics or would they report to the police force?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Still to the director.

Ms UIBO: In terms of the bus drivers, obviously they are through their own employer as well. If there is an issue of a ban notice, would that then be shared with the police?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No. Transit and ex officio transit officers can already ban people. If someone is swearing at the bus driver or other passengers, our transit officers can ban them from the bus, and rightly so. It is disgraceful behaviour.

This will allow our PPSOs to do the same thing, because it is a specific power for transit officers. This is actually giving police the power to do what transit officers can do.

Clause 30 agreed to.

Clause 31:

Ms UIBO: How do the officers inform the person?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I think they walk straight up to them and say, 'Hey, mate, that is totally unacceptable behaviour. Here is your bloody banning notice. Now, get off the bus.'

Ms UIBO: If it is likely that the person is in a heightened state and the bus driver is waiting for a PPSO or other support, how will they be trained to manage their safety and the safety of passengers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: They have already been trained. We are not hiring new transit officers. They will just keep doing it.

Clause 31 agreed to.

Clause 32:

Ms UIBO: At this point what effort has been made to connect the person to the services they may need, such as mental health or AOD services?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Sorry, are you asking whether they have to do that?

Ms UIBO: Is this a pathway?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I doubt it very much. I think it is a pathway off the bus. That is what happens when you get banned; you get a pathway—do not pass go, do not collect $200 and get off the bus. That is what a banning notice is. Whether they go the extra mile and refer them to some other service will probably be a matter for the individual, but it is not a requirement.

Ms UIBO: I am conscious that alcohol legislation is being brought in on urgency to allow for extra time for referrals. I ask the question because we are talking about managing bad behaviour and safety in the community.

Does this have the potential to create, again, the two-tier system—that has been raised as a concern—in this legislation in regard to PPSOs and their powers versus the ex officio powers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, because that already exists. There are already transit officers and ex officio transit officers. We are saying that police officers can have the same powers that transit officers have. Transit officers will keep doing what they do. PPSOs will come in and do what they do. It is clear cut.

Clause 32 agreed to.

Clause 33:

Ms UIBO: Is there a likelihood that this will create risky behaviour and situations for bus drivers to deal with who must deny someone entry to a bus because of the banning notice?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Opposition Leader, I am pretty confident you were the minister who brought this in. At section 28D, the only thing we have changed is in subsection (5), where we changed the words ‘a transit officer’ to ‘an issuing officer’. These are all powers and laws that were under Labor, and I think you were the minister. We are not changing that; it is already there. I changed three words from ‘a transit officer’ to ‘an issuing officer’. That is it.

Ms UIBO: Is there any recourse if someone contests a banning notice?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I think there is in another section, but that is not what we are changing in the Bill. That is not what this Bill does; it is what your Bill did, which is the Bill you are talking about. You could have asked yourself these questions when you were minister. Obviously you did not, but if someone wants to challenge a banning notice, they can go their hardest. There are provisions for it, which has nothing to do with the Bill.

Clause 33 agreed to.

Clause 34:

Ms UIBO: Can you step through the process in regard to the director, delegate and the powers and sections for the issuing officer?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: None of that is changing. Again, in this clause, the only thing we change is ‘transit’ to ‘issuing’. All of that is set out clearly. They can write and state the reasons for variation—blah, blah, blah. It is all there. None of that is changing except the word ‘transit’ to the word ‘issuing’ in subsection (6).

Ms UIBO: Is there decision-making in regard to someone having a banning notice varied or revoked?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Of course someone would have to make that decision. It is the director, and it says it in the section.

Ms UIBO: Does the individual have to apply for this?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I could almost guarantee the director is not waking up and thinking, 'I wonder whether Mary wants her banning notice revoked. I might do that today because I really feel like it.' Yes. Mary would have to make a submission and say she believes it should be revoked for whatever reason. Again, it is all irrelevant. If you have a question on why we changed the word 'transit' to 'issuing' I can explain that, but otherwise this is the current law. Yesterday, the day before, the week before, the year before—that is the law.

Clause 34 agreed to.

Clause 35, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 36:

Ms UIBO: Can you explain the new administrative review system?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Are you talking about section 28G or section 29?

Ms UIBO: Have I asked it early?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Again, that is not new. We just changed that so it is transit officers other than ex officio transit officers who are police officers.

Ms UIBO: Does the same process exist for any complaints against transit officers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This is the process for them. If they are complaining about police, there is a police complaints process or people can go directly to the Ombudsman.

Clause 36 agreed to.

Clause 37:

Ms UIBO: How is this section monitored?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It is limited. For example, section 29A(4) says:

> *This section has effect despite the operation of any other law of the Territory that prohibits or restricts the disclosure of the information.*

It says who the information-sharing entity can be, so it is the director, a transit officer or a police officer. There are limits inherently built into that section.

Ms UIBO: Is there an approval process for that information sharing?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: As long as it is carried out in accordance with the Act and all other relevant legislation. If there is a breach, all sorts of other things can kick in.

Ms UIBO: Is the ultimate decision-maker in this scenario the Northern Territory Police Commissioner?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No. It is the police officer, transit officer or director.

Ms UIBO: Does the director sit in the police force?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, the director is with the transit officers. A transit officer is with the department under the director, and a police officer is with the police force.

Ms UIBO: Will there be standard scenarios for information sharing across agencies?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I am sure there will be often-used scenarios, and I gave one earlier, but otherwise as long as people are complying with the Act, that is fine.

Ms UIBO: If they are not compliant with the Act, if they break any privacy Act, would that stay the same as what is currently in place?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Correct.

Ms UIBO: Is there a process in regard to the department or a lead agency—in this case the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure—for reporting and auditing, and will that information be kept with that agency?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I really could not comment because it is not in the Act. If it has a practice of doing that there are probably annual reports and all sorts of other things, like the Information Commissioner. It goes on and on in regard to the types of actions people can take if they believe their information has been wrongly shared—internal audits. There are just so many; it is far too hypothetical.

Clause 37 agreed to.

Clauses 38 and 39, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 40:

Ms UIBO: Can body-worn imagery be shared with other entities?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes, it can.

Ms UIBO: Can PPSOs enter someone's house or unit without a warrant?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It depends on which powers they are exercising, yes.

Ms UIBO: That would be determined by the …

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: By the law. It is exactly the same as now. A police officer can do that now under certain circumstances, and in other circumstances they need warrants. It entirely depends on the circumstance.

Ms UIBO: Will that come from the Northern Territory Police Commissioner determining the powers and ranking of the PPSO?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, our police know all their powers and there are different points at which they have to get authorisation, depending on what it is. It is not necessarily this scenario, so I do not want to make you think that before police do that they would have to get some sort of authorisation. It is dependent on what and why—what is happening at the time and which powers.

Every police officer—you just need to talk to one—will say, 'This is section 197; we are doing X.' When they exercise their powers, they are in their mind like, 'Right. That is section X; I can do this', and off they go.

Ms UIBO: If their powers have not been determined yet then …

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: By the time they are out they will be. We will not have PPSO—it is nonsense, what you are saying. When police graduate, they graduate because they are then a police officer. It is the same as a PPSO; we are not training them for 18 weeks for them to wander out on the street and not know what they are doing. It is nonsense and is disparaging our police.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Everyone sit down, and let the Chief Minister answer. If you want a follow-up question you can have one.

Anything further, Chief Minister?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No.

Ms UIBO: Can body-worn camera footage used or filmed by PPSOs be used in the consideration by an Ombudsman if there is a complaint against that PPSO?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Absolutely.

Clause 40 agreed to.

Clause 41:

Ms UIBO: Regarding the positions—we do not know what the full powers will be—have any risk assessments been done in terms of putting inexperienced and minimally trained PPSOs on the street with firearms and other weapons?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I have to correct you; we know what the PPSO powers will be because they will be the same powers that police have. PPSOs will just be able to use them in more limited circumstances, which will be detailed in their instrument of appointment. It is just like the PALIs, which your government did. This is a near identical process to the PALI process you created. You effectively said to PALIs, 'You can have this power, that power, carry guns and do all of these things. You can be a police officer, but only when you are standing at a bottle shop.' This will be similar to that but in an expanded area.

Ms UIBO: Will there be something to show the comparison between the criteria in the 18-week training versus the 32-week training of a constable?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: There is a training schedule for the recruits.

Ms UIBO: I know the consent agreement has not been agreed to yet; will that determine the pay conditions expected of this role?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Correct.

Ms UIBO: Do you have a timeframe for that condition?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I would have loved for it to be done already, but we are working closely with the NTPA.

Ms UIBO: Will the consent agreement, or lack thereof, slow the start for the graduation squad?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: It could; I hope it does not get to that.

Ms UIBO: Will auxiliary positions be affected by this legislation? Will they still exist, or will there be changes to their conditions, roles and powers?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Their conditions, roles and powers stay as they are. We will not recruit to the auxiliary positions other than JESCC going forward. It is a similar situation for transit and housing officers, but the various auxiliaries we have will continue to do their work.

Ms UIBO: Once the first group of PPSOs has graduated, will the government-funded private security guard arrangement cease?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No, but over time as we build up there may be a different decision made. It might take a couple of years. If we did 25 per squad and take into account attrition and the fact we can train them only every 18 weeks, it will take a significant amount of time to build up the kind of workforce we would be confident could to step in and take over that role. It is certainly not in the foreseeable future.

Ms UIBO: What will happen to transit officers and PHSOs who do not want to sign up to be PPSOs?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Agencies are working with them to make sure that they have fulfilling work and do whatever they need to do. The authorised officers for housing and transit will continue in the interim. All those conversations are being had with staff about what the next steps would look like for them. I suspect that some of them are waiting to see the EBA because they do not know what the pay and conditions will be. Once that happens they might leap across immediately or over time once they see how it works.

It is a gradual process. We do not want this to be forced upon anyone, so we are taking the time to move through. A long list of people have expressed interest, so we are confident that we will fill a squad as soon as we have the green light on the EBA. It is just about making sure we do all of that change management with our existing transit and housing staff so that they continue to be well supported and well engaged in the workforce.

Ms UIBO: Based off your last answer, can the first squad not commence until the EBA is completed?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Yes.

Clause 41 agreed to.

Clause 42, by leave, agreed to.

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

Bill agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION AMENDMENT (BANNED DRINKER ORDERS) BILL
Serial 48

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I support this legislation and will speak about the benefits of the changes to the banned drinker order penalties for the community of Katherine.

I commend the Minister for Alcohol Policy and Health minister for bringing this legislation to the parliament. Of all people, he sees the evidence of the harm that happens in our communities. Increasing the length of time from seven days to 28 days will make a difference to our towns and communities, and I have heard that from police while I have been at their nightly patrol or the meetings I have with them on a regular basis.

Yes, we have moved more legislation on urgency, but we are not afraid to do what is right for the Territory. There is another tool in the toolkit that will make a difference for the upcoming Christmas period and, moving forward, will support people having time to get the support they need through the services. Alcohol-fuelled crime has a huge impact on small businesses, members of the public and, more broadly, communities throughout the Northern Territory, particularly in key regional hubs such as Katherine.

Extending the banned period for a person to purchase alcohol from seven to 28 days will make a big difference to policing and community safety for all. As the Chief Minister and the Minister for Alcohol Policy noted yesterday, as a result of a successful operation in Katherine earlier this year, there has been a 354% increase in number of banned drinker orders issued. This is a huge achievement and credit to proactive policing led by acting Commander Terry Zhang—good, hard, honest work and staying the course to get the job done.

Between January and September 2025, the Northern Territory Police Force issued more than 1,900 banned drinker orders in Katherine alone. This is a considerable number and a substantial increase from previous years. This has been part of a coordinated plan in Katherine, and I am delighted to see this every time I visit the night patrollers, who are representatives from Kalano Community Association, NT Police, the Department of Children and Families, the Circuit Breaker Program, public housing safety officers and our Katherine-based liquor inspectors.

Throughout the year we have seen the joint operations occurring with our public housing safety officers and NT Police across public housing in Katherine. It is making a real difference in reducing alcohol-driven crime. There is too much drinking in the common areas of public housing and in premises which have ‘alcohol restricted premises’ signs out the front but where tenants choose to keep drinking.

The considerable number of banned drinker orders issued in Katherine since March this year is an achievement and a credit to the hardworking members of Katherine Police Station. The dedicated and visible policing efforts are a key part of the success, which we know will help to keep our community safe, particularly over the December–January school holidays coming up.

I will briefly reflect on the soon-to-be 28 days that the banned drinker orders will operate for, noting that this will give a person the time to make the right decisions in their life, seek help if they need to address the harmful way in which they drink alcohol, and address the dangerous, unlawful behaviours which can happen. This is a chance to get help, check in the operating sobering-up shelter or, if needed, think about investing in time at a residential rehabilitation program. It is possible to change.

As a small business owner for many years and having been raised in a family grounded by strong values, hard work, accountability, commitment to community and your fellow neighbour, and learning how to enjoy a drink, I do so lawfully to ensure respect and appreciation for others. I know we have to keep setting the standard for the right behaviours we want to see in our key regional towns like Katherine.

This important change to the banned drinker orders and the review recently undertaken by the minister's department will help make this possible.

While those opposite were too busy building grandstands, shade structures and car parks in Darwin for eight long years, the CLP Finocchiaro government has been getting on with making the Territory safer with these changes to banned drinker orders, another example of our commitment to reducing crime, protecting victims and making the Territory a safer place for all to live, work, play, invest, create, educate and grow a family.

When I am out and about talking to my constituents in Katherine, they are no longer talking to me regularly about the impact of crime on their families, businesses and our town. It is not the first thing that leaves their lips. Since we have come to government, we have taken swift action to reduce crime and ensure there are fewer victims and consequences to stop the cycle of offending.

As we have said before, this is not a set and forget; there is more work to do, but we will not stop with our reducing-crime agenda.

I congratulate Minister Edgington and his department on the delivery of another important election commitment in the review of the Banned Drinker Register, and I thank them for leading this important work to keep our regional hubs such as Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs safe from crime so we can get on with rebuilding the economy and enjoying our public spaces.

I thank our hardworking frontline police officers, Circuit Breaker staff and regional leadership who are delivering our government's priorities to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique and beautiful Territory lifestyle. We are in good hands in Katherine for the December–January school holidays with these important changes to banned drinker orders. I am honoured to represent this community, which works hard to deliver for all.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, on the very last sitting day of the year, this government has arrived in this Chamber with an eleventh hour urgent amendment. Territorians deserve better than policy by panic. They deserve better than a government that uses urgency motions as a smokescreen for its failures.

Today's debate is not just about a change from a seven-day banned drinker order to a 28-day one; it is about a government scrambling to distract from the fact that alcohol-related domestic violence has increased under its watch. It has not stabilised or improved; it has increased and, in some regions, skyrocketed.

In Darwin and Palmerston alcohol-involved domestic violence incidents have surged by over 10% in just one year of the CLP government. These are real families, victims and communities now dealing with more harm, not less, because of the changes the government has made since taking office. What is this government's response? Not investment, treatment or evidence-based reform. Instead, we get another rushed procedural circus to try to cover the fact that every major lever the CLP pulled on alcohol policy has made things worse.

Alcohol addiction is a health issue; it requires a health-based response. Expert bodies like the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education remind us that punitive approaches do not reduce dependency; access to treatment and early intervention does.

It is staggering that this government continues to pursue criminalisation over care, yet what is the minister's flagship policy? A return to alcohol mandatory treatment, a policy the NT has tried before and one that failed spectacularly.

The Menzies School of Health Research's detailed report of the former alcohol mandatory treatment regime is damning. It found that there was no evidence of reduced alcohol-related harm. People subjected to mandatory treatment repeatedly returned to the same patterns because treatment was not voluntary, therapeutic or grounded in clinical best practice.

The system targeted Aboriginal people, raising major ethical and human rights concerns. Importantly, AMT diverted resources away from voluntary effective treatment services, undermining the supports that work.

In simple terms, it was expensive, ineffective and deeply flawed, and the CLP want to do it all again. The minister's signature mandatory rehabilitation policy, the centrepiece of his entire approach, is already in tatters. It has not even been introduced; it has stalled because it is unworkable, ineffective and would burn millions of taxpayer dollars for no measurable impact. Deep down, the minister knows this.

Meanwhile, the government has delivered no meaningful investment in rehabilitation services, treatment programs or supports for families affected by alcohol-related harm. The CLP cannot talk about consequences when it refuses to fund recovery. It cannot talk about accountability when it refuses to invest in prevention.

Let us also remember one of the first things the CLP proudly did in office: it scrapped the floor price, an evidence-based reform that saved lives and reduced alcohol-fuelled assaults. Predictably and inevitably, things got worse. It even went further and once again criminalised public drinking, despite decades of evidence showing this policy does not reduce harm and is far more likely to increase interactions with police.

Members interjecting.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; interruptions.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, we will all remain silent and listen intently to the Member for Daly.

Mr YOUNG: As I was saying, the government even went further and criminalised public drinking, despite decades of evidence showing this policy does not reduce harm and is far more likely to increase interactions with police, increase avoidable arrests and increase the risk of deaths in custody.

Territorians deserve better than a government that ignores evidence for ideology. Now, with domestic violence escalating and alcohol-fuelled harm on the rise, the CLP's solution is to bring a last-minute amendment into parliament and try to blame everyone else because the Leader of Government Business, Steve Edgington, cannot get his house in order. He has had all year to introduce this legislation. All of a sudden, he comes in here and rushes this legislation on urgency with only one of the four recommendations from the review. If it was so urgent, why did he not implement all the recommendations?

Labor created the Banned Drinker Register and banned drinker orders in the face of CLP opposition. We believe in measures that reduce alcohol-related harm and support frontline workers, but we have no confidence in this government's ability to manage the BDR system effectively or responsibly. After all, the last CLP government that the Chief Minister was a part of scrapped the Banned Drinker Register altogether. We have not forgotten, and Territorians have not forgotten, the damage caused by that reckless decision.

Today's debate is not about a 28-day order. It is about a government desperate to look like it is doing something, anything, after a year of failure, rising harm and bad decisions that have fuelled more violence, crime and chaos. Is the government serious about strengthening? Territorians deserve real leadership, investment and solutions, not a farcical last-minute rush designed to hide the consequences of the CLP's actions.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, everyone in this Chamber agrees that alcohol is a terrible problem in the Territory. It destroys families, drives violence, fills our hospitals and burdens our community. There is no disagreement regarding the seriousness of this issue. Because we all agree that it is so serious, this is not how we should be making law about it.

We received an entirely inadequate briefing, before we saw the Bill this morning where no basic questions could be answered. Who was consulted? What modelling had been done? How many people will be affected? What outcomes does the government expect? How does it know this will work? It might work, but the truth is we do not know. On that basis, we should not be making law.

That brings me to another question: where is the alcohol roadmap? We have heard about this roadmap since Estimates. We have been told that this amendment is part of a bigger plan. If it is part of a plan, where is that plan? Can it be provided to Territorians so that services, communities, ACCOs and frontline workers can see it and people can understand how this fits into tackling this thing which causes so much harm in our community?

If this Bill is not part of the roadmap, why are we still seeing ad hoc reactive changes to a problem that we all agree is urgent and complex? A serious problem requires a coordinated strategy, not piecemeal amendments rushed through on urgency.

At the risk of saying the same thing over and again in this Chamber, once again we are seeing a Bill passed on urgency. Urgency is a mechanism not designed for Bills like this. It is designed for disasters and natural emergencies. That is not what this is.

Earlier today the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence said that she will do whatever it takes to address alcohol-fuelled violence. I support that. If this is true, why is the Coroner's recommendation 32 for the mandatory trial of BDR scanning in licensed venues—which was also supported in this review—not being implemented? Why is it not being referenced in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Safety Roadmap? You cannot claim to do whatever it takes while refusing to implement basic prevention measures recommended by the Coroner and your own review.

I am ready and committed to working on tackling alcohol-related violence and alcohol problems in the community and on serious alcohol reform; I know that everyone is this Chamber is. However, serious reform needs transparency, evidence, consultation and a clear plan; we have none of that. For that reason, I do not support this Bill's passage today.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank the Members for Katherine, Daly and Johnston for their contributions. The contributions, although small, were relevant.

The Member for Daly suggesting that we had not done enough in dealing with alcohol policy. I remind the Member for Daly that the former Labor government promised $5m in July 2018 to build a new rehabilitation facility in Tennant Creek. Of course he has forgotten Labor's record on dealing with the harm caused in the community by alcohol. From that $5m promised for Tennant Creek, not one shovel hit the ground under the Labor government. The sad thing was that commitment would free up 19 public houses in Tennant Creek. Not only did Labor not build the rehabilitation facility but it also did not free up 19 houses.

Tennant Creek suffered under the Labor government. To suggest that it did all these things that we have not done is not correct. To set the record straight, Labor has a poor track record on dealing with alcohol-related harm in the community.

This Bill seeks to make a straightforward but impactful amendment to existing provisions of the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017* by changing the length of the police-issued banned drinker order from seven days to 28 days. This change was recommended to the government after careful review of the Banned Drinker Register and has been heralded by members of our hardworking police force as a change to give them the tools needed to keep our community safer.

As members opposite reaffirmed, this government is a government of action. This government identified an opportunity to give communities and our police force the tools they need to respond to problematic drinking and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour, and we got on with the job. That is why we are here; we are getting on with the job. The review has been done and we are implementing this recommendation as quickly as possible while considering the other three.

Although the Bill will support police in keeping Territory streets, communities and homes a lot safer, it is important to reaffirm that this is not just a punitive approach to alcohol harm. The extended duration of orders gives individuals issued with a BDO more time to become treatment ready. With more time on the BDR, individuals have more time to contact and engage with the Banned Drinker Register office with which they are then more likely to engage in meaningful discussion about their alcohol use and reflect on the conduct that triggered the order. This also gives those issued with a BDO more incentive to seek support and rehabilitation offered in the Territory which this government continues to invest in.

These amendments will amend the current provisions in the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act* to change the length of seven-day police-issued banned drinker orders to 28 days. It will see 28-day police BDOs issued when a person on fewer than three occasions is taken into alcohol-related protective custody, issued with an alcohol-related infringement notice or a banning notice or found to have consumed alcohol in a prohibited public place. The Bill does not alter the existing mandatory requirement for police to issue a minimum three-month BDO to respondents in an alcohol-related domestic violence order or to individuals charged with an alcohol-related offence.

The Bill enhances existing police powers to deal with people who engage in problematic drinking and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour. The legislation being moved today demonstrates our government's commitment to taking decisive action to deliver a safer Territory for all Territorians. Communities across the Northern Territory should be safe places where families can thrive, businesses can prosper and people can enjoy their lives free from the disruption caused by alcohol-related harm.

The legislation before us today demonstrates this government's commitment to taking decisive action to deliver our vision for a safer Territory. As Police Commissioner Dole said:

> *Increasing the number of days from seven to 28 will be an important tool as we head into our summer season, which attracts a spike in alcohol-related crime.*

As summer approaches, this government has chosen to act, not sit on our hands and wait for things to happen. We are getting ahead and putting in legislation to support the police, which will give them greater opportunity to reduce crime in the community and tackle some of this antisocial behaviour that is going on in all parts of the Territory.

I thank those involved in the Banned Drinker Register review, the Health department staff and the NT Police, who have ensured this legislation was ready for today, as well as the members of this Chamber for their debate, contribution and consideration.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND POLICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 43

Continued from 23 October 2025.

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

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, ordinarily, legislation should be brought to this House in a coherent and transparent manner, with each proposal standing on its own merits. Instead, before us we have a collection of unrelated documents bundled together on the basis that none of them apparently justify a standalone Bill. That says less about the substance of the proposals and more about the government's attitude to scrutiny.

This House is where we test ideas. It is where we examine the rationale for legislative change, assess community impact and ensure the integrity of public decision-making. It is difficult to do this when the government treats legislation like a grab bag. Nevertheless, each part of this Bill deserves genuine consideration, and in turn I will look at them.

The Bill proposes changes to the *Firearms Act* to allow faster permit approvals for category A and B firearms when the applicant already owns a firearm in that category and prescribed checks have been satisfied.

The Northern Territory has a long and proud history of balancing community safety and the responsible and legitimate use of firearms. We know that Territorians in our rural communities and pastoral sector and our sporting shooters and recreational hunters approach firearm safety with seriousness and respect. We also know the Northern Territory's history of responsible regulation has been an important part of maintaining that balance.

Nothing in the material provided to us suggests a clear policy rationale for changing the balance now. The regulatory system already enables checks and risk assessments to occur efficiently, so when the government chooses this moment, this week, to make a change, one must ask what problem it is trying to fix. Community safety must remain the guiding principle. That requires clarity, evidence and consultation, not legislative tweaks made simply because they can be bundled together into an omnibus Bill.

In relation to the Public Trustee, the proposed modifications appear largely administrative in nature, clarifying that the Administrator may set the terms and conditions for the Public Trustee's appointment simultaneously while making minor changes to how the Deputy Public Trustee is appointed. These are not the types of changes that would typically concern the public; in isolation they would likely pass without controversy. Specialist agencies such as the Public Trustee rely on consistency and predictability, and it appears that the intent of these amendments it is to improve administrative clarity.

Turning to the *Police Administration Act*, this Bill purports to implement elements of the Blow report by outlining principles for appointing senior leadership positions within our police force. In principle, articulating expectations around skills, experience, conduct and leadership capability is a positive step. Territorians expect a police force that is strong, professional, transparent and accountable. Our officers deserve the certainty of a leadership structure chosen on merit and guided by clear criteria.

Timing matters. This government introduced these principles after appointing a new commissioner. A cynical observer might conclude that this legislation is crafted not to guide appointments but to give the appearance of action in the aftermath of significant public scrutiny, which the government has done little to address.

The Blow report raised serious concerns about conflicts of interest, training, recruitment, culture and systemic capability, yet this Bill addresses none of those matters. It is a half-measure attempt at signalling reform without undertaking the deeper work required to strengthen community confidence in the police force.

I now turn to the most significant and troubling aspect of this Bill: the amendments to the *Information Act*. This Bill seeks to exclude criteria categories of the *Information Act* from public access, specifically information created or shared exclusively between ministers, assistant ministers and their staff where it is deemed not to be government information connected with the responsibilities of a minister's portfolio. The government's justification for this is it claims that these changes are needed to stop so-called green warfare.

Territorians' right to ask questions about decisions that affect their land, water, environment, communities and livelihoods is not an act of aggression. It is not sabotage; it is not warfare; it is democracy. When a government moves to restrict access to information, the public naturally asks why. What they are trying to hide? The ability to test government decisions through freedom of information access processes or the courts is not an inconvenience; it is a safeguard. It is one of the ways in which ordinary people can hold power to account. If a decision cannot withstand scrutiny, the answer is not to take away the scrutiny; it is to improve the decision.

These amendments go further than simply clarifying the Act. They create a broad shield that allows ministers to refuse access to information even when it is clearly in the public interest. They invite the withholding of documents that go to the heart of environmental decisions, infrastructure approvals, public spending and the use of ministerial discretion. In a jurisdiction like the Northern Territory, where public trust is fragile and the integrity of decision-making has been the subject of royal commissions, inquiries and public concern, this is a step in the wrong direction.

A government confident in its processes would welcome transparency. A government unsure of its decisions does exactly what this government is doing. The legislation that affects public rights, impacts the principles of open government and shapes our public institutions should not be squeezed into an omnibus Bill for convenience. It should be debated properly. It should be open to scrutiny in the committee process. It should be justified with evidence, consultation and logic. We have instead a Bill that attempts to mix uncontroversial administrative changes with significant restrictions on access to information all while seeking to avoid a level of debate that each part deserves.

This approach does not build trust. It does not improve governance. It does not serve Territorians.

We are prepared to engage constructively with legislation that strengthens public administration, improves safety or clarifies statutory frameworks. Some elements of this Bill may well fall into those categories, but the proposed amendments to the *Information Act* represent a profound shift away from openness. They risk eroding public confidence at a time when the community expects more transparency from its government, not less. This Assembly should be deeply cautious about anything that restricts the public's right to know.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I support this Bill.

I specifically focus on the firearms part. We all know that I am a firearms owner and I have been around firearms for a long time.

The purpose of this Bill is to be able to make sure that if you already have firearms in the A and B class, you are able to put your purchase permit in, and the commissioner may grant an exemption for the 28 days.

This is not about saying that you should get as many guns as you like. This is about making sure that if you choose to buy another gun, you are able to put your application in. The permit, which is called a purchase permit, is processed by the police and then they do their prescribed checks. If you pass those prescribed checks, you get the opportunity to get a new purchase permit that you can take to the firearms shop and get a gun.

What this will do is allow people in the three main gun shops up here—which is Trent at Rod & Rifle TackleWorld in Katherine, Darryl at Coolalinga Guns & Ammo, and Ronald at Fishing & Outdoor World—to be able to take orders for guns and not have to wait the 28 days.

It was 28 days, plus the application time and process timing of the purchase permit, which took time. That stopped people being able to buy another firearm in the A or B category for family, friends or themselves, whether it was for around the farm or the home.

This is about why you might want to have multiple firearms. For example, a .308 is a common calibre up here, and you can get different models of those. I have three of them; one is a long range for 500-metre shots, one is for closer range and the other one is for very close range, depending on where you go. For example, if you are out in your buggy, you would want a nice short and compact gun so it does not get caught.

This is about what you use your application for when you go out. An analogy might be that golfers have multiple golf clubs for different shots. You might also have multiple drivers, putters and sand wedges, because everything is a bit different.

The Northern Territory is a unique area. Sometimes when you go hunting you might use long range stuff, sometimes it is shorter range stuff, and sometimes it is walking through a creek which may be three or four metres wide. Your shot might be three or four metres because the pigs will be walking in the creek.

This is about making sure firearms laws are not any less restricted, because the rules still apply regarding prescribed checks. This is simply about creating the ability to get your purchase permit earlier. I know from speaking to Darryl Yesberg that he has a whole storage container full of guns on lay-by, because people are waiting for those 28 days. He will be able to move those guns through his shop, and that will let people go out and enjoy our Territory lifestyle.

This is about the Territory lifestyle being important, and firearms are certainly a part of life for people in the rural area, out on stations and in communities. That is because people live off the land and they use them for protection, feral animal control and for sporting shooting. Not to mention people like Bart at NT Field and Game, who may do trap shooting with a nice quality gun, and they might have another gun for goose shooting—which the Member for Arnhem will know gets knocked around and gets mud on it. You do not want to take your nice quality gun out there, so you have multiple guns.

This will allow people to be able to replace guns if they get damaged and buy new ones as models change.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I support the Bill. As the Member for Nelson—who is a great rural resident of this parliament—has touched on already, I am incredibly supportive of the changes to the *Firearms Act 1997*.

This Bill does not change any rules about how many firearms someone can have. It simply removes an arbitrary 28-day waiting period. The previous waiting period applied to people who already owned a gun, complied with all their licence conditions and went through all the checks, yet they still had to go through some checks. They will not have to wait the arbitrary 28 days, which is fantastic, especially for our gun shops.

When you punish law-abiding people for no reason, it creates frustration. We want to make sure Territorians trust our Firearms unit. We want to make sure Territorians and small businesses such as Coolalinga Guns & Ammo are not held up by red tape which is not adding any benefit.

We do not ask the golfer why he needs another driver, the fisherman why he needs to own another rod or a cricketer if he wants to buy another bat. You can already purchase your second or third firearm in that category but, for some reason, you have to wait 28 days, taking up inventory and space and not allowing turnover.

We know December is pretty much a dead month for gun sales in the Territory because we Territorians like to treat ourselves. We like to buy ourselves something nice and new. As the Member for Nelson touched on earlier, there are different guns for different jobs.

I am incredibly supportive of this government's ability to cut down on arbitrary restrictions to make sure Territorians doing the right things are not unnecessarily held up by red tape.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I will keep it brief. I have some concerns about the proposed changes to freedom of information and the *Firearms Act*.

The changes to the *Firearms Act* seem unnecessary and potentially even dangerous. There are no limits in the NT on the number of firearms someone can own, which is unbelievable. Surely for the sake of community safety we should be placing limits.

There is no reason why someone needs multiple guns. I think there was someone caught recently with hundreds of guns. During the briefing on this Bill we learned that there is also no limit on the number of guns someone could purchase without waiting 28 days. This is reckless and unnecessary. Alongside this, we were told at the briefing …

Mr Maley: Twenty-five years has been long.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nelson, could you stop your interjections, please.

Mr Maley: I am trying to educate her; she is not very educated.

Ms Uibo: She listened to you respectfully.

K McNAMARA: No-one wants to be educated by you. Enough.

Madam SPEAKER: Everyone can stop their interjections.

K McNAMARA: In the briefing we had on this Bill, we were told that this change would be a breach of the National Firearms Agreement, but not to worry because even under the current legislation, the Territory is not compliant anyway.

That is not comforting. In fact, it is quite worrying to me that we are not compliant with national standards and are soon to be even less compliant.

Last year there were community calls for the NT to update our outdated gun laws to ensure greater community safety. Instead of listening to community concerns, the CLP government is seeking to further loosen these laws.

I learned just this week that in the NT the maximum penalty for unlawful possession of a firearm is two years, but interstate it is up to 20 years. Alongside this, in other jurisdictions you need a genuine reason, with personal safety not considered a genuine reason, but here that is not the case.

It does not seem to me that waiting 28 days before purchasing another gun would be too onerous for someone. Surely having to wait a few extra days before purchasing a gun is worth it for the sake of community safety.

When tabling the Bill the Attorney-General stated:

> *The changes proposed represent a balance between strong regulation of firearms and removing unnecessary red tape and burden …*

Again, I do not think 28 days is unnecessary red tape, but an important mechanism to ensure that only people who will use firearms responsibly have access to them. We need gun reform in the NT, but this is a step in the wrong direction.

I move onto the freedom of information changes. It is probably getting tiring for everyone having to come in here and continuously criticise the government for lack of transparency. I am sick of doing it, but the government keeps reducing the mechanisms available for community oversight. This Bill is doing that.

This move has been criticised by many, with the proposal making the Northern Territory the jurisdiction with the strictest FOI laws. At least the minister was transparent when she tabled the Bill, saying that this is a direct attack upon the ECNT, which is apparently seeking access to historic documentation dating back over five years.

These changes are not just administrative, as has been claimed; this is a clear attack on environmental protection and, more importantly, strong democracy. Transparency and access to information is one of the core pillars of a healthy democracy. If government is truly making decisions in the best interest of the community, then why the need for secrecy? What is the government trying to hide? There is no reason for the changes to the FOI laws, apart from hiding things, making things more secretive and not letting the public know what is going on.

I do not support the Bill.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, this Bill touches on four separate Acts and, although it has been described as administrative housekeeping, some of these changes have real consequences for people in our community.

The *Firearms Act* changes propose cutting the waiting time for additional firearms from 28 days to as little as a few days. We have heard that as long as you already own a gun in the same category and the checks are done, that should be okay.

I want to be clear that I am not anti-firearms. I know many people own and use firearms legally and responsibly for legitimate purposes, but just because someone has a genuine need for one firearm does not automatically mean they have a genuine need for five, 10 or 20. In the Northern Territory there is no limit on how many guns you can own.

The Member for Goyder said that the 28 days—I cannot remember the word he used—was not based on anything, but the 28-day cooling-off period is not just bureaucracy; it is a safety net based on the National Firearms Agreement framework. It is time for police to do thorough checks, as circumstances might change when people have a potential deadly weapon in their hands.

Some people may argue that if all checks are completed the 28-day waiting period is unnecessary, but that is a misunderstanding of its purpose. People who work in this area explain that this is a critical safety buffer because even when all administrative checks are done, circumstances can change quickly. A person may become subject to a new police investigation, experience a mental health crisis or engage in violent behaviour that was not previously recorded. That 28 days acts as a pause button, giving police time to identify emerging risks and protect our community.

I recognise that someone who already has a domestic violence order cannot legally acquire another firearm, but everyone in this Chamber knows that many perpetrators of domestic violence do not have a formal order against them. Many women do not take out orders because of fear of retaliation, financial dependence, isolation, cultural pressures or trauma, so the absence of an order in no way means that a person is safe. It means only that the law has not yet recognised the risk.

Under these proposed changes, a perpetrator without an order could acquire multiple additional firearms in a matter of days, even after all checks are complete. In a practical sense, someone with a history of abusive behaviour but no order could quickly stockpile firearms, putting women, children and communities at serious risk.

It is unclear why we should put people at risk. For what benefit? I do not understand what the rush is. I am sorry if someone has a lot of guns on lay-by, but when I balance that with putting women and children at risk, it does not add up. I call on the government to maintain the 28-day waiting period for all firearms acquisitions, regardless of what you already own, because community safety must come first.

The other thing I touch on is the amendments to the *Information Act*, which are buried in Part 3. They would exclude communications between ministers and their staff from FOI requests. We were told not to worry because this already happens. If something already happens, it does not mean it is okay and we should put it in the law.

We know that there is a court case, because the government has been open about it, trying to access historic documents about the McArthur River Mine. It involves Nicole Manison, who was Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer and Minister for Mining and Industry when key decisions were made about that mine, and who

now works for Tamboran Resources, the same company that holds the largest acreage in the Beetaloo Sub-basin. The McArthur River Mine, operated by Glencore, also has major interests in the Beetaloo basin.

The government has been clear that it is changing this law to shut down that court case, to make sure Territorians never see those documents. That is exactly what this amendment does. I am shaking my head because it is unbelievable to me, the blatant disregard for Territorians having access to information about how decisions are made that affect them. The government is openly saying, 'We don't want you to see this'.

In practice, for people in my community, someone might come up and say, 'Justine, can you help me find out why the minister made a decision that is affecting my community? I put in an FOI request and the government said, "Sorry, that's just ministers talking to their staff, not your business."'

How do we know if something is official portfolio business if we are not allowed to see it? How do communities hold their government accountable when the government decides what we are and are not allowed to question? For example, when residents in my electorate raise concerns with me about air quality, whether it is about East Arm Port, industrial emissions or Dry Season smoke, they want to know what monitoring data ministers received, what discussions took place about health risks and why certain decisions were or were not made about air quality standards and public warnings.

Under these changes, much of that discussion could simply be declared ministerial communications and hidden from view. That is not good, accountable government; that is government in the shadows. I am calling on the government to withdraw these *Information Act* amendments entirely, because if you believe in transparent and accountable government, as you say, you do not need to hide your communications from the people you serve.

I will support the other parts of this Bill, but I do not support the *Firearms Act* changes, and I strongly oppose the *Information Act* changes. They are not just technical changes; they are changes that potentially have a fundamental impact on real people in my community and across the Northern Territory—the single mum who has not been able to take out a DVO and is terrified that her ex-partner can quickly stockpile firearms. I am sure anyone in this Chamber who has worked with women who have been at threat of violence would have heard a story like this.

I call on the government to maintain the 28-day waiting period and to withdraw the *Information Act* amendments, because the people of the Northern Territory deserve a government that operates in the open, takes their safety seriously and genuinely serves their interest.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank the members who contributed to this debate.

I correct the record about some of the allegations by the Member for Nightcliff. I need to tell everybody that she did not actually go to the briefing, so I am not sure what she is talking about.

K McNamara: I had a staff member go; I had a representative there.

Ms BOOTHBY: As members will recall from when this Bill was introduced, it brings together a number of minor but important amendments across several Acts. Together these changes improve clarity, consistency and the way government processes are administered.

The amendments to the *Public Trustee Act* simplify what has been an unnecessary, complicated appointment process. The Administrator will now be able to set the remuneration terms and conditions of the Public Trustee at the time of appointment, removing the need for two separate Executive Council processes.

The Bill also modernises the appointment of the Deputy Public Trustee by giving that responsibility to the Attorney-General, which is consistent with how similar deputy roles are appointed.

The amendments to the *Police Administration Act* implement the recommendations of the independent review of police recruitment conducted by Acting Justice Blow. These reforms make merit the key factor in senior police appointments and strengthen transparency, integrity and accountability in recruitment processes. This Bill is a significant step towards fully delivering all six recommendations from that review.

The amendments to the *Information Act* reaffirm a longstanding position that provides the ability for ministers to have free and frank discussions within their offices as they formulate policy positions. This principle allows for the proper functioning of representative democracy.

This issue has come into sharp focus because the Environment Centre took the Northern Territory Government to court over documents from former Labor minister Nicole Manison dating back five years. The court case is ongoing. Defending that case has already cost taxpayers significant time and money—already close to $200,000 and counting. These amendments will help stem the tide of green lawfare that wastes taxpayer funds. It stalls projects, shreds certainty and stymies the ability for policy to be debated on the fifth floor.

Territorians will continue to have access to government information through the appropriate administrative channels which we acknowledge is also an important transparency and integrity measure.

Finally, the amendments to the *Firearms Act* deliver on the government's election commitment to cut unnecessary red tape for responsible firearm owners. The changes allow existing category A and B licence holders who have already completed all checks and who already own a firearm of the same category to obtain a permit without the 28-day waiting period. All current probity checks remain in place, maintaining the integrity of the system while making the process more efficient for law-abiding Territorians.

I have circulated some amendments that I will be moving through the consideration in detail phase.

I thank members for all their contributions to date.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail

Clauses 1 to 3, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 4:

J DAVIS: What consultation occurred with domestic violence services or organisations in relation to these changes?

Ms BOOTHBY: We consulted with police and the Attorney-General's Department.

J DAVIS: To clarify, there was no consultation with domestic violence services, mental health services or organisations.

Ms BOOTHBY: The consultation was with Police and the Attorney-General's Department.

J DAVIS: So no consultation. What is the purpose of the current 28-day waiting period?

Ms BOOTHBY: There is a mandatory 28-day waiting period before the commissioner can grant a permit to a person, unless an exemption applies. This amendment provides an additional exemption to the 28-day waiting period for category A and B firearms.

Applicants will now be able to apply for an exemption of the 28-day period where the prescribed checks have been completed and either the applicant holds a licence, owns a registered firearm and has established a genuine need for owning the firearm to be purchased or acquired, or the permit is for a category A or B firearm and the applicant holds a licence for the category of firearm to be purchased or acquired and they already own a registered firearm of the same category of firearm to be purchased or acquired.

J DAVIS: My question might not have been clear. What is the purpose of the 28-day waiting period, not what is the change?

Ms BOOTHBY: The rationale comes from the National Firearms Agreement which constitutes a national approach to the regulation of firearms and affirms that firearm possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety. Therefore, paragraph 43 of the National Firearms Agreement provides that the issuing of permits is to be subject to a waiting period of at least 28 days.

J DAVIS: What is the rationale for not following the National Firearms Agreement framework?

Ms BOOTHBY: We are still following the National Firearms Agreement.

J DAVIS: You just set out that the agreement says a minimum of 28 days; is that correct?

Mr MALEY: I can help answer that. Section 35(4) says that you cannot purchase a firearm until the end of the 28-day period. That section is not being changed. That complies with the National Firearms Agreement. After that is an exemption, and we are just amending the exemption. Twenty-eight days still applies for all the other categories of firearms; we are just allowing an exemption. We are still complying with the National Firearms Agreement because it says 28 days. We are just putting in an exemption which is already there.

J DAVIS: You are putting in an exemption which means that people can get a firearm in less than 28 days; is that correct?

Mr MALEY: Yes, that is correct. You can do that. That has already been part of the law for 25 years.

J DAVIS: We have already not been following that national framework and now we will not be following it a bit more.

Mr MALEY: No. We are following it, but they are an exemption.

J DAVIS: What is the current average processing time for firearms applications?

Ms BOOTHBY: It depends on the applications that are coming in. There is not an average.

J DAVIS: How many applications take the full 28 days?

Mr MALEY: It does not work like that. When you ask how long it takes, it depends on what month and how many applications have been put in for the month. The starting period is that you put in an application and there is 28 days.

If you apply for an exemption under current laws which have been in place for 25 years, the commissioner may grant an exemption. We are just clarifying what those exemptions are. The law is still 28 days, then you can apply to the commissioner for an exemption which is section 35(5).

J DAVIS: Is there real-time notification to the Police Commissioner when a registered gun owner becomes the subject of a domestic violence order?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: Is there real-time notification to a firearms dealer?

Mr MALEY: No, because the firearms dealer is not a party to a domestic violence order. If police issue a domestic violence order on you and you get an interim order, the police will come around as soon as possible, as soon as they are free, and take all your guns off you.

J DAVIS: If someone applies for a firearms permit during the period between the DVO being issued and that information reaching the firearms registry, what would happen?

Mr MALEY: It is instant. If there is a domestic violence event and the police are called, they choose whether they put an interim order on you. As soon as that happens, they come instantly. If they came to my house and I had a domestic violence event with my wife, they would arrest me and take my guns.

J DAVIS: There would be no circumstance where someone could—there would be a gap between when they got a DVO and when …

Mr MALEY: As soon as an interim order is carried out by the police, they will then as soon as practical—they could get called to a murder somewhere else. For example, if they came to arrest me because there was an event at my house, they would take me and my guns away.

J DAVIS: What safeguards exist to prevent firearms acquisition during periods of mental health crisis?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to this clause as you have a 28-day period, and we are just talking about exemptions.

J DAVIS: I think it is relevant. If someone already has a licence and they are undergoing a mental health crisis, what safeguards exist?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: I am unclear how this is not relevant to the clause which talks about not having the 28-day period if someone already has a licence, expediting that.

Mr MALEY: We do have a 28-day period, so it is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: Does the current requirement to demonstrate genuine need apply to each individual firearm?

Mr MALEY: If you apply for the exemption, yes.

J DAVIS: Is there a limit to how many firearms people can own in the Northern Territory?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause, but the answer is no.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 7:

Ms BOOTHBY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I move amendment 1 to clause 7(1).

Clause 7(1) of the Attorney-General and Police Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 amends section 5(6) of the *Information Act 2002* to replace references to 'parliamentary secretary' with 'assistant minister'. The proposed amendment is a like-for-like swap to reflect current terminology and practices and cater for future possibilities of that title.

Amendment 1 will see clause 7(1) remove reference to 'parliamentary secretary'. The rationale for the proposed amendment is that as an office of parliamentary secretary has never been formally established and the position of assistant minister is likewise not formal. The position has no ministerial responsibility under a ministerial portfolio; references in the *Information Act* to parliamentary secretaries or assistant ministers are without function or purpose.

Should the functions of assistant minister be formalised in future, the *Information Act* can be amended to accommodate this.

Mr PAECH: I need confirmation that assistant ministers are not formalised; are they just a title?

Ms BOOTHBY: Yes.

Mr YOUNG: I want to understand why you have omitted 'assistant minister'; what is the rationale behind it?

Ms BOOTHBY: The rationale for the proposed amendment is that the office of parliamentary secretary has never been formally established and the position of assistant minister is likewise not formal. As the position has no ministerial responsibility under a ministerial portfolio, references in the *Information Act* to parliamentary secretaries or assistant ministers is without function or purpose.

Mr YOUNG: I just want clarification, because previously you had 'assistant minister' in the legislation. Now can an FOI process take place to an assistant minister?

Ms BOOTHBY: To clarify, assistant ministers do not have government information.

Mr YOUNG: Yes, but an FOI request can take place to an assistant minister now that has been removed.

Ms BOOTHBY: An FOI does not apply to backbenchers.

Mr YOUNG: I wanted clarity on that because originally when it was inserted the intention was that every member on your CLP side would not be able to come under scrutiny. I just wanted clarity on that if an FOI process was to take place.

Ms BOOTHBY: It was a like-for-like swap with the parliamentary secretary.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind people we have five amendments to this clause. We will go through them one by one.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms BOOTHBY: I move amendment 2, that clause 7 at line 20 be amended to omit ', an assistant minister'.

The rationale for the proposed amendment is the same as for amendment 1, which I have been through, in that as the position of assistant minister is not formal, references in the *Information Act* to assistant ministers is without functional purpose. Should the functions of assistant minister be formalised at a future point, the *Information Act* can be amended to accommodate that.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms BOOTHBY: I move amendment 3, that clause 7(2) at line 21 be amended to omit 'or assistant minister'.

The rationale for the proposed amendment is the same as that for amendment 1 in that, as the position of assistant minister is not formal, references in the *Information Act* to assistant ministers is without function or purpose. Should the functions of assistant minister be formalised at some future point, the *Information Act* can be amended to accommodate that.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms BOOTHBY: I move amendment 4, that clause 7(2) at line 28 be amended to omit 'entity;' and replace it with 'entity.'

The rationale for this amendment is to grammatically support the omission of paragraph (c) in proposed section 5(6A).

Amendment agreed to.

Ms BOOTHBY: I move amendment 5, that clause 7(2) be amended to omit paragraph (c) of proposed subsection (6A).

Clause 7(2) is intended to clarify and confirm that any information created or received by the minister or a minister's staff and shared within the minister's office or with other ministers' offices, but not with other public sector organisations—that is, a department—is exempt from freedom of information applications. Amendment 5 is intended to put the issue beyond doubt.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8:

Ms BOOTHBY: I move amendment 6, that clause 8 be amended to omit clause 8 as it is presently drafted in the Bill and replace it with a revised clause 8 to remove the reference to assistant minister.

The rationale for the proposed amendment is the same as that for amendment 1 in that, as the position of assistant minister is not formal, references in the *Information Act* to assistant ministers are without function or purpose. Should the functions of assistant minister be formalised at some future point, the *Information Act* can be amended to accommodate that.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9:

Ms BOOTHBY: I move amendment 7, that clause 9 be amended to omit clause 9 as it is presently drafted in the Bill and replace it with a revised clause 9 to remove the reference to assistant minister.

The rationale for the proposed amendment is the same as for amendment 1 in that, as the position of assistant minister is not formal, references in the *Information Act* to assistant ministers are without function or purpose. Should the functions of assistant minister be formalised at some future point, the *Information Act* can be amended to accommodate that.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10:

J DAVIS: What constitutes official portfolio business?

Ms BOOTHBY: The Administrative Arrangements Order sets out our ministerial responsibilities for areas of government. The amendments seek to clarify the longstanding position that information created or received by a minister or their office is not subject to freedom of information requests regardless of what it relates to.

J DAVIS: If a minister discusses something—for example, mining approvals—in an informal communication, would that be official portfolio business?

Ms BOOTHBY: That is not relevant to this clause.

J DAVIS: Which clause would that be relevant to?

Ms BOOTHBY: Clause 7, which we just went through.

J DAVIS: What appeal mechanism exists if someone believes information has been wrongly classified as portfolio business?

Ms BOOTHBY: If it is within the minister's office, it is excluded.

J DAVIS: Is there is no appeal mechanism?

Ms BOOTHBY: No, because the work that is done in the minister's office is excluded.

J DAVIS: 'In the minister's office'—is that if it is directly related to the minister's portfolio or is it anything the minister does?

Ms BOOTHBY: Yes.

J DAVIS: If it was the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and there was communication about the environment, would that not be related to their portfolio?

Ms BOOTHBY: Any portfolios.

J DAVIS: It is not related to the minister's portfolio. Is it any portfolio?

Ms BOOTHBY: What happens in the minister's office happens in the minister's office. There is no other way of getting around that.

J DAVIS: That is fine. I am just seeking to clarify. Any ministerial communication regarding anything related to any portfolio by any minister is not FOI-able; is that correct?

Ms BOOTHBY: Yes.

J DAVIS: There is no appeal mechanism if someone believes it should be.

Ms BOOTHBY: No.

Clause 10 agreed to.

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

Bill agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

PAPERS TABLED
Auditor-General's Report No 6 to the Legislative Assembly

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Auditor-General's Report Number 6 to the Legislative Assembly.

Treasurer's Mid-Year Report 2025–26

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table the 2025–26 Mid-Year Report to the Legislative Assembly and make a short statement.

Leave granted.

Mr YAN: In accordance with section 13 of the *Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Act 2001*, I table the 2025–26 Mid-Year Report to the Legislative Assembly.

The Mid-Year Report provides an update on the current fiscal and economic outlook for the Territory since the 2025–26 budget. The 2025–26 Mid-Year Report shows the net operating balance is estimated to be in deficit in each year across the budget cycle, peaking in 2026–27 before reducing to a deficit of $57m in 2028–29.

The updated projection for the non-financial public sector fiscal balance shows an average annual deficit of $938m in 2025–26 and 2027–28, before almost halving and remaining stable over 2027–28 and 2028–29, with annual deficits of $510m. This reduction shows that this government is on the right track and that we must continue to stay the course for the rest of this financial year and into the next budget.

When compared with the 2025–26 budget, updated net operating balance projections have worsened in aggregate by $114m across the budget cycle, largely due to methodologies which are out of the government's control. For example, revised cost assumptions relating to public housing and road infrastructure—an increased non-cash depreciation expense by an average of $130m per annum—and unspent Commonwealth funds in 2024–25 carried over to be spent in 2025–26 and forward years.

These are offset by improvements in GST revenue in 2025–26. This was due to underpaid GST revenue in the 2024–25 period, following a revised population assessment—as this CLP government's Rebuilding the Economy strategy begins to ripple through our economy—and higher GST collections pool outcomes.

Additional taxation and royalty revenue is due to continued growth in commodity prices, one-off commercial property transactions, strength in private sector wages and employment and lower interest expenses as a result of this government's leadership in reducing borrowings and increasing own-source revenue with the support of improved GST.

The updated fiscal balance projections have, however, improved in aggregate by $369m across the budget cycle, with the improvement mainly reflecting the same factors affecting the net operating balance—namely, improved GST and own-source revenues, excluding non-cash depreciation adjustments.

Variations to the Darwin ship lift facility project resulted in net improvement of $133m across the budget cycle, due to the acceleration of expenditure recognised in 2024–25, as reported in the 2024–25 Treasurer's Annual Financial Report.

This improvement has facilitated a reduction to government borrowings and in lowering annual interest expenses across the budget cycle and, consequently, improving net debt and net-to-revenue forecasts.

The updated projections in the 2025–26 Mid-Year Report show net debt is projected to be $11.71bn in 2025–26, increasing to $13.58bn by 2028–29. When compared with the 2025–26 budget, net debt is projected to be lower in each year across the budget cycle and $387m lower by 2028–29, showing that this government's budget repair strategy is working and that ditching the debt cap has not resulted in unchecked accelerated borrowing.

The increase in own-source revenue reflects business and investor confidence in the Territory and confidence that the Northern Territory Government is turning the Territory around in our year of action, certainty and security. It is a sign that the Finocchiaro CLP government's budget repair strategy and our Rebuilding the Economy strategy are growing own-source revenue, thanks to a growing population and a growing economy.

The Territory's economic indicators clearly show this to be the case. The Territory's economy grew by 1% in 2024–25. State final demand in the Territory grew strongly by 2.9% in 2024–25, broadly in line with the 2025–26 budget forecast. Economic growth in our domestic economy was driven by our strong consumer spending, which was higher than anticipated at budget. This is a vote of confidence from Territorians in this government's Rebuilding the Economy strategy.

Although resources investment will remain a cornerstone for our prosperity, and mining and petroleum is expected to remain a major driver of growth in the years ahead, the Territory economy will greatly benefit from expanding the mix of businesses operating in the Territory. Our government has been laying the groundwork to achieve this through making the Territory the best place to do business and creating an economic environment that is competitive, thanks to our reforms which have slashed red tape from merits reviews through to payroll tax.

Greater diversification of our economy will build resilience, create new jobs in new industries and ensure more sustainable growth, increased choice and greater prosperity for Territory families. By working in partnership with entrepreneurs and emerging industry leaders, investing in new skills for business owners and attracting new investment, we can unlock opportunities that strengthen the Territory's economic foundations for the future.

Promisingly, green shoots have already emerged in the Territory economy after one CLP budget. As I mentioned, household spending has improved in the last couple of quarters, labour demand remains strong and job vacancies increased to more than 5,800 in September 2025. Interest rates have declined by 75 basis points, or three-quarters of a percentage point, and this is supporting the uptake of the new HomeGrown Territory and FreshStart grants which will drive stronger housing construction this year and into the next.

Several developments and data releases since the 2025–26 budget have impacted the economic forecast. The forecast for gross state product for 2025–26 remains broadly in line with the 2025–26 budget, although there are some changes to the balance of trade. This reflects a downward revision to exports in 2025–26 due to a longer shutdown period related to planned maintenance works at the Ichthys LNG plant and revised timing of gas exports for the Barossa project, which is now expected to commence in December 2025.

Business investment is expected to ease in 2025–26, although this will be offset by strong growth in public investment.

Employment growth over the year moderated from 1.3% in the June quarter to 0.6% in the September quarter. The slowdown in employment growth aligns with the 2025–26 budget forecast as construction on several large projects winds down. With this government working with businesses and industry to ensure that there is a strong pipeline of projects coming through to replace those winding down projects, employment forecasts are marginally higher than the 2025–26 budget, although the underlying growth profile is expected to be broadly unchanged.

In 2024–25 the Territory's unemployment rate averaged 4.1% below the 2024–25 budget estimate. The average unemployment rate for 2025–26 is now expected to be slightly lower than the 2025–26 budget forecast of 5% as the labour market and jobs growth have been more resilient than anticipated, with a range of new private sector investment projects entering the pipeline in 2025–26. The unemployment rate is thereafter expected to ease, gradually stabilising at about 4.5% by 2028–29, the long-run rate consistent with the economy operating at around full employment.

Wages increased by 3.3% in 2024–25, which is broadly in line with the 2025–26 budget forecast of 3.2%. WPI growth is forecast to be 2.8% in 2025–26, slightly below the 3% forecast in the 2025–26 budget, before trending up to about 3.3% by 2028–29.

Inflation has remained within the RBA's 2% to 3% target band, reaching 2.5% in the September quarter of 2025. This is well below the national rate of 3.2%. Overall, CPI growth is largely tracking the 2025–26 budget forecast profile, with forecasts unchanged over the outlook period.

The Territory population is estimated to have grown by 1.4% to 264,377 persons in 2024–25, above the 0.7% forecast in the 2025–26 budget. This is because under this CLP government people want to live, work and invest in the Territory again. We have seen stronger net overseas migration and stronger net interstate migration expectations relative to the 2025–26 budget.

Population growth is also expected to be stronger in 2025–26. The Territory's population growth is forecast to be 1.1% in 2025–26, slightly higher than the 1% forecast in the 2025–26 budget. Again, it is supported by stronger net overseas migration expectations. Over the forward estimates population growth is expected to average 1.2% per annum as the Territory's migration flows stabilise. This is in line with the 2025–26 budget.

Overall, the 2025–26 Mid-Year Report shows an economy that is strengthening, a population that is growing and net debt that is decelerating under this government's responsible fiscal leadership.

I commend the 2025–26 Mid-Year Report to the Assembly.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
AusMusic T-Shirt Day

Madam SPEAKER: Given that it is AusMusic T-Shirt Day, I will allow members to put on a T-shirt this evening if they feel the need to—as the Member for Nightcliff has.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, of all the events I have attended in Parliament House, none has brought me greater joy than the event that was held here last Tuesday, which commemorated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first East Timorese refugees to Darwin.

It is a salient reminder of the value of humanitarian migration and its contribution towards the NT historically and ongoing. I say ongoing because one of the people I bumped into there was Maria Albion, who is the Principal at Stuart Park Primary School, whom I have mentioned on a number of occasions. She told me that night something I did not know: she was amongst those first cohort of refugees in 1975 who came here from East Timor.

In the spirit of this being our final sitting day, tonight I share a related story of hope for everybody in this Chamber and for all of us this Christmas. Before I came to this place I was an academic, as many of you know. My area of expertise was competitiveness in the global market of skilled migrants. I returned to Darwin a couple of years ago to try to put some of my subject matter expertise to good use.

I did not return to become a politician; I returned to be a senior public servant, and my remit was to lead and focus the Northern Territory Government's strategy on migration, population and talent acquisition because we are experiencing demographic decline, albeit encouragingly, our population growth figures are starting to stabilise.

The reason that has been happening for a number of years, and the argument that I prosecuted, was that we have been competing—valiantly but potentially in vain—against a global market we cannot compete with. Noting also that Australia itself is not necessarily winning in the global race for talent, we are also competing against other states and territories in Australia for immigrant labour, and historically the problem has been that we were unable to be more attractive than a lot of other states and territories on a level playing field.

In order to fill our sink faster than it drains, as it were—that is, achieve substantive population growth—I argued that we need to find ways to slow the rate of drainage and evaporation with social and economic policy levers, if you like, and to fill our sink using new hoses, finding new inputs to fill into the system.

I had a small amount of success in trying to address those matters between August 2023 and 2024 and worked under the auspices of a population policy working group in the public service. For the first time in the Northern Territory's history, we introduced population policy into the administrative orders under the auspices of the Chief Minister, recognising it was something that needed to be dealt with.

Most importantly of all was the work I progressed under the auspices of the federal government on something called complementary pathways migration. That is really what I want to speak about tonight.

Complementary pathways migration was first countenanced by the Global Compact on Refugees, the 2018 UN agreement designed to improve the worldwide response towards the needs of refugees. There are 33 million refugees in the world, and less than 0.5% of those refugees are resettled using existing mechanisms.

In April 2022 a global taskforce was established to expand these complementary pathways mechanisms, with representatives from UNHCR, the international migration organisation; Fragomen, the world's largest global law firm dealing exclusively with immigration; the governments of Canada, the UK, Germany and Australia; and NGOs connected to humanitarian labour pools.

It put together a model which enabled skilled people, who just happened to be refugees, to take up fast-tracked permanent migration quickly and legally, recognising them for their talent and easing tough labour market access by harnessing private sector involvement for administration.

In the Australian context an NGO called Talent Beyond Boundaries is the key organisation that helps to work on complementary pathways. In conjunction with the federal government, it came up with the Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement, which has been hiding in plain sight for years.

In a short space of time we used it to create a competitive advantage for the Northern Territory to stimulate population growth. We brokered an arrangement to job match and bring 100 skilled workers and their families permanently to the Northern Territory to help us with our workforce needs. This is not some humanitarian sidebar; this is a global program that some of the biggest players in the corporate world utilise. Massive companies use it across the world. For example, it is how the NHS in the UK has been procuring nurses.

In Darwin we were trying to get 100 workers to create momentum towards critical mass because we recognised that we needed momentum in the capital city first before moving on to other places like Alice Springs. We did outreach with the private sector and proponents, including INPEX in the gas industry and Arafura Nolans in the mining industry, which we hear about all the time.

Our first goal was to work with healthcare. In late 2023 we had the first tranche of healthcare workers coming to the Northern Territory to work and build something here. My crowning achievement in my time in the public service in that regard was multi-stakeholder pledge 07521—which you can google on the United Nations Global Refugee Forum site—which reads:

> *The Australian Federal Government, in partnership with the Northern Territory Government, Talent Beyond Boundaries and Fragomen, pledge to facilitate 100 job matches by June 2024 under Australia's Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot, providing a pathway for skilled refugees and displaced persons to live and work in the Northern Territory, Australia. The partnership is a practical example of how businesses and business leaders can harness the talent of refugees to address skills shortages, creating a win–win for displaced people, employers and the wider community.*

That agreement should have brought 100 skilled workers and their families to the Northern Territory, but, unfortunately, the former Labor government did not see the merit in it. That is why I left my job and entered this place to progress that work and try to address our demographic decline.

I am proud to announce that although we could not get 100 workers and their families here and that most of the deal evaporated and fell apart, the last four of those people—a renal nurse, an emergency care nurse, an oncology nurse and a hospital pharmacist—and their families from other countries had their permanent visas issued. In December, God willing, they and their families will arrive in Darwin to build a new life, contribute and hopefully be like the Timor-Leste refugees who came 50 years ago.

It is a small thing, and I am sad we could not realise the full totality of the program, but I am hopeful that it may be the beginning of something where we not only open our hearts but also use our heads to try to turn around demographic decline in the north of Australia.

Some of the biggest players in the world have said things like:

'Consider refugees, undocumented labour migrants, as a source of labour. With the growing worldwide turmoil poised by political conflict, economic distress and climate disasters, this group of individuals offer skills and opportunities. Some governments are ahead of the curve and are already creating concessions to fill labour gaps. Further, complementary pathways, though still nascent, can match displaced talent with employers.'

That was a quote from the Fragomen report provided the world over to some of the biggest corporates.

The former minister for immigration wrote to the former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory in the last government to say:

'The Northern Territory Government's involvement in the pilot represents an exciting opportunity to be involved in a novel migration concept at the outset, which could over time have real and lasting benefits for NT employers, the NT economy, as well as the wider NT community. The partnership is a win–win for refugees and displaced people and for the NT as it gains highly sought-after skills that boost the economy and enrich society.'

Complementary pathways is not a silver bullet, but it is an opportunity. It is one of the many opportunities I would like us to seize when we are trying to rebuild the Northern Territory economically and demographically.

The Department of Home Affairs was onboard and willing to hear us out if we could demonstrate independent evidence of successful execution of this pilot. I am hoping that although the original deal has lapsed, we will still be able to demonstrate that we can grow the Territory by utilising bespoke migration mechanisms in the north of Australia. We need to do so; it is vital for north Australia and national security, and it is a win–win for all involved.

There are global eyes on this program still. The World Health Organization, the UK Government, the global forum on refugee mobility and the University of Sydney and ANU are still auditing the work we are doing. We need to accommodate these people and settle them into the Northern Territory. Housing will be a challenge.

I thank the Minister for International Education, Migration and Population and the Minister for Health in particular for allowing me to continue this work in earnest and supporting me wholeheartedly. They could have killed the program, and they did not. I am grateful that they have given it room to run. I likewise want to thank our partners with Talent Beyond Boundaries, Jemma Bailey and Louna Ghawi; and at Fragomen, Teresa Liu and Jannet Balite.

Whilst migration is not a substitute for investing in the skills of Australians, well-targeted migration can complement local skills while contributing to productivity growth. We need dialogues not just on size but on the composition of the migration program.

Just like those first East Timorese refugees to Darwin, I pray that in another 50 years there will be another story of hope and triumph that we will be able to tell and that we will welcome these people with open arms and open hearts.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Hon Peter Chandler

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, in the gallery we have the former Member for Brennan and minister in the NT Government, Peter Chandler, and his wife Robyn. Welcome Peter; good to see you here. For those who do not know, Peter is part of the band, Peter, Paul & Jacko. They play wonderful music, and he will be playing at a special event for us in December.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, today is the last day of parliamentary sittings for 2025, and I wish everyone in the Chamber a safe and merry Christmas.

It has been a big year, and I thank my parliamentary team, who have been incredible to work with over the last 15 months of government. We have just achieved our first full year in government; it is a 12-month period that we can be proud of.

This year we have pushed through more reform than the Territory has seen in a generation, and we have stayed true to our belief of reducing crime, rebooting the economy and restoring our beautiful lifestyle. To the entire team, I say thank you so much for all your support, hard work, dedication and tenacity, making sure we are delivering the change that the Territory needs and deserves.

I thank the people of Spillett who have put me here to serve them. Without their support I would not have the opportunity to be able to deliver the change that Territorians deserve. Being Chief Minister takes you out of your electorate, but you can never forget the place where you have to commit your service.

We have continued this year with the steadfast support of Jess, my wonderful electorate officer, and Traci, who provides support. Without them I would be unable to keep up that important interface with the people of Spillett and fulfil all my other obligations to Territorians. To Jess, thank you. You are my rock. I would not be able to do it without you. To Eli and Mia, I know you guys are the ones doing all the hard work and mum just claims all the credit, but you do a pretty amazing job, so thank you very much.

To Lyndel, Michael, Grace, Alyssa, Marcus, Chris, Sally, Michael, Ella, Isaac, Damion, Joanne, Benjamin, Mitchell, Jeannette, David, Sue, David, Michelle, Klinten, Zara, Harrison, Richard, Narelle, Traci, Dwayne, Paige, Willow, Olivia, Tara, Chris, Cooper, Archie, Isobel, Tony, Jane, Scotty, Graham and Logan, thank you very much for all of your support over the last 12 months. You have been rockstars, and I could not do it without you. I wish you all a very safe and merry Christmas.

I wish the principals and the school community in Spillett a safe and merry Christmas. Durack Primary School is led by the one and only Cindy McLaren, who recently won Top End Region Principal of the Year. Cindy is ending the year on a high and so is Durack Primary and all the staff and students. I wish you all a safe and merry Christmas.

Mother Teresa Catholic Primary School is led by Principal Michelle Garbutt. Michelle has been fantastic to work with. The Member for Brennan and I have a border that supports that school. I wish all the staff and students a safe and merry Christmas.

Zuccoli Primary School has a new principal, Ben McCasker, and he is doing an incredible job. The whole school is doing an incredible job. It is bursting at the seams, so I know the teachers at that school will be looking forward to a well-earned break over Christmas. I hope they get to spend time with loved ones, family and friends, and I wish the entire Zuccoli Primary School community a safe and merry Christmas.

MacKillop Catholic College is led by Principal Lucas Hurley. That school has been celebrating all the achievements of its students over the past few weeks. I had the privilege of attending their graduation. I thank all the students in that school for being amazing contributors to our community. Will, who graduated Year 12, babysat me on McHappy Day. He did an excellent job. Our numbers were looking pretty good on that screen. The school is wonderful. I wish Lucas, his entire team and all the students a safe and merry Christmas.

Palmerston is propped up largely by our incredible seniors. I wish Marg Oliffe, the president of Palmerston 50+ seniors club, all of her committee and team and all the people who attend the club a safe and merry Christmas. They meet every Tuesday and do an incredible job. People love going there. It creates connections and support and is a lot of fun. To Mary and the entire Palmerston 50+ seniors club, have a merry Christmas.

I have been proud to be patron of the Palmerston Probus Club since its inception more years ago than I can remember. Jess might give me an indication—10, 12, 13 years. Okay, I have been doing this a long time. I have been patron of Palmerston Probus Club for 13 years. Iain Morrison and his team do a great job. I wish Iain and the entire Palmerston Probus Club a safe and merry Christmas. I am proud to be your patron and thank you for providing such an incredible club to the people of Palmerston.

I wish the Palmerston and Litchfield Seniors Association, led by Neville Driver, a safe and merry Christmas. They meet every fortnight on a Thursday and have a range of other events as well as an outstanding seniors fortnight calendar they run. It is an incredible operation which provides so much love, support and connection to seniors in Palmerston and the rural community. I wish all of them a safe and merry Christmas.

I also wish the Country Liberal Party members a safe and merry Christmas. Of course, political parties rely on hardworking volunteers to support us to do what we need to do for the community. To our new president, Nathan Land, congratulations and welcome aboard. We all look forward to working with you over your tenure. To the management committee of the CLP, you do an incredible job keeping the show on the road.

To all our volunteers on the ground at each of the CLP branches across the Northern Territory, thank you so much for your tireless and unwavering support, your commitment to the Country Liberal Party, the values that we hold for Territorians and the way in which we are fighting every day to make the Territory a better place for people now and for our kids into the future. I wish you all a safe and merry Christmas.

Thank you to the Legislative Assembly staff at Parliament House, from the Clerk to everyone in between—the Serjeant-at-Arms; Committees staff; parliamentary staff; education services, who are rockstars supporting hundreds of students coming through this building every week; the security teams who keep us safe; Hansard; and all the support teams like the admin crew and the garden crew. It is a massive operation to pull off. I wish them a safe and merry Christmas and thank them very much for all of their hard work.

To the entire public service, seeing as I am Chief Minister—there are tens of thousands of you—thank you for an outstanding year. We have asked a lot, and you have delivered a lot. Your proudest moment of the year was the way in which Cyclone Fina was handled. The recovery effort has been outstanding. My last update from a couple of hours ago was that there are 220 homes left to have power switched back on, which is an unbelievable and unrelenting effort. Thank you to our public service for keeping all the wheels of government moving and allowing us to implement the reform we believe in for Territorians.

Specifically to my Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet led by Luccio Cercarelli, thank you very much; it has been a terrific year and that role we play across the whole of government is incredibly important, particularly with the Territory Coordinator in operation this year and Defence NT under new leadership as well. It has been a big year.

I thank Martin Dole, our brand-new Police Commissioner, and my entire Police team and family. You guys have done a rockstar job this year—unbelievable. There was an 8.3% reduction in the number of victims; that is 1,635 fewer people victimised this year than last year. I take my hat off to our police. They will be working over Christmas, serving and protecting Territorians while we are at home probably having too many drinks and eating way too much. They will be out on our roads protecting us, and I thank them for that.

To our Fire and Emergency Services team, it has been fantastic being the minister for that new agency, and we are proud to see that grow. We had firies in Wurrumiyanga cutting down trees to try to anticipate which ones would fall on powerlines. We had emergency services and our NTES volunteers out in full force everywhere. Bushfires have had a big year as well; it has been an incredible effort. I am proud to be the minister, and I thank them for that.

To all my staff upstairs on the fifth floor, who are probably listening, thank you. It has been a huge effort over the last 15 months, and we can all be proud. It is a team effort, and every step of the way we are stronger together and better for having each other. To everyone, thank you for a strong year. Merry Christmas.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish everyone a merry Christmas. To all the colleagues in the Chamber, from the government to the crossbench members and my own Labor colleagues, I wish everyone a safe and merry Christmas.

I also thank my electorate staff for the wonderful work that they do for the Daly electorate, particularly Kirsty Sayers-Hunt. Thank you for everything that you do from pushing out the letters to setting up meetings with constituents and following up issues with constituents. I think we all know that they are really the ones working behind the scenes for us, especially when we are out and about working with a large electorate. I have said many times in here before that I might be lucky to be home just one night a week, but they are the ones in the office pushing through the paper and getting those issues sorted. Thank you, Kirsty, for your dedication and all your hard work.

Jill is a wonderful staff member who is a part of our team, supporting Kirsty, Joao and I in the office. Thank you for all your support in the office.

I give a special shout-out to Joao, who is in the gallery tonight. Unfortunately, Joao is leaving me next year in mid-January. I am jealous that he is going to Fiji on a huge surfing trip and staying on a boat. I wish I could join you over there, but I might do a holiday over there and come for a surf trip for a week or two if I can get some time next year. I give a huge shout-out to you for all the work that you have done over the last couple of years and to the friendships and memories that we have had travelling out bush, going to the homelands, rolling out a swag and camping next to waterfalls. It has been a tough life, you know?

Daly is one of the most beautiful electorates. There are some great memories, especially getting out to Emu Point. Joao has been doing a lot of work with the whole electorate. When we travel, Joao is the person next to me, driving with me and following up from those meetings.

Thank you for all the work you do, Joao. I know people out bush will miss you, and they really respect you. I think it was last week or the week before when I was in Wadeye, they were asking where you were. You are only in three days a week, but those three days are appreciated. That has helped to ensure that we are

following up on issues in the community, and I appreciate all that work you have done throughout this time. I will miss you, but I will be catching up with you in Fiji for a surf trip, that is for sure. I am bit shocked that you are leaving, as I thought I would never see you go. So come back, because you are always welcome.

I will touch on the work that Thamarrurr Youth Indigenous Corporation has been doing with young people in Wadeye. Earlier this year they went to Canada for a language revitalisation program. They came back with a set of new ideas from what First Nations people are doing in Canada for how they can implement programs in their community.

Young PJ Crocombe is from Wadeye. His mother is a Kardu Diminin traditional owner. He came to me to look at ways to get young people back out on their country and speaking their traditional languages. At the moment, for those who are not aware, many people in Wadeye are not speaking their own traditional language. They are speaking Murrinh-Patha language, which is a language of the Kardu Diminin people, but there are seven other language groups. Many young people are not speaking their own language. PJ came to me and said, 'Look, we are having a real issue with young people around their identity, who they are, and not knowing their totems or Dreaming stories and who they are as young people'.

We set up meetings to look at how we advocate to members of parliament, because we are seeing a huge gap in Wadeye. A lot of the old people are, unfortunately, passing away and there is a gap with how people advocate to politicians. We decided we would go to Canberra to meet with the federal minister and the Independent Member for Indi, Helen Haines, because there is a program in Bright, which sits in her electorate. We met with federal Minister Malarndirri McCarthy. It was a way for the young people to understand how to lobby a minister, meet with ministers and not to be afraid to meet with local members. I think sometimes people put us on this hierarchy and it is a big, scary thing, and it should not be. Young people should be able to come to us and tell us what they need.

They are looking at setting up a pilot project on language revitalisation in Wadeye, having some of the young people employed to work with some of the old people who still speak their traditional languages and looking at how we resource those programs so people are speaking those languages. I look forward to seeing where that evolves and I encourage any support from the government, because it is a great initiative that came out from this program.

It was only last week that I was in Wadeye and had the privilege of being asked to come along and meet with the Homelands Reference Group. They asked me to meet with Shaun Ansell to support discussions about independent schools in the Wadeye region. The old people in those conversations also talked about young people not being able to speak their traditional languages. The Homelands Reference Group and the Thamarrurr youth corporation were linked on that. The young people are saying, 'We need to speak our traditional language', and the old people are saying, 'We need our young people to speak our traditional languages'.

The way we can do that is have a program through the Thamarrurr youth corporation. Also, how do we look at setting up an independent school model on homelands in Wadeye? I know the Member for Mulka has a couple of independent homeland schools out there, as does the Member for Arafura. We are thinking of doing a trip next year to look at that so the community can explore a community-controlled model that is locally governed, culturally appropriate and with a curriculum that implements traditional knowledge, because we are seeing the success of independent schools. I am really excited by that piece of work happening in the Daly electorate.

Before my time runs out, I thank everyone in my electorate and wish them a huge merry Christmas. I will probably run out of time, but I thank everyone from Wagait Beach to Belyuen, Dundee, Southport, Berry Springs, Pine Creek, Fly Creek, Batchelor, Wadeye, Palumpa, Peppimenarti, Daly River, Emu Point, Woodycupaldiya, all the homelands in between and Livingstone.

To all the constituents in my electorate, it has been an absolute honour to represent you this year. I am looking forward to getting out and seeing you all over the next few weeks for the Christmas period. We have a lot of COTA events and community Christmas events.

I give a shout-out to Power and Water. Not many people will know that I have had a tree over my powerline. I have had no power or water. It came back on today. I was worried that I would not have any over at Wagait Beach. I said, 'I am not the priority because I am away. I am in parliament so just sort out what you have to do.' I thank the Power and Water workers for going around and pulling that tree off my powerline. Thankfully it did not disconnect. It was just leaning on it, but I was worried over the week that it would disconnect. I thank the Power and Water workers for coming to my house today and removing that tree.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, firstly, I put my dissent on the record that I did not support the alcohol harm reduction amendment Bill that passed earlier tonight. I do not support it on urgency, and I do not support these approaches without the government putting in place proper support to address the underlying issues. This is not happening.

I say merry Christmas to you and all who are here, working hard with the efforts that many people have contributed during 2025.

In my electorate I thank the elders, leaders and community members who continue to work hard for the people of our communities, Yolngu and balanda. We are fighting to bring real changes to the current system that does not support our law, culture and way. We have big problems with the children who are struggling and lost to drugs, alcohol and gambling. It is a system that will not let us be the decision-makers for our people.

Through all the frustrations, pain and hurt, there are people who get up early in the morning and do their best for our lives, people and culture. There are many successful stories. I have already attended the CDU graduation in Nhulunbuy with my people who are achieving their training. I also look forward to attending school award ceremonies and graduations next year, when we will see some of the fantastic stories of Yolngu children in two-way education, bilingual schools and balanda children finding pathways, and the teachers who have helped them to achieve across our communities.

We have teachers, nurses, doctors, health workers, rangers, businesspeople, police, support workers, community development workers, Yolngu and balanda working hard to uplift and care for all people who live in the Mulka electorate on Yolngu country.

This year many people in the parliament listened very respectfully while I explained Yolngu law, but it is not enough just to listen. The laws and the discussions in this Chamber need to shift greatly if we are to improve the lives for all people in the Northern Territory.

I wish everyone a peaceful, safe Christmas and a happy new year. It is a time to spend with family and loved ones. It is also a time to reflect and think about how we can change and work together to make things better for the NT.

I thank my wife, my family and those who have been standing behind me, supporting me to stand where I could put messages into the Chamber so that we all understand each other in a way that we will work together, making it a life that we walk together and help one another by doing the heavy lifting.

I have been very fortunate to be in here to call out to the parliament. We are still not a part of who we need to be in the community, in this town and in Arnhem Land—balanda and Yolngu working together so that we achieve a better life and brighter future for our families, children and everyone.

Merry Christmas to all and happy new year. I will see you next year.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, may I just say first and foremost that it is a privilege to be serving the residents of Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon as their local MLA. I treasure it and I honour the position. I wish everyone in that electorate all the best for the Christmas season.

I am privileged to be part of Lia Finocchiaro's parliamentary team. To the whole team, thank you. I think we have really put in an effort this year. Not everyone agrees with us, but I know our residents do. I am proud to be a part of this team, so I thank each and every one of you.

Within that team I also thank my northern suburbs colleagues; we often work together. Sorry, I have a bit of a frog in the throat—no, I am not getting emotional about it. The Members for Wanguri, Casuarina and Sanderson and I often get together and unite. I relayed the other night about how we jointly donated a prize fundraiser for the typhoon victims in Philippines and Vietnam; that prize raised $2,000. Thank you. We will continue to do things like that.

I am proud to be part of this Assembly with each and every one of you. It is an important role, and there are only 25 people elected to this role at any one time. We may have differences, but we are all here and we have to value each other.

In my own way, I pay tribute to the Speaker. It has been a pleasure to be her deputy overarching. I want her to know I acknowledge that.

Members know that I am proud of my newsletter. This is my fourth newsletter. How many times have I brought this out—but this is important. I will just read the first paragraph on my latest newsletter:

> *Dear residents,*
>
> *On behalf of myself and our government team, I wish you all the best for the upcoming Christmas and New Year festive season. Hopefully, it will be a joyful time to connect with family and friends, and everyone looks after each other. I am conscious that for some people this can be a stressful and lonely time, and I hope that we show charity and care for our vulnerable residents.*

That is important. I like to stay grounded in my community. As I mentioned last year, moving into December I will be joining my good friend Tejinder Singh, who runs the Sikh Family Food Van, and we will distribute food to vulnerable people in Karama and Malak. We often do that on a Saturday. I go out with him whenever I can. It is a wonderful thing to do.

The Member for Sanderson and I have our joint seniors' Christmas party, which will be held at Darwin Golf Club on 19 December from 12 pm to 3 pm. This will be the second time. We will get at least 130 people. We always go for 150, but you get 20 who do not turn up. I think we are capped at 130, but we will probably get more.

In walking to deliver my newsletter around the streets, one of the things I look for is seniors who might be a bit lonely and might be needing someone. I say to them, 'Why not come? It is free! Come and have a good time. We will connect you up and if you have trouble with mobility we will come and pick you up and take you home.' While you can often talk to the people you know, I look out for the people I do not know, and I also look for those who I think would most benefit from socialising with other people, particularly around that time. I am looking forward to doing that.

The former Member for Brennan is in a group called Peter, Paul & Jacko, which will be playing at the seniors' Christmas party. The band did a fantastic job last year.

I must also say that December is an important month for my family. It is my wife's birthday and my birthday. You may recall that it is on Christmas Day—the 'Life of Brian'. I think I told you that last year. The other thing is I am celebrating my 35th wedding anniversary in December. I was not too sure what the 35th was. You know silver is 25 and gold is 50. I thought it might be rust, but I looked it up and it is not; it is coral. I thought that makes it easy, so I will buy a coral trout and give it to my wife. It is pretty simple. That is what you do with these things. You have to show love and care always.

Having said that, I have to acknowledge my darling wife, Marylou. She is my rock. I also have to acknowledge my two adult children, Fergus and Nadia; they are fabulous. I acknowledge my grandson, Arlo, who turned seven in October. When I was sitting up in the Chair the other night my phone was going off repeatedly. Luckily, it was on silent. It was Arlo trying to get to me on kids' messenger. I had to go out and say, 'I can't take the call right now'.

Obviously, I wish both of our extended families—siblings and all of them—all the best and we will connect up with them over Christmas where we can.

I acknowledge our two dogs, Paddy and Kingsley. Paddy is an 11-year-old labrador and Kingsley is a three-year-old cheeky one of those little fluffy dogs …

Mr Paech: A cocker spaniel?

Mr O'GALLAGHER: A cocker spaniel, that is it; you got it. Wonderful, Member for Gwoja; you got the trick question.

I also have to acknowledge my wonderful electorate officer, Jessi. She and my wife, Marylou, do casual work for me. We work as a great team. They tell me what to do and I do it; it is fantastic. We try to be innovative. You saw the calendars I gave out. These were ideas we came up with at different times. I used to have the magnetic calendar and you pay a heap. No, with this one you can adjust it and do whatever you want.

I will give you a hint about what I will do. We have the Knit and Natter Club that comes every Monday to the library at Karama. I will go there and get Jessi to take lovely photos of the quilts and different people. I will make a calendar for that group and they can give it to every new member who walks in. I love this flexibility; you can print off in your own electorate office. There is a hint for everyone—go for your life.

I thank the LA staff; they have been magnificent—the cleaners and everyone. Each and every one of them has been fantastic. We could not do it without them. I can see the Clerks there. You certainly help me when we get to consideration in detail and all that stuff. Can I say to some of these government members, stop putting in so many bloody amendments; it is ridiculous.

I must admit, doing the CID has been interesting. I could never forget when we did the Territory Coordinator Bill. We had one the other night, too.

It is an important part. I value being Deputy Speaker. You have to be a bit schizophrenic. Down here I am the Member for Karama, a loyal member of government. I can be an attack dog if need be, but when I get up in that Chair I have to put on the neutral hat and represent every member of the Assembly. I try to be balanced. If I upset both sides, I am probably on the right track.

Having said that, I truly wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas. I go back to my maiden speech; some of the virtues I learned from my family—love, compassion, tolerance—are important. That is how people will judge you in the end: what difference did you make to other people in your life?

I honestly say that I wish each and every one of you a safe and enjoyable Christmas. Reach out to someone who looks a bit lonely or vulnerable. You get more out of giving than taking. That is what I do. I wish you all the best.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, this week at the start of the 16 Days of Activism, the CLP government released the so-called roadmap that falls well short of strengthening the sector or protecting women and children. The Northern Territory domestic, family and sexual violence sector is in real crisis. One year on from the landmark coronial inquest, the CLP has walked away from the recommendations and sent a clear message to everyone who participated in that process: that their voices are not valued.

It is deeply upsetting that the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence said yesterday that she has made her position clear on the coronial inquest. That position was dismissive, offensive and hurtful. It was the minister who described the coronial report, the victims' stories and the voices of their families as 'unimpressive' and who then attempted to discredit the Coroner. That is not leadership or representative of the community she is elected to represent.

De-identifying the coronial recommendations in this strategy is a clear sign that this government does not want to be measured or held accountable. De-identifying those recommendations is erasing those women, their stories, the pain and the truth, and those who fought to have them acknowledged.

I reiterate what the family of Ms Ragurrk said to the Coroner:

> *If the solutions are not made in our communities, they will not work in our communities.*

This domestic, family and sexual violence strategy has let down these communities. The majority of funding has gone back into government programs. The strategy contains no robust independent monitoring and evaluation. It fails to deliver meaningful prevention and accountability measures. It overlooks intergenerational trauma, child abuse recovery; the socioeconomic drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence; education campaigns; coercive control; lateral violence; and commercial determinants such as alcohol.

Preventing domestic violence means investing in our frontline workforce. One year on from the coronial inquest, the Territory is still waiting to hear about a Territory-wide domestic violence workforce strategy. We are still waiting for a plan for long-term indexed funding for specialist services. How long does the community have to wait? How many more coronials?

There is strength and resilience in our communities and our Aboriginal women and children. Our government has a duty to honour that strength and take real and meaningful action to provide the proper supports that our families need and deserve.

As we head into the Christmas season, I acknowledge all my communities. I place on the record and speak on behalf of the communities of Docker River, Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Utju (Areyonga), Hermannsburg, Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji), Papunya (Warumpi), Mount Liebig, Kintore, Nyirripi, Mount Ellen, Laramba, Willowra, Lajamanu, Kalkarindji, Dagaragu, Nitjpurru (Pigeon Hole), Yarralin, Lingara, Amanbidji, Bulla, Menngen, Giliwi and Timber Creek, and all the homelands.

I remind the Northern Territory CLP government of its obligations to look after people in the bush and deliver good housing services. Minister, our communities are waiting to have their air conditioners fixed, houses repaired, doors fixed and electricity and plumbing issues fixed. Please do not leave them desperately waiting for these repairs.

On behalf of all the communities in Gwoja, I have been asked to raise those concerns and ask for action. People are sick of waiting for the CLP to take action on housing issues in their communities. It is not good enough. Stop ignoring the bush and the communities of Gwoja. They are sick and tired of seeing you getting selfies in front of new houses while you will not fix their houses.

If you want to go out there, I will happily take you.

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: If you mob want to talk and interject now, I will take you for a free ride. You can see firsthand the conditions that they are living in. They are waiting. They are sick of reporting issues to Housing and getting no action. Stand up and do something about it.

Mr Edgington: Leave our frontline workers alone.

Mr ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will be heard in silence.

Mr PAECH: It is 27 November. That means today it is AusMusic T-Shirt Day. It would be remiss of me not to support this amazing campaign led by Support Act. Today is about acknowledging the amazing contributions that our creatives make in this country. Today I am repping Yothu Yindi in this parliament. This is one of their first designs ever created, which Yothu Yindi wore on the national and international stages.

Today is the day of celebrating musical talent and achievement. Here in the Northern Territory, we have something to be so proud of. The Territory might be small in population, but we are big in creativity and in the music space.

This is an opportunity for all members to make donations to Support Act or Music NT. Support our local artists because they get to celebrate and showcase the Northern Territory on the national stage. To all the musicians, thank you so much for all that you do. Every creative in the Northern Territory has an important role. We need to support them. When you come to the Northern Territory you hear the amazing sounds of our creatives, bands, musicians and solo artists, all celebrating and doing an amazing job.

I place on the record my appreciation to all our creatives in the Northern Territory. If members have not done it yet, jump online and make a donation. It goes to a worthy cause, supporting our musicians, social and emotional wellbeing, fundraising, development opportunities and other amazing things that get us together.

Remember, if you have not been to the National Indigenous Music Awards, chuck it on your list for next year. If you have not been to the mighty Bush Bands Bash in Central Australia, it is a must-do event for next year. A reminder that we are all politicians and always busy around the Territory, but if you cannot make it to a local gig, do not be stingy. Buy a ticket and give it to a constituent or a mate. Those tickets support our local artists and keep our mob going in times of need. We saw that during COVID.

I shout out to all the people in the music scene in the Northern Territory, you are incredible and deadly; you are Territory pride.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to make an additional two-minute contribution.

Leave granted.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I thank my beautiful family. Without them I would not be able to do everything I do. I have the most amazing, loving and supportive husband, and I know that he is there not only for me but also for the kids when I am not. It is easy to dehumanise politicians, but at the end of the day, we are people too. We have problems, debts to pay, little mouths to feed, lunchboxes to make, washing to do on the weekend and all those things, like everyone else.

Without Sam, everything would fall apart. He is there for the kids when they need a parent in their life, and I thank Isla and Issac for being troopers. I had both of them while a member of parliament, so they have only

ever known this life, which is unusual for young children. They are eight and 10, and they mean everything to me. When I leave late at night, am out at late events on a Saturday or whatever it might be, all I am thinking about is heading home to them.

To my family, thank you for the patience, love and support. Thank you to my mum and dad, who are the A, B, C and D backup plan and drop everything to come running for us. It is a machine of logistics running our family life so I can do what I love to do: fighting for the Territory that gave me everything.

My wonderful family, my mother-in-law, Annette, and Denis are always cheering me on and always in my corner. It has not been an easy year for our family, but I thank them for being the incredible people they are, and I love them all very much.

Ms CAHILL (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, before I get onto my Christmas wishes for everybody, I will take a minute to recognise the amazing kids in my electorate who have been the recipients of my Citizenship Awards over the last couple of weeks.

I shout out to Marco Richardson, for always trying his best, being a helpful member of the classroom and showing kindness towards others; and to Percy Peters, for always showing genuine respect for others, fairness and cheering on his classmates when they achieve something.

Congratulations to Saanvi Roopan, the winner in the 9–12 age group for her story, *I Can Hear You: A Suspense Diary*, which was in the Young Literary Awards held recently and was also shortlisted in the same category. She is quite the prolific author, which is fantastic.

Jaxon Jerrett was the recipient of the first Larrakeyah Primary School Principial Appreciation Certificate for his contribution to the school community, which is highly valued. He was thanked for his commitment to serving the school values.

There are also great teachers at Larrakeyah Primary—and St Mary's—with a shout-out to Mrs Caitlan Ingle, who was the Matific Teacher Appreciation Award recipient in recognition of her outstanding dedication, innovative teaching methods and unwavering passion for inspiring young minds in the field of mathematics.

The kids at Larrakeyah Primary are pretty impressive. A group of them recently participated in the Northern Territory Learning Commission's initiative that puts students at the centre of leading research and evidence-informed recommendations, alongside their teachers and school leadership teams, so they can improve practice within their own schools. Some might say they are all politicians in the making. Congratulations to Abigail Gabelish; Sarvad Roopan; Victor Lee; Wesley Dorrian; Paridhi Pandey; Rose Samaratunge; Alexandra Nebauer; Poppy Summers; Shelby Kwok; Lexi Dorrian; Viola Harrop; Ryan Liu; Neve Ross; and Michael Baldry. They are all great kids and it is such a delight to be able to spend time with them every week or two when I manage to get to their school.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, congratulations to Mackenzie Barwell for being welcoming, kind and friendly, with an outstanding attitude to everyone in the school and the community. Mackenzie was the recipient of my citizenship award for September. Also congratulations to Faith Wijerama for consistently bringing her positive energy and kindness to school every day.

In November we awarded Alina Chow—it was a really exciting day for her because not only did she win my citizenship award but she also celebrated her birthday with her schoolmates that morning at assembly, so she got the double whammy that morning—for consistently lending a helping hand around the school and making her community a better place for everyone. Eyn Germono also received a citizenship award for lending a helping hand around the school and making the community a better place for everyone.

The following students from that school entered their works to the Young Territory Author Awards. Congratulations and well done for putting yourself out there to Okith Gunawardana and Chloe Munday. Okith won the under-8s category.

Two boys travelled to Singapore to compete in the SingaCup, the Singapore international youth cup in soccer. Well done, Oisin Farrell, who was there representing the Territory in the under-10s team, and Joshua Cobern, who was there representing the under-8s team.

A special shout-out goes to a member of the electorate, Makaylia Ravlich, who won the Operational Support Member of the Year in the St John NT 2025 Excellence Awards.

I give a big shout-out to all the members of the Port Darwin electorate for all of their support and faith in me for this last 12 months. It has been quite the year. It has been incredibly busy, so I appreciate their patience and support; it has been fantastic. They are a great community.

A big group of international students live in my electorate. It is a great thing for me because looking after international students is one of the greatest joys I have; they are such enthusiastic members of our community and great volunteers.

I also give a huge shout-out to my electorate team, Georgie and Helen. Thank you so much for being able to hold the fort down when I have been travelling, which I have done quite a bit this last 12 months. To the team here in Parliament House, I give a big shout-out to Brett, Warren, Derek, Natalie and Nur. They have done an amazing job supporting me over the last year and I am very appreciative of that.

A big shout-out goes to the CE of the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, Hayley Richards, and her deputy, Kelly Ralston, along with David Orr. They have held my hand as I learned my way forward in the portfolio of Asian Relations and Trade. It was a massive learning curve, but I had those guys with me every step of the way and I do not think I could have come through it without them. I wish them a merry Christmas and thank them. I look forward to where our journeys will take us next year.

I also thank our new CE at the Department of Children and Families, Brent Warren, because he had been in the job only eight weeks and we threw a cyclone at him. He did an exceptionally good job. He did a great initiative with the team to respond once the cleanup started, to support our community. A big thank you to him and the team. It has been a tough week for them, and I know they still have a little more to go in terms of the work they must do. I really appreciate everything they do.

Merry Christmas and thank you to all the community groups, families, mums, dads and people who have been willing to share their stories and journeys with me over this past year. We have worked to make things better for them and the young kids. I appreciate the kids who have been willing to sit down and yarn to me about their experiences in the system, how they think things could be different and the barriers that they face. I appreciate their candid and open discussion, and I look forward to working with those kids over the next year to see that we can make a difference for them.

It would be remiss of me if I did not say a big thank you to my husband, Len. I am not sure what he looks like anymore because I do not see him very much. For us it has been quite a journey over the last 12 months. He has turned into the husband that everyone wants to look for. I go home and dinner is ready, which is incredible—Madam Speaker, you have met my husband, so you know how amazing that is. He is always there whenever I need him to be, and the dinner is edible, too, which is even better. I say thank you to him because I could not do what I do without his support.

Finally, I give a massive shout-out to all my parliamentary colleagues, particularly the Members for Fannie Bay and Fong Lim—team town. We are excited to be able to do things together and it has been great working with everyone in the various community events that we have seen. Merry Christmas to everyone there.

To all the staff who make things happen in this building—there are so many people who you never see who are just getting on with the job. To the guys who keep parliament under control—especially you, Madam Speaker—and to my ministerial colleagues, thank you for being so patient in what has been a fast learning curve as someone who is new to government and straight into portfolios. I could not have done what I have done without that support and understanding, so thank you to everyone.

I cannot wait to see what 2026 brings; I am sure it will be quite the ride. To those on the other side, thank you as well. It is important that we have robust discussion, everyone keeping each other honest, and it is great to know that we can do that. It would not be the same if we did not have a bit beef, right? That is what makes it exciting. It would be very boring for the rest of the community if everything was rosy and sweet every day.

Thank you all for keeping me on my toes, and I cannot wait to see what 2026 brings because I have a feeling it will be a special one for the Northern Territory.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, first of all, just a Christmas message and a thank you to my electorate and the communities of Maningrida, Warruwi, Minjilang, Jabiru, Gunbalanya, people in Kakadu—all the little outstations in between—across the Tiwi Islands, Milikapiti, Wurrumiyanga and Garden Point. Thank you mob for the support.

We all come here for robust debate, like the Member for Port Darwin said, but we all go back to our families. Merry Christmas to all of you; I genuinely mean it. We are going back to our families, so make sure you are safe in the new year. Good luck with looking after our little kids and little babies.

I say a big thank you to my team and those on this side for turning up with a bit of fire. It brings entertainment in this place, as the Member for Port Darwin said.

I thank the staff for keeping us in check.

I send a big, huge shout-out to my partner, Jessica, and my three kids. They watch the political topics; my whole family watch it now. That is what happens when you are involved so heavily in this sort of stuff.

Lastly, I thank my staff, Baden in the office, Alan, Nathan Fejo and Gawin; Merry Christmas, guys. I will see you mob tomorrow for a bit then I am off to Jabiru. Everybody, look after your family, look after yourselves, and see you mob in February.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I will start with my thanks first—to thank my partner, Tom, and the kids because if I speak too much about him I cry, so I will be very brief. They are actually in my office right now watching the TV. It is chaos; there are pieces of food and toys everywhere. Hi, kids. Obviously, I could not do anything without Tom. I have the most spectacular partner. He is just beyond words, so thank you, Tom.

It is AusMusic T-Shirt Day, as we heard from the Member for Gwoja. Madam Speaker, are we allowed to say swear words in here?

Madam SPEAKER: Some swear words.

K McNAMARA: The band's name is FUXACHE—this is Tom's T-shirt. This is a band not only an Aus music band, but this is the second year running I have worn a shirt for a band from my own electorate. At least half this band are from Nightcliff—shout out, guys! Chris, Pete, Sam and Shady are a sick local band. Aus Music Month—woo! Tom will be embarrassed I just did that.

I am happy to reflect on many amazing things that my team and my community and I have achieved this year, and I highlight some of the wonderful volunteers in Nightcliff electorate. We know that our electorates and communities are just held together by volunteers.

I have really incredible staff despite acute under-resourcing as a backbencher. My staff go above and beyond every day, as do my office volunteers. Thank you to Eliza and Harry, my electorate staff; and volunteers, Ally, Cathy, Grusha, Di, Immogen and Lucy. Also thanks to Dan, who comes and visits at least once or twice a week to come and have a cup of tea.

I have to emphasise my gratitude to my EO, Eliza. I know she will be reading the *Hansard* later. Eliza is smart, capable, empathetic and resourceful, and I could not do half of what I do without her. I feel like she was an angel that fell down into my electorate office, and I am so glad she is there. We actually get confused for one another, which I do not understand. We are both very tall with dark hair, but she has very short hair. I do not think we look alike. Despite her best efforts when introducing herself, at the end of so many conversations apparently people say to her, 'It has been so nice to meet you, Kat', and she has to awkwardly say, 'I am so sorry, but I am not Kat'. It happens all the time.

My staff, volunteers and I have been able to achieve a lot of things together in Nightcliff this year. We are advocating for many of our constituents and have been able to solve many tricky problems that I did not think we could solve. Together we have supported many public housing residents with a range of things from accessing health services to housing transfers and advocating for critical issues like their homes getting fixed. We have a lot of constituents who live with disabilities, who we have been working hard for. I say this to them: you deserve the same access to services and public spaces and to live free from discrimination. Our office is always here to support you.

I have been astounded by the challenges people who are on NDIS have. Despite that being a federal portfolio, we have done our best to assist by raising issues and getting things looked at. It has been eye-opening and humbling to get to hear people's stories, and a huge learning curve to learn how to solve the depth and breadth of the things that people are facing. We almost feel like we have had to become a bit of a social worker intake. I have sent my staff to do mental health first aid. We are trying to be as equipped as we can to figure out the best way to serve people.

That has been incredibly satisfying as well. I thank everyone in Nightcliff, Rapid Creek and Coconut Grove for the privilege. I also thank you for the baked treats. I get brought in an inordinate number of baked treats. It is lovely.

A member: On the hips.

K McNAMARA: Definitely. It is really lovely, though. I did not expect things like that. There are people I know, and there are people I have barely met who have said, 'I had a day off today, and I just baked this lemon cake for you guys. Thanks for what you're doing.' We are always snacking on baked goods, so thank you, everyone, for that.

Last week I had the honour of attending the Clontarf end-of-year awards ceremony, and the Stars program. That is the boys' and girls' programs at Darwin Middle, which will soon be Darwin High. I gave out some of the awards. I give a shout-out to the students involved in the program, particularly those who won the awards this year. The Clontarf award recipients were: Stingray of the Year, Kaiya Blomeley; Clontarf Spirit, Kojie Xenie; Community Service, Isaak Schroeder; Top Academic Award, Tadhg Cranley-Barba; Top Attender, Lukey Boase-Senge; Top Trainer, Orsen Fernandez; and Sportsman of the Year, Rufus Abayasekara.

I also give a big shout-out to Ashton Hams, director of the Clontarf program at Nightcliff Middle, and Leicolhn McKellar, the Stars program coordinator there too. These are such fantastic programs. I have to say, the feeling in the room with the Clontarf boys and their mentors—no-one has a dry eye. It is really emotional, and you can see the love between the boys and their mentors and what a brilliant program it is. I shout out to the boys. It is easier for them not to turn up for training or go to their work placements, but they put in the work. It is a 5 am or 6 am start, so good on them.

Stars awards recipients were: High Attender Award, Zavani Mogridge; Academic Award, Lucy Jenkins; Sports Star Award, Ocean Bonson; Rising Star Awards, Holly Parker, Tionee Campbell and Kahtika Fejo; and Star of the Year, Valerie Alford.

There were a lot of tears on that night too, and a lot of hysterical, embarrassing photos getting put up on slideshows. It was very sweet.

I give a shout-out to the Director of the Clontarf program and the Coordinator of the Stars program.

I give a big shout-out to Ashton Hams the director of the Clontarf program and Nightcliff Middle, and Leicolhn McKellar the Stars program coordinator. These are such fantastic programs.

I shout out to some of the community groups and volunteers in the electorate. From Rapid Care Land Care we have Lon Wallis, Michael Christy, Mel Hazud, Louise Harrison, Jill Abraham and Peter O'Hagan. Thank you for everything you do to look after our beautiful environment.

The Nightcliff Dragons has great volunteers in the club committee and the senior and junior coaches. Jackie Edwards has volunteered for the Nightcliff Dragons for over 55 years, as well as Selina Petrilli, another lifetime member; Stu Miles; Mark Wright; Liz Cruse; and many more.

From the Nightcliff parkrun team—I shamefully have to say, I do not do parkrun. I am not a runner, but I am still glad that they do it. Core volunteers make up the run: directors, Karen; Rachel; Julie; Liberty; Shani; Taya; Jess; and Eddy. The support volunteers who are there most weeks are Rajendra, Santosh, Edith, Jasmine, Kamal, Russell, Viki, Helen, Barry, Lee, Roy, Kimmi, Sharon, Connie, Irene, Matt, Nick, Julianne, Phil, Joanne, Greg and Shuyi.

The Nightcliff Cricket Club is entirely run by volunteers; it has some core volunteers who keep the club thriving. To Josh Smith, club president; Andrew Innes, treasurer; John Tate, curator; and Amanda Hoepper, the junior lead, thank you for all you do.

I have also been proud to support many of the local community groups this year, including the Mindil Aces, Nightcliff Football Club, Nightcliff Netball Club, Nightcliff Rugby Club, the cricket club and some students going on interstate trips. I keep threatening the women's AFL team that I will join them and come to training. It has not happened yet, but maybe this off season I will.

I give thanks to my staff as well. We have this community pantry that we have set up at the office; it has just been food going out the door. There are a lot of people now who are eating food from our community pantry who would not otherwise be eating or would be having fewer meals. They are very vulnerable people. We

get it all from the local grocer, and we put it there for the people in need. I am proud that initiative has really taken off.

We have a lot of people who come and donate. People who say that they do not need the food from the community pantry come and say thanks, because they know there are people in need, and they donate things like beans. Thanks to everyone who has been donating.

Next week we put on the seniors' Christmas lunch; I am very much looking forward to that. The high school dancers and the primary school choir come to that.

To all the staff at Parliament House, honestly, you make it bearable coming here; thank you. I love the friendly chats with security, especially in the evenings, and the cleaners in the office. To all the DLA staff, thank you for answering all my endless, probably repetitive, questions.

Thanks so much and happy Christmas everyone.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I start by welcoming some friends who are visiting because, as everyone knows, I turned 60 yesterday. They have come from outside the Northern Territory. Welcome to the Northern Territory parliament. We do some things differently here. It is great to see you all, and enjoy whatever you do here.

I start my end-of-year adjournment by saying it has been a huge year for everyone. I have found it overwhelming at times, but I feel incredibly privileged and grateful to be here in this role. I am deeply grateful to the people of Johnston who elected me, who were so involved. We ran a community campaign because people wanted to see change and things happen differently. Those people have come with us along the journey for the last 18 months. So many of them are still so engaged in what we are doing, it has created a real sense of hope that we can do politics differently.

Thank you to far too many people to name. I remember last year the Member for Karama started reading out of the phone book. I will not do that.

I thank some particular people as well. I start by thanking my staff and volunteers because, as the Member for Nightcliff said, as a crossbencher and an Independent, the resources to do a huge job are minimal. There is no way I could do what I do without an incredible electorate officer in Viv. Thank you, Viv. She does about 10 jobs at once. I do not know how she does it; it is amazing.

We have two Maddys and a Gabe who work for us, plus so many regular volunteers who come in, including Elsa B, Jill, Ian, Ali, Sarah, Louise—I am sorry if I have forgotten you; I will come back to it. There are amazing people who come into our office every week just to do something nice for us. Gwen comes in every week and brings us a plant or some flowers. She is in her eighties and says, 'You are all working hard. I want to do something to make this place nice for all of you.'

Our community is amazing. We have so many wonderful people. Every week we have started to do a Friday shout-out for the amazing people in Johnston who make it so great.

I thank my family as well, who are all amazing. I am lucky enough to have my mum, who is my most loyal supporter. Many of you would have seen her come into this Chamber with her partner. She is a wonderful, inspiring woman. My beautiful sister Annie and her family—I am lucky to have all of them living in Darwin. My two beautiful sons, Jack and Zeph, who do not live here anymore but are both in Darwin at the moment, which is wonderful. They are two amazing young men who do their own great work in the world.

I am so proud of you, Jack and Zeph, and I hope the work that I do here will be part of making sure that your generation, your future and that of those who follow you is safe, thriving and good for everyone in the whole world.

To Johnny, thank you so much for everything you do, in the big and little ways, and all the adventures we have shared and all the ones ahead. Billy is not in the Chamber because Billy is a dog. Billy is my number one Instagram companion and comes with me all the time and is patient with me when I am there and not. Thank you, Billy.

I will talk a little about some of the things that have happened in Johnston and thank people for that. I start most recently with the response to the cyclone. As many people have talked about, the community's response to Cyclone Fina was amazing. So many people in our suburbs came together to help each other, as well as

local businesses and shops that opened their doors, provided food to people and said things like, ‘This is just here for people who are hungry or do not have water or power. Come and have food or just come and be with someone if you are feeling a bit lonely.’ We were lucky enough in one of our suburbs to have power, but the other three did not.

We have a thriving seniors community in Johnston that does lots of different things. Many of them spend time in our office in regular weekly groups as well as often just coming in for a cup of tea. Lots of them like to come in and give me lots of advice. That is great. I love it.

Last year when we had our seniors Christmas party, one of the stood up and said, ‘You shouldn’t have to do this all by yourself. We will help organise it next year’, and that is exactly what they are doing. It is fantastic. We have a group of seniors who are organising the seniors’ Christmas party for Johnston this year. They have said that the one rule this year is there will be no violins. I tell you for free, it is not good to have violins in a hall for a seniors Christmas party. It does not work, so we are not doing that this year.

One of the things that we are doing across the electorate that I am really excited about, starting with young people, is working on a future generations Bill. We are doing that with the community. The idea of that Bill—which I have talked about in the Chamber before—is that as lawmakers we have a responsibility to think about the impact of the laws we are making, not just on us but on future generations and beyond.

We are bringing people together through community meetings in town halls to find out what is important for them for their future, and to learn about the process of lawmaking. We will bring that back to the Chamber as a community members’ Bill. This is what the community wants to see. We have an advisory group made up of young people who are helping us design and do that. It is a really exciting process for us and very hopeful.

People in this Chamber hear me say no a lot to things. Often that is what I am doing. I want to be able to say yes to things; I would much rather that. Part of my responsibility and my role is to represent the voices of the people who are not heard in here. That is what I am trying to do. I also want to find ways that we can agree on things that will be hopeful to build our future and that of the people we represent. That is something I feel positive and hopeful about.

One of the ways that I stay connected—I love Johnston and my community—is going to Rapid Creek markets every Sunday. It is 100% my favourite day of the week. It is a wonderful place. Some of my comrades across the Chamber come there every Sunday. I have been going there for 30 years. It is an incredible community of people. It has the best food in Darwin, if you ask me.

There has been a lot of work done in the last bit of time regarding what we can do to make it better. I have been working with Costa—who some of you might know—and the local council, stallholders and the shop owners to address some of the things that need to be looked after to make it better like shade, parking, toilets and access to good water. It will get even better. If any of you are looking for something good to do on a Sunday, come to Rapid Creek markets.

Every Tuesday, I stand outside one of the local shops in our electorate. That has been a wonderful way to connect with people who are unable to come into the office. I get to have a lot of wonderful conversations there. There are some people who come to see me every week when I am outside a particular shop, and some people just drop by. It is a wonderful way to feel grounded and connected with people.

There are lots of projects we are working on. The main one I highlight is the one we are doing with Tisha Tejaya, who is someone you may know. She is a local artist. Over the course of the year, Tisha has been running drawing workshops with us at Rapid Creek markets, drawing local produce and teaching people how to draw. From that, we are making a whole lot of things, including tote bags and tea towels.

We are also making a calendar, Member for Karama. Our calendar will feature recipes using what is in season and what you can cook with it. Stay tuned for that. I am not as organised as you, Member for Karama, so it is not quite ready yet, but it will be before January next year.

We are using that project, like the one we did with community artists, to raise money for community projects. That is a way of people from the community sharing their skills and us being able to raise funds to support community projects. We will continue that into the new year.

I wish everyone, however you celebrate, a safe and happy new year. I look forward to working with you across our differences towards what we all believe we can create together.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, I speak about a matter that I believe is being misconstrued by the Member for Gwoja; that being the current situation at Yipirinya School.

Yipirinya School is a non-government school that is majority federally funded. It is important to note that the board asked for the Registrar of Non-Government Schools to conduct a special investigation in 2024. The report of the investigation made 26 recommendations, including addressing financial management, school leadership and governance.

The school board also asked for a statutory manager to implement the recommendations of the report. The key focus of current statutory management is to ensure ongoing financial viability and appropriate governance of the school so that it continues to provide education services for Alice Springs children.

An experienced statutory manager was appointed to administer Yipirinya School from 25 June 2025. Under statutory management, the statutory manager assumes the role of the school council. The goal of statutory management is to ensure that the school remains open; the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the school; and that the school is well-positioned to continue to serve the Alice Springs community.

The Northern Territory Government will not be providing emergency funding for the school. The special investigation into Yipirinya School looked into the performance of the school council in terms of governance, composition and skills; the school's relationship with Children's Ground; payments of principal's fines; school council members accepting money and tickets as gifts; school council approving a pay raise for the principal; and the principal approving rental payments out of school funds and continuing payment for staff not rocking up to work.

I will be clear that Yipirinya School plays an important role for Aboriginal children in Central Australia. That is why we will continue to support the school through the department to implement the report's recommendations. Getting the school financially viable is our priority.

I point out to the Member for Gwoja, who was on the panel that appointed the former principal, that the panel members were Pauline Schober; Les Turner, the CEO of the Central Land Council; and Sheralee Taylor. Sheralee, the former Labor candidate for Namatjira in 2024, is featured in many online photos with the Member for Gwoja and is currently an adviser for Minister Malarndirri McCarthy. The hypocrisy from the Member for Gwoja astounds me. These individuals, who are close to the Member for Gwoja, hired and appointed the former principal.

I can also reveal that the former principal was appointed to the NT Board of Studies in 2020 by former minister Lauren Moss. He was then reappointed by former minister Eva Lawler in 2023.

I seek leave to table the interview report of the former Principal of Yipirinya School.

Leave granted.

Mr EDGINGTON (Barkly): Madam Speaker, I extend my best wishes to all Territorians, especially all my constituents in the Barkly electorate. It has been a busy year, and it is hard to believe that we are on the last day of sittings for 2025.

I wish everyone in the Assembly and their family and loved ones a safe and merry Christmas. I give special thanks to all of our team and our 17 members for the work that everyone has done this year. It has been amazing. I can see that everybody has been working together to make things happen in their electorates and for our government to deliver on our commitments. Thank you to all of our members.

I hope everyone has an opportunity to have a break over Christmas. I may or may not see some of you before Christmas. If not, I wish everyone a safe and happy new year.

I thank those I am elected to represent. I feel especially honoured that everyone in my electorate is willing to engage with me and ensure that I am representing their interests every time I am out speaking to people. It is pleasing to talk about a range of things and share information, but also to look, listen and learn from the people in my electorate. They want to talk to me and raise a range of issues about things happening in parliament and things they want to see pursued. I thank them for engaging with me and sharing their experiences and knowledge and, importantly, raising the things that matter most on their behalf.

The Barkly is incredibly diverse in its people, population and the area it covers. The Barkly really is the land of opportunity. There are so many things happening. As I travel through my electorate, it is amazing to see some of those things. I know we have covered some of those issues.

My constituents live as far as south as Aileron, and there is an outstation nearby called Alyuen which is the furthest south in my electorate. Up the Stuart Highway I have some incredible communities ranging from Ti Tree, Barrow Creek, Wilora, Tennant Creek, Elliott, Larrimah and across the Carpentaria to the Barkly, and Robinson River. Also right alongside the Queensland border, there places like Alpurrurulam, down the Sandover Highway to places that some people may not have visited, such as Ampilatwatja, the Utopia homelands, Ali Curung, Epenarra, Canteen Creek and Murray Downs.

In my electorate there are also many homelands, outstations and cattle stations. I thank all the people who occupy those different parts of the electorate for always making me feel welcome. I thank those constituents for raising the important issues with me. I thank the pastoralists in my electorate. I have a huge number of cattle stations and roadhouse operators, and I thank their staff for the important work they do.

Over the next few weeks schools throughout the Barkly will be wrapping up for the year and celebrating their achievements. I am fortunate to have several schools in my electorate—just under 20, remote and urban. I especially thank the principals, teachers and staff who work at those schools. I know the incredible effort they put in, making sure that they not only get the students to school but also provide the best possible education for those students.

Tonight, the Tennant Creek Stars Foundation is having its end-of-year celebration. It is great to see these programs happening in the Barkly. The young women who are coming through the Stars Foundation program are our future leaders.

I thank all the government and non-government agencies and the many Aboriginal corporations in my electorate for the work they do during the year. It is important that we continue to work together to improve our communities for the people we represent.

Most electorates are covered by one council, but I am quite fortunate because I have three local government councils in my electorate: the Barkly Regional Council; the Central Desert Regional Council; and the Roper Gulf Regional Council. Quite a significant area is covered by local government as well. I thank all those elected members from each of the councils and the staff who work in remote communities. Many are employed through local government, and I thank them for the work they do supporting their communities.

I give a big shout-out and thanks to the local businesspeople and small business owners in my electorate for the incredible work they do, not only providing business to our constituents but also employing local people and creating jobs for locals throughout the electorate.

Small business provides a range of services in my electorate, from tyre services in Tennant Creek to cafes and local contractors such as the large civil contractors or tradies out there on the job. They are all pulling together, doing an amazing job. Thank you for all the work you do keeping your doors open, employing locals and providing a great service to all the people in the Barkly. It is tough running a small business, so I thank all those small business owners.

I thank all the Legislative Assembly staff for the work they have done throughout the year. It has been incredible as a lot of the work goes unnoticed, but I can assure you that I certainly see and appreciate the work that you all do. Thank you very much for that. I pass on my thanks and support to all the staff who manage the committees, all the work done by the Legislative Assembly, Hansard, library, cleaners, security staff and, of course, the Speaker's Corner Cafe as well—great work.

In my role as a minister it is important that I also acknowledge the great work by each of my departments. There are a range of departments from Health and Mental Health to all the other areas including Housing, Local Government, Aboriginal Affairs and Essential Services. Thank you to the CEOs and staff in those departments for the work you have done throughout the year.

I also thank the department liaison officers who have contributed to running my office in Parliament House. Thank you for your assistance.

I thank all the first responders, police, fire and emergency services, incredible health staff and St John Ambulance for working on the front line over Christmas, 24 hours a day, seven days a week; thank you for the work that you do.

In my electorate office I thank Aimee, who has done some incredible work keeping the doors open in my office and engaging with constituents, supporting them, passing on issues that I need to know about and providing all that support across the electorate. It is a big job, so thanks for the work that you have done.

I have had quite a few staff on the fifth floor, and I know different members have engaged with staff up on the fifth floor. I think you would all agree with me that they have done incredible work over the last 12 months. I thank David, Justin, Sarah, Ktima, Hayley, Patty, Angus, Russel, Denise and Jess. I have already thanked all the department liaison officers, but there is incredible work done up there, and I thank everybody who had helped. To everybody across the fifth floor who we engage with on a daily basis and who provide support, thank you for your contribution over the last 12 months.

In closing I thank all my family because most members feel the same, that without our families supporting us in the background it would make our job a lot harder. I thank my wife, Nicci, as well as Aimee, Sarah and Jacob for the great support they have given me during the year. It has made my job easier.

Once again, thank you to everybody in my electorate, and all the members here. Have a great Christmas, be safe and enjoy your time.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge a Territorian for his quiet generosity in bringing comfort to some of our youngest and most vulnerable hospital patients. Mr Adam Turley, a resident of Leanyer, has for several years been hand-sewing what are called ‘glow bears’, which are soft comforting teddy bears made with care, colour and compassion, and they glow in the dark. These bears are donated to the Ronald McDonald House charities team at Royal Darwin Hospital and given to sick children facing difficult moments in their young lives.

Adam funds much of his work. He tries to keep the cost of each handmade bear low so that more children can receive this small but powerful gift of kindness. Recently Adam was able to create another batch of glow bears for children at RDH after reaching out to me for a little support. Adam Turley represents the best of community spirit. He sees a need, steps forward quietly and gives from his heart, asking for nothing in return. The Northern Territory is a better place because of people like him. Thank you, Adam.

I also acknowledge the wonderful Total Recreation Dancing with the Celebrities fundraising event held on Saturday 25 October in which I had the privilege of participating. This was my first year taking part, and what an unforgettable experience it was. I had the joy of dancing with Nathan Carroll, who danced with the Chief Minister last year. Unfortunately we did not win, but he proved to be a talented, patient and encouraging partner for me. Although we did not leave with an award, I am certain we had the best time of anyone on that stage. Nathan made every rehearsal enjoyable, and I cannot thank him enough for being a fantastic partner.

I acknowledge my colleagues the Member for Drysdale, who danced beautifully with Georgina Higgie, and the Member for Blain, who performed wonderfully with Faradiba Djawas. Both pairs were successful and well deserving of their awards. Many thanks also to the Member for Brennan, who attended and supported us all.

A special mention goes to the Member for Port Darwin, who has served as the Chair of the Total Recreation Board for a decade. Her longstanding leadership and commitment to this unique organisation has helped it thrive and continue its important work. She is stepping down from that role.

My sincere thanks go to Ramona Bartlett and her hardworking team at Total Recreation—she spent many months organising this event—as well as the instructors and volunteers who gave their time to teach us the steps, spins and sequence, and the sponsors whose generosity ensure Total Recreation can continue providing inclusive recreation opportunities for Territorians of all abilities.

As we move towards the end of this parliamentary year, I reflect on the work we have undertaken and express my deepest gratitude to those who supported me in serving the people of Wanguri. I thank my incredible team at the Wanguri electorate office at Hibiscus: Jade O’Neill for her calm leadership and unwavering professionalism; Kym Hanna, whose warmth and compassion uplifts everyone who enters the office; Mohammad Jobaidul Hoque, known as Fahim, for his positivity, reliability and willingness to take on anything; Laura, for your time in the office earlier this year for organising and running errands; and Ranjana, for helping out when we needed a hand. I am deeply proud of this team. They serve our community with integrity, empathy and efficiency every day.

I also acknowledge the cross-border support from Sara Battye, Jessi Allen-Shaw and Suzanne Spedding, who have stepped in to assist when needed. Your teamwork reflects the spirit of collaboration that strengthens all our electorate offices.

To my northern suburbs team bros, the Members for Casuarina, Sanderson and Karama, thank you for always affording my community your time, generosity and presence. We achieve so much more together.

To the volunteers who make our events possible—pizzas in the park, pancakes in the park, the Sunday markets, letterboxing and so much more—thank you. In particular, I acknowledge Aplonia Raga, Johannes Ladju and Benhur Helwend, who show up time and again.

I thank the Legislative Assembly staff: the cleaners, security, attendants, library staff and all the support staff who keep this building running. You work long hours often unseen, and we are genuinely grateful.

A special mention goes to the secretariat staff who have supported my colleagues and me through significant scrutiny work this year, especially on the Territory Coordinator Bill and the voluntary assisted dying inquiry report. These were large, complex bodies of work requiring long hours and deep expertise. Their guidance and dedication has been invaluable.

I also thank members in this Chamber for the way we have worked together, taking calls, answering emails, sharing ideas and engaging in long, sometimes difficult conversations in the pursuit of good outcomes for all Territorians.

I thank the CLP members who entrusted me to be, first of all, the candidate and now the Member for Wanguri, for putting your trust in me. I thank my constituents and the whole community in the Wanguri electorate for entrusting me to be the new Member for Wanguri.

We have had some small wins. We were the first dementia-friendly electorate office. I am the patron of the Nightcliff Orchid Society. I still cannot grow an orchid, though. I killed them during the cyclone, so I will need some help with that.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my family, whose support enables me to do this job, one that I have grown in such a short time to truly appreciate. I thank my mum; siblings; four-legged children, Charlie, Cody, Captain; and my two-legged child, Rian—good luck for the grand finals next week in the Palmerston Basketball Regional teams. He has two teams in the finals. To my Palmerston colleagues, please go down and support those teams. Again, I thank my husband for everything he does for me, like picking up the extra jobs around the home so that I can do what I do.

I have only one sibling in the Territory. The rest are around the country and the world. I will be on the phone to them soon. I have a brother who also shares a Christmas birthday, Member for Karama. I always have to make sure that I say happy birthday before I say merry Christmas when I call him.

To everybody here, please have a safe and happy Christmas and all the best for 2026. I look forward to working with you all next year.

To Madam Speaker, thank you for letting me sit here in silence and watch the show. Thank you for keeping us all in check.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, as we come to the end of the year and the last day of parliament, I start with a big thank you to our Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro; to you, Madam Speaker; and to all my parliamentary colleagues and all members in the Chamber. I give a special thank you to my northern suburbs team: the Member for Sanderson, Jinson Charls; the Member for Karama, Brian O'Gallagher; and the Member for Wanguri, Oly Carlson. I thank you for a huge year. It has been a pleasure working with you all.

We have worked hard, and I have learned a lot. We had some wins that we can be proud of and, most importantly, we have supported each other. I thank you for your support. I have learned a lot from you. We will hopefully have a good year next year too. If this is what we have achieved in 2025, then after a bit of sleep over Christmas I cannot wait to see what we do in 2026.

To my beautiful wife, Nilam, I thank you for your love, strength, kindness and your ongoing support. It has been great throughout the year. Without you, I would not be able to do what I am doing now. To my kids, Anika and Krishna, you bring me joy every day, especially on the tough days. In politics, there are plenty of those. Thank you.

I thank my hardworking office team: my electorate officer, Sara Battye; and my assistant electorate officers, Ranjana Weerasinghe and Kym Hanna. They do not just work weekdays; they come to night events, weekend events, community cleanups and everything we do at Casuarina. I also thank Sara for the early

Sunday market setups; she lets me know often, with a cheeky smile, that she prefers her sleep-ins. Thank you for your hard work.

A big thank you as well to Eva Susanto, who has volunteered so much of her time at the office and at our Halloween event and today is helping with our Christmas display. I truly appreciate her enthusiasm and kindness.

I also thank Leonie Melder and Derek Mayger for keeping me busy with our wonderful multicultural communities, and for making sure I attend all events; they are my second calendar and reminder throughout the week. I thank you for your unconditional kind support. Thank you from my bottom of heart for being there when I have silly questions to ask.

I thank Christina Boothby—the mother of Minister Boothby—who does a lot of community work at Casuarina. Christina, you do an amazing job in our community. I love you and thank you very much for doing such a good job in our community.

This year I have had the great joy of spending time in our Casuarina schools. I have seen incredible talent and so many proud achievements in our schools. I thank all the educators and support staff who guide our children every day. A special thank you goes to our wonderful principals in Casuarina: Ms Nekatia Pikolous at Dripstone Middle School; Ms Sarah Corry at Henbury School; Ms Paula Sellers at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary; and Ms Liza Parr at Nakara Primary. Your leadership and passion make a real difference to our future generation. Thank you for doing such an amazing job.

Throughout the year I also had the privilege of working with, and being supported by, many business and community leaders in Casuarina. I thank and acknowledge them today: Tony and George Miadous; Vicki Lettice; Warren Ebert; Elysia Billingham; Katy Chin; Praveen Hampole; Bridie Maguire; Penny LaSette; Tony Schelling; Rick Setter; Peter Perrin; Frankie Ennor; Janet Truong; Laura Nguyen; Michael Foley; Narelle Gosstray; Christina Boothby; Judith Roberts; Amanda Swift; Amy Hetherington; Bill Daw; Paul Peterson; Mark Warnock; Gwenda Smallacombe; Judy Smith; Sally Lawrence; Josh Wilson; Maria Boubaris; Katrina Fong Lim; Pat King; Annie Rily; Kellie Hutchins; Andrew Everingham; Gail Marsh; Judy Boland; Tania Sellers; Delma Swan; Debabroto Roy; Swadhin Kumar Paul; Janine Dempsey; and Sandhya Sigdel.

Truly, I could keep going. Casuarina is full of generous and community-minded people. I thank you all for your kind and hardworking support for the Casuarina community and making it a great place to live, work and stay.

I also thank everyone here at parliament who keeps this building running smoothly: security staff; cleaners; building maintenance crews; Hansard; the Table Office; Clerks; library staff; fifth floor staff; and everyone behind the scenes who supports us every day. We appreciate all that you do, and I thank you from bottom of my heart for running this place smoothly.

To this Assembly, thank you. It has been an honour to serve this year and I am excited for the year ahead.

I wish every member, every staff member in parliament, all my Casuarina constituents, all Royal Darwin Hospital staff and every Territorian a very merry Christmas, a happy new year and a safe, joyful holiday season. May it be full of rest, family time and good memories.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I start with my schools. I have six schools in my electorate: Ludmilla Primary School; Parap Primary School; St John's Catholic College; Darwin Middle School; Darwin High School; and the Northern Territory School of Distance Education. They are all amazing.

I have had the opportunity to really get pulled into the school communities, which is an added benefit from my history of working in the education sector and knowing all the schools, but those schools have wrapped their arms around me and brought me in. It has been an amazing year to spend with those schools, working with the kids and teachers and seeing the amazing work that all the school staff do. School staff who are not necessarily teaching the kids all do an amazing job. They work hard day-in and day-out. The run around like crazy. It is a bit like Question Time in the Chamber; sometimes they think they will get one job done and then a bomb gets thrown over there, so they have to change direction. A big thank you goes to all the staff in all my schools.

I am grateful to have attended many award ceremonies and sponsored a lot of awards for kids. I want to give a big shout-out to one teacher at Darwin High School, the Year 11 coordinator, Ms Sevi Redwood. I might

talk more about her as I go through my speech. She has been absolutely amazing for that school and I am pretty sure everyone knows what they have in someone like her.

I thank all of our frontline services; police, fire, health workers, teachers and everybody who are working. They are the guys who will be working over Christmas when a lot of us get breaks. They work during cyclones and all the natural disasters we have, so I thank them for everything they do day-in and day-out every day of the year.

I also thank our parliamentary staff, staff in the Legislative Assembly, and on the fifth floor specifically Hayley, Rachel, Sonia, Nat, Tori, Daniela and Katie, who provided amazing support to myself and my team over the last year. The Legislative Assembly support they provide to us is phenomenal, so thank you to them. They are so knowledgeable, helpful, friendly, professional and willing to assist whenever they can.

To my parliamentary wing and other colleagues, thank you so much. I think I said this last year as well, but I am learning something every day. I am transparent; whenever something is happening I just throw out my thoughts and sometimes I think later that I should have kept it to myself. My parliamentary colleagues, especially in the wing, have been amazing, giving me the time to process things. That has been good.

Thank you to the Committees staff, who are phenomenal people and do an amazing job to help support us with our committees. I started on the House Committee and the Public Accounts Committee. I am still on the Public Accounts Committee, as well as the LCAC and Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

Estimates this year was amazing. I have always been on the other side of Estimates sitting in with government departments or preparing all the briefs for the departments, so it was amazing to be on the other side of it this year and be part of the panel and able to chair some of those Estimate Committee meetings. There have been a record number of inquiries this year, as the Member for Drysdale mentioned in, so we have worked really hard. Thank you to the Member for Drysdale for chairing those; he has been good at bringing everybody together and making a functional committee.

As the assistant minister for People, Sport and Culture I throw out a big thank you to the Minister for People, Sport and Culture and his team. They have been amazing in supporting me trying to assist in those roles. Being able to represent the minister at a lot of events and being the emcee has grown my abilities, so thank you for the opportunity.

I thank the constituents in the electorate of Fannie Bay. It is a dynamic electorate and an amazing number of people come through my door every day. I think I have the busiest electorate in the Northern Territory. I thank everyone who comes through and has a chat with me. I have made many friends and we have helped many people. We have had some wins and some losses, but we have gone through it together. Some amazing people use my community room and, as the Member for Nightcliff said, they bring baked goods constantly. It is showing on my hips; they need to stop.

The businesses in the electorate of Fannie Bay have been phenomenal. Together we have had good conversations about how we can help people grow their business and what we can do to support them. I thank them for coming in and building a relationship with us. I have had an amazing opportunity over the last 12 months to sponsor some students, athletes and clubs. It is a great position to be in as the local member.

I thank the security patrollers who go through our electorate. Territory Protective Services (TPS) and Neptune Security, with the Public Order Response Unit, are doing a good job for us in Fannie Bay. I call or text them and they are usually there within five or 10 minutes, so I thank them.

I open my community room every Saturday morning for the staff at the Parap markets and we have regulars who come in, sit down and have a chat. Tourists come in when they need a break in the air conditioning and new people in the electorate come in all the time. Thank you to the vendors at the market; they are beautiful people doing a really good job.

I am lucky this year to be the patron of the Waratah and PINT Football Clubs. It has been good to get involved, sit behind the scenes and help support them. I give a shout-out to myself, as I started playing with the PINT Football Club 10 years ago in the inaugural women's team. In January they will be having the 10-year women's team of the decade, and I was notified last week that I made the list of the top 45 players who have been winnowed down into that team of the decade. That is a nice accolade; I am not sure I deserve it, but we will see what happens when they draw the final team in January next year. Thank you to the selectors on that committee who chose me to be part of it. I appreciate it.

We have the seniors' Christmas party on 10 December at the Waratah Football Club. We already have about 116 people registered to attend the event, which will be amazing. Thank you to the seniors. I also have a seniors morning tea at the Kurringal Court seniors residential village soon.

A big thank you to Luke and Ella at my electorate office for their amazing work. As many of us have said tonight, we are not always there to help and they keep the place running. Everyone I speak to loves my staff and say they are so helpful. Thank you especially to my volunteers—Joe, Stuart, Jenni and Rosa—who drop things whenever they want. Joe comes down to the markets every Saturday and helps me run that community room. They all fold newsletters and basically do whatever we ask. Thank you.

My final thank you is to my family. I could not do this without them. I have three kids and they have all returned home. They went away and have come home with their partners and babies, so we have eight people in our house at the moment. Thank you to Kalani, for giving me my grandchild Koa. It has been the best thing to happen for our family. Thank you to my family for your support.

I talked earlier about Sevi Redwood, the teacher at Darwin High School. She has been helping our son, who is in Year 11. He is doing a school-based apprenticeship. He is 17 years old and has no brains, and she has been amazing in helping him every day. Thank you so much, Sevi.

Thank you to my husband, who has been absolutely phenomenal in picking up the pieces in that space because I have not been around as much as I usually am. Thank you to my family.

If anybody is travelling by car this Christmas, please drive safely. We had a horror last couple of months on Northern Territory roads, so drive safe and have a good Christmas. We all deserve a little break, so hopefully you will all get a break.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I start first and foremost by thanking my wonderful wife, Olia, who does not see me nearly as much as we would both like. She is always there, keeping the home fires burning and everything going. Thank you, Olia, for your support, keeping me going and packing my lunches. I love you and always look forward to coming home, even if you are already asleep in bed by the time I get there.

I thank my wonderful kids, Jacob, Jason and Joshua. Jason and Joshua were growing up before I got this job so they—particularly Jacob—knew dad a bit before. Josh is at the point where he has only ever known dad in this job. It has been a bit of an adjustment. They say, 'Dad's famous'. I am doing my best to try to raise good, well-grounded young boys who will grow into men. Jacob, Jason and Joshua, I love you very much and look forward to spending more time with you as we move into the Christmas break and I get to spend time away from work.

To my mum, brother and family who are looking after the block while I am busy going to events, thank you. We had some health issues in the family this year. It has been difficult watching people bounce around through the health system and visiting them and seeing, as a consumer, the struggles and strain our health system is groaning under. We pushed through and things are going well now. Mum, I look forward to having you in here on the floor for the opening next year. I hope you are proud of your little baby boy who has come so far.

To my electorate office staff: Kelly, thank you for keeping everything running dealing with all the people coming through the doors while I am running around like a headless chook; Sally and Leanne, thank you for all the work you do. To my wonderful volunteers—Annette, Bron, Kay, Bec, Judith and all the others—I appreciate you so much. This is such a big job that you cannot do it alone; you need as many hands as you can possible have to get the job done.

To the members of the Calder branch in Palmerston: Suzanne Cavanagh, Kay Stevens, Michael, thank you so much. I value everyone else in the Calder branch so much for everything they do, supporting the four members in Palmerston. I look forward to the work we can get done together.

Thank you to the seniors groups in Palmerston: Neville Driver from the Palmerston Litchfield Seniors Association; Marg Oliffe from the Tuesday 50+ Club; and Iain Morrison from Palmerston Probus. I love our seniors associations in Palmerston. When you walk into the 50+ Club they all go, 'Aaah!' It is a great feeling that you have a great relationship with everyone when you catch up.

To the schools of Blain, thank you for welcoming me into your school family: Maisie Floyd from Palmerston College Driver campus; Kirsti Beynon from Palmerston College Rosebery; Moulden Primary School, Sylvia Gregory; Woodroffe Primary School, Kristi West; Forrest Parade School, Annie Keighran; Rosebery

Primary School, Danielle Banicek; Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Stephen Versteegh; Palmerston Christian College, Sonya Melhop; and all the other schools in Palmerston that overlap with the Blain electorate. Thank you so much for inviting me in and letting me be part of your school life.

To the people at Clontarf and Stars, thank you for all the work you do, for inviting me to meet with you and your boys and girls to see the good work you do and attend your end-of-year graduations.

To our hardworking police force, Siiri Tennosaar, senior sergeant OIC of Palmerston Police Station—she be tiny but she be mighty.

Mr Howe: A fantastic officer.

Mr KERLE: What a fantastic officer; I agree Member for Drysdale. Thank you for all your work.

To Joshua Orr of the Territory Safety Division, Ghulam Abbas from the Social Order Unit—a big shout-out to all those units—thank you for working hard every day in an incredibly tough job in demanding positions and we appreciate everything you do and the sacrifices you make.

To the Neptune Public Order Response Unit who support our public housing safety officers, the private security at our markets and many other things, thank you for your work. Thank you for helping to keep Palmerstonians safe.

To the DLA staff, thank you so much. A special shout-out to the Committees staff who assisted on the VAD inquiry this year, to Caroline and Katie, thank you for all your hard work and long hours, to Georgia and Caelan who supported us and to the Hansard staff who had to listen to some harrowing testimony to produce our transcripts, thank you for your work. To all the staff who keep this building running and support us in our work, thank you so much.

To my parliamentary colleagues and my CLP team, I love you all. This is one of the best jobs you could have. We are like a true family. Sometimes we are fighting. Sometimes we are at each other's throats verbally, but we do care for each other. Especially to my CLP team, I love you guys. I really feel at home. It is so great being part of a team that is doing so much good for the Territory. I appreciate that, and I look forward to all the work we will get done in the years to come.

To the ministers and their staff, thank you for all your work, even though I am constantly annoying you with my ministerials and lobbying for my pet projects, particularly the minister for Housing and his staff. They see me coming and all try to hide in their offices and go, 'Oh no, it's Matt about some public housing thing again'. Thank you so much, everyone.

To our indefatigable Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro, thank you for all you have done, all your sacrifices and hard work over so many years to get us all to where we are now. No-one is more qualified to lead our team and to lead this Territory, so thank you.

What a job this is. This is such a different job from anything I have done before. It has been a real learning experience for me this past year. I will call out some highlights; I do not have enough time for all of them, but Bellamack homes—thank you, Minister Burgoyne. We had some serious problems there and I lobbied the minister fairly hard, and he came to the table. After many years we can hopefully put the saga of the Bellamack homes to bed and move forward. That was a huge achievement this year.

Trevor Miller from Woodroffe was attacked with a machete in his own home by two juveniles who were out on bail. That matter is still going before the courts but he is out now and home. Unfortunately, he is not able to drive anymore, but he has an electric scooter.

The VAD inquiry—what a huge piece of work. Thank you to the Attorney-General for her team's hard work on the drafting. There were many pieces of legislation this year, but I will call out a few that I am particularly proud of:

- the Territory Coordinator
- vexatious litigation of third-party merit reviews
- getting rid of the pointless alcohol floor price

- allowing private officers to support our hardworking Corrections officers
- Declan's law phase 2 in response to the tragic death of Linford Feick
- the Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill
- restoring free speech in the NT and restoring common sense to the definition of 'offence'
- youth justice amendments
- allowing Corrections officers to prevent juveniles from escaping detention
- the container deposit scheme amendment, increasing bottle size to three litres, which is a big help for Palmerston.

Over the last year I have kind of felt sometimes I was almost drowning and trying to keep my head above water, learning how everything worked and dealing with the issues that came through the door. Now I am starting to feel like we have a handle on it.

As we move forward into the next sitting year, I look forward to being able to get things done and push forward the agenda for the people of Blain.

I thank everyone and wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, I give a big shout-out to Tammy Karambetis who owns Mellowed Out Greek Takeaway in Gray, because she has just won Small Business Leader at the NT News Territory Leader of the Year Awards. Tammy is a stalwart of our community in Gray. Her business, which she started herself, has brought hope and a new light to the area. She has been incredible. She has hosted public parties to try to activate Gray, especially as Gray has had a hard time over the years.

It is fantastic to see Tammy doing a community-driven effort with her business to bring people back together through these community parties, getting around with her amazing home-cooked Greek food. I thank Tammy so much for everything she does in our community. It has been a pleasure to work with her and together make change for our community.

I acknowledge the Christian community throughout the Northern Territory. Christmas is a traditional Christian holiday. For many Territorians, Australians and people around the world, it is an important date to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. I wish all Christians in the community a merry Christmas and may you enjoy time with loved ones throughout.

I acknowledge the churches throughout Palmerston—St Luke's Anglican Church in Gray, a fantastic church; Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church; the Palmerston Uniting Church; Cross Roads Christian Church; Zion Church Darwin, Hillsong Church; St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church; Cornerstone Christian Fellowship; the Meeting Place Church; Palmerston Seventh Day Adventist Church; and C3 Church.

I thank all those churches for the work they do throughout the community. It does not go unnoticed. I thank church leaders for all their pastoral care and spiritual leadership.

There are many Christians who live in Darwin, Palmerston and throughout the Territory who do not feel they can be open with their faith. I want them to know that I will always fight for them and make sure that they never feel persecuted in the Northern Territory.

In the same vein, I thank the opposition and crossbench. I sincerely humble myself before you all and ask forgiveness for any personal wrongs you may have felt I have given throughout the year. I am a man of conviction and who can be quick into the fray. As I get older, I try to be more disciplined. I ask forgiveness for any personal wrong I may have done and I give my complete forgiveness back in the Christmas spirit.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely thank you for the work that you have done throughout the year in controlling this, at times, madhouse. As mad as it can get in here, what we do is so important. The rare ability for all 25 of us to speak our truths and say what needs to be said without persecution is vital. Our role in controlling that is an immense responsibility. I thank you so much for taking on that duty and ensuring our democracy can continue to flourish in the Northern Territory.

To my CLP team—as the Member for Blain said, it is like joining a family—it has been the most incredible journey. I have sincere respect and love for all of you. It has been incredible what we have been able to achieve together. We have been able to do it only as a team. It has been a wonderful experience. We can do good for the people of the Northern Territory through this incredible team.

I had the pleasure of serving with many incredible leaders in rare opportunities in my military career. To the Chief Minister I can sincerely say that I am serving with one of the best leaders I have had the pleasure of serving. Thank you for everything you do for our team and the people of the Northern Territory.

The Palmerston team has the Members for Brennan and Blain and the Chief Minister. There are four of us, and we are a tight group. We fall back on each other. I know the three of them will have my back whenever I need it. It is fantastic to be a part of that team.

I thank the wider CLP party and Calder Branch members for the trust they have put in me. I am so grateful for that trust they have put in me to win government and serve the community of Drysdale. It is a privilege.

Mel is my electorate officer and she is amazing. Mel, I could not do this without you; you know that. Without you I would probably miss half of my appointments and have no idea what is happening. You run that office like a champion and I value every day we work together. We are an incredible combination; we cover each other. It is a hard job in the Drysdale office; it is not easy. We have a huge caseload. Mel, you amaze me every day. I sincerely thank you.

Thank you, Maria, who is the assistant. She is incredible for her dedication throughout the year. Thank you so much, Maria, for all the work you have put in as well. It is a pleasure and I look forward to another year.

To all my volunteers, I thank you. To the emergency workers over Christmas, my sincere thanks. As I do each year, I will be coming around with the family, dropping off goodies on Christmas Day. We have done it the last two years and will be doing it again this year. My girls love it because the firies always put them in a hat and they crawl through the fire truck. It is important to give back to those who are giving up their Christmas Day. I thank all the workers who will work over the Christmas break.

To Gray Primary School and all the staff, particularly Donna Westaway, you are amazing; Driver Primary School, Simone Timms; and Palmerston College, Maisie Floyd—there is so much more I would like to say but I am running out of time—Good Shepherd School Palmerston campus, thank you for all the work you guys do.

I give my gratitude to the people of Drysdale, every one of them. I truly believe this is a job of service and a duty to them. I hope that each day you feel that I am a servant you can come to and who will fight for you. It is the greatest honour of my life and I hope that I am fulfilling the duty that you entrusted me with. To the people of Drysdale, merry Christmas and my sincere thanks.

My amazing wife, Alice, is God's gift to me. She has followed me through the craziest journeys and stayed by my side the entire time. I could not ask for a better wife. I love her so much and thank her.

My two daughters are the light of my life. The hardest thing about taking up this duty is the time I do not get with them. I try to get back every night in time to see them and kiss them goodnight. I love them so much. I would like them to know that when I am not there, I am doing it for them because I want the best future for them. I love them both more than anything in this whole world.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, tonight is the last adjournment in this House for the year, so I will reflect on my wonderful electorate of Sanderson.

I have really enjoyed the year and getting to know more about my electorate particularly the people, which includes Anula, Berrimah North, Marrara, Wagaman and Wulagi. I represent a diverse melting pot within Sanderson that ranges from some of the most incredible young achievers to long-term born-and-bred Territorians who are now in their twilight years to brand-new migrants who are experiencing a new life in Australia.

My electorate office at Northlakes Shopping Centre is a thriving pulse of our community. The Sanderson Electorate Office Community Room is a highly sought-after meeting space. I am proud to support the following organisations on a regular basis: Alcoholics Anonymous; Australian Independent Retirees; Bininj Kunwok Regional Language and Cultural Centre; Darwin Chorale; Darwin Professional Women; Figure Skating Association NT; Garuda FC; Riding for the Disabled; Darwin Bushwalkers; Grow Group; Motorcycling

Association Australia; Tracy Village Jets; Rural Eats; Healthy Nation; Breast Cancer Voice; Sanderson Book Club; Sanderson Men's Group; and Sanderson Craft Group.

As we come to the end of the year, there are many hardworking businesses at Northlakes that I will mention: Australian Ears and Hearing Care; Bert's; Headquarters Hair; Le Nails and Beauty; Smokemart and GiftBox; Subway; and Darwin Golf Club.

Fridays are often a hub of activity at Northlakes and for those who know, there are groups of friends and acquaintances who catch up for regular coffees. I have spoken about some of these amazing people previously, but I must mention again one of these gentlemen, Vic Ludwig. Vic was a finalist for this year's Hall of Fame Award in the NT News Territory Leader of the Year Awards held at Mindil Beach Casino last night. I was proud to nominate Vic, who has long been regarded as a true football visionary whose contributions have brought immense benefits to the game and to our community. His commitment is remarkable and I congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition. He is 97 years old and still very active in the community.

I am also delighted to acknowledge Miss Demi Cubillo from Wulagi Primary School, who has been named the winner of this year's Apple for the Teacher competition. This honour reflects Miss Cubillo's dedication, compassion and unwavering commitment to her students. Miss Cubillo has received a new Apple Mac computer and her class will enjoy a pizza party courtesy of Hot 100. The entire Wulagi community is immensely proud of her achievement.

Miss Cubillo is representative of the incredible teachers across an amazing group of schools in my electorate. I acknowledge the principals who provide their leadership to all the different schools in my electorate: Anula Primary School Principal Brian Hyke; Marrara Christian College Principal Christine Hibma; Milkwood Steiner School Principal Netanela Mizrahi—she is also a musician; Wulagi Primary School Principal Ray Dixon; Wagaman Primary School Principal Mandy McKinnon; Sanderson Middle School Principal Robert McIntosh; Sanderson Stars program coordinator Terri Antess; and Sanderson Clontarf coordinator Phillip Wills.

All our local teachers remain at the heart of our community. Many were recognised through nominations for World Teachers' Day honours. I congratulate Anthony Busch of Sanderson Middle School, who received the prestigious School-Based Support Person of the Year award for 2025.

End-of-year celebrations have commenced, and I am looking forward to attending these ceremonies.

I acknowledge Anula Primary School's Citizen of the Year Award winner Tathan Esteban. Congratulations also go to the newly anointed school captains for 2026, Sahara Walsh and Lauren Kim, along with vice captains, Isabelle Sammut and Hadleigh Abbott.

One of the greatest privileges of this role is advocating for constituents during their most difficult moments. In 2025 I helped secure appropriate housing for many residents in urgent need. One case involved a constituent undergoing cancer treatment who required stable accommodation close to the hospital. With English as his second language and facing homelessness at an extremely vulnerable time, his situation was deeply distressing. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Minister Edgington and his dedicated staff at the department of Housing, we were able to deliver a swift, compassionate and life-changing outcome. This is the very work that reminds us why we serve.

Many constituents continue to face real challenges in public housing. Delays in securing safe and appropriate homes, ongoing antisocial behaviour and instances where some tenants show little respect for their properties or neighbours remain serious concerns for our community.

At the same time, I acknowledge the work underway by Minister Edgington, his team and the department of Housing to strengthen compliance and lift standards across the system. These efforts are important, and I will continue working closely with them to ensure that residents will finally receive the safe and stable housing they deserve.

This year saw the successful launch of several initiatives aimed at strengthening community connection and supporting families, seniors and people in the Sanderson electorate. This included:

- Sanderson Early Years Art project, fostering creativity in early childhood development
- Sanderson monthly seniors' morning tea, providing regular opportunities for connection and support

- Sanderson Day, celebrating the spirit and identity of our electorate

- movies under the stars and pizzas in the park, creating safe, family-friendly environments for all ages

- the joint Sanderson and Karama seniors' Christmas party, uniting seniors from both electorates, which the Member for Karama already mentioned

- the Sanderson electorate office internship program, promoting inclusivity and providing opportunities for young people, including those living with disability.

I am pleased to report I also provided sponsorship of 102 community events and organisations, and many of those were done together with my northern suburbs colleagues, the Members for Karama, Wanguri and Casuarina. I also attended 116 events in and around the electorate, and doorknocking is ongoing in all the suburbs.

This year also saw the commencement of long-awaited improvement works at the corner of Amy Johnson Avenue and Boulter Road in Berrimah North. Thanks to Minister Yan, his team at DLI, I welcome these initial upgrades and looking forward to the future works to upgrade Boulter Road.

I reflect on the past week when we experienced the close call of Tropical Cyclone Fina. In the lead-up to the cyclone, it gave me great pride to support vulnerable residents by providing a shopping service for those unable to make last-minute supermarket trips. Once it was safe to do so, I visited properties across the electorate where trees had fallen and provided hands-on assistance with the cleanup. Seeing firsthand the resilience, tenacity and mateship of our community reaffirmed just how special Sanderson is. Their strength inspires me daily and strengthens my determination to work tirelessly on their behalf.

This year, 2025, has been a year marked by challenges and triumphs. Through it all the people of Sanderson have demonstrated remarkable resilience, generosity and unity. I am immensely proud to represent them and will continue advocating for their needs, aspirations and wellbeing. There is still much to do as many constituents continue to identify housing, health and crime as their most pressing concerns.

I thank the electorate office staff members: Suzi Spedding; assistant electorate officers Megan Howlett, Synthia Islam and Kym Hanna; volunteers Nazli Hucent, Ronda and Kevin Brien, Paul Wyatt, Christie Damianak, who is also a Year 11 student at the Casuarina Senior College helping in our electorate; and interns Molly and Chiara from the Project 21 team. I also thank all the wonderful volunteers who are always there to help with all the different activities throughout the electorate.

I thank the staff of the Department of People, Sport and Culture. That department was always under a bigger branch, but this year they have been working tirelessly to make sure they are supporting with all the issues. I want to thank them for all the work they have done for the last 14 months supporting me in this role.

Thanks also to my ministerial staff for being an incredible team in this journey: Peter, Katie, Monica, Markus, and extra special thanks to Liv and Mona. I also acknowledge staff members who were with me earlier, Derek and Sachin.

A special thank you to the Legislative Assembly staff for all their hard work, with a special shout-out to the Hansard team for their patience, the Speaker's office, the cafe and the wonderful security team who always welcome us with a smile.

To my CLP colleagues, well done for all the hard work and achievements made in our first full year, led by our Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro. I look forward to continuing to work hard together. To the northern suburbs team, thank you for the teamwork and we will make sure we work together and take it forward.

To my family, my wife, Anu, and children, Aime and Anna, I know that I am not there. Similar to when I was at the hospital, I was always out and about, but thank you for your support and making sure I can do this job.

Finally, with us all together, I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a safe new year. Tropical Cyclone Fina has reminded us all that no matter where we may sit in this Chamber, we are all in essence seeking the same things for our loved ones, colleagues and constituents. This is what drives me to be a diligent, present and effective Member for Sanderson, a proud representative of the people of Sanderson and an extremely proud Territorian.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I reflect on 2025 and wish everyone a safe and merry Christmas. I start by wishing you personally, Madam Speaker, a merry Christmas and to the Member for Johnston, a merry Christmas and happy birthday for earlier in the week.

To the people of Goyder, what a year it has been. Thank you to the rural community for giving me the opportunity to listen to your concerns, share your love of the rural area and continue to advocate to make it even better. Engaging with you all drives me to deliver positive outcomes for my electorate and the greater rural area.

I thank each community member who has stopped by at one of my roadsides, visited my electorate office, chatted to me at the markets, followed me on Facebook, given me a call or sent through an email, even just to say hello. It is with this communication and feedback that I can come to parliament and advocate on your behalf for a better Northern Territory.

There have been some real highlights in 2025. I will start with my personal favourite—a big shout-out to the minister for Sport, who made it all possible. Lighting up Norbuilt Oval at Freds Pass Reserve was an election commitment made by me, the Member for Nelson and the CLP candidate for Daly, Mr Kris Civitarese. On 25 October the three of us joined loyal Crocs supporters to light up the oval for the first time. Southern Districts Football Club games had lights. It was great to see. I quote the club president, 'The real win isn't just the final score in the match; it's seeing 300 kids storming the field at half-time and enjoying kicking a footy around.' I am incredibly grateful for my CLP team making it all possible and to the minister for Sport.

Today we passed the firearms law reform, which was the removal of the 28-day waiting period for second or subsequent firearms, which is very popular in the rural area. I am glad we have delivered that.

We also helped secure mango exports to Western Australia, allowing more Australians to enjoy the fruits of the Territory and support our mango farmers.

It has taken a bit longer that I would have liked, but the Sayer Road intersection upgrade to improve safety and turning access is slowly ticking along. It is technically in the Member for Nelson's electorate, but on the border of mine. From October I will look forward to seeing it done. I am still working on the Freds Pass Road and Arnhem Highway intersection and, hopefully, will have some big news soon.

This year we also purchased Silkwood, which is my favourite thing that this government has done, and I support all our policies wholeheartedly.

Lastly, I pay tribute to Dean and Anitra Jackson for lobbying on behalf of their dog Evie with Evie's Bark, which saw us strengthen animal welfare laws in the Territory to be the strongest they have ever been.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being so warmly welcomed into the six wonderful schools located in my electorate of Goyder. Presenting awards at regular assemblies is always a highlight, and I have attended tremendous events over the year. Each of these schools has an incredible principal who provides strong leadership to the school community and passionate teachers who ensure students achieve their best. A special shout-out goes to the support and administration staff who are sometimes the unsung heroes of our schools.

I acknowledge Ms Sarah Filosi, Principal of Bees Creek Primary School; and Ms Mez Flynn, who is now the Principal of Middle Point Primary School. She was my Year 8 English teacher, so hopefully I am doing her justice with all the persuasive text practice she made me do in Year 8. It is their first year as principals in their respective schools and I am sure everyone has made them feel welcome. I look forward to working with them.

Thank you also to the existing principals: Mr John Harris, Principal of Taminmin College, nominee for NT Principal of the Year—he was also my Year 10 mathematics teacher; Ms Carrie White, Principal of Humpty Doo Primary School; Mr Michael Tooler, Principal of Sattler Christian College; and Mr Chris McAloon, Principal of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School. Thank you to all those principals for their continued leadership and support. I look forward to working with each and every one them as their school progresses through the new year and they work together for the betterment of the next generation of rural kids.

I also shout out to Ms Tracey Bond who is a fantastic teacher at Humpty Doo Primary School, who took out the Outstanding Childhood Teacher award a few weeks ago. Tracey is a wonderful human being and a fantastic asset to the rural community, having taught at many of the rural schools over her career, including teaching me, and inspiring our young people to do great things.

I also enjoyed hearing about the wonderful student achievements at the end-of-year school award ceremonies that I have attended so far, with a few more to come before school wraps up for another year. The Taminmin College Stars Academy graduation and awards event was inspirational, with 12 Year 12 students graduating this year, one being the first ever in their family to complete secondary college.

Also, the Taminmin College Clontarf Academy saw 11 students graduate Year 12 this year, and I am particularly excited to see the future career path of student Elijah Williams as he heads down south to study physics in the new year. He is an incredible man, and we wish him the best of luck.

Congratulations to all the Year 12 students who graduated this year, whether it was through an academic pathway or a work-a-job program. Well done for making it. Your future is wide open, whether you are heading into a trade, off to university, joining the workforce, starting a small business or chasing a dream of your own. Back yourself—just do not forget the rural area is your home and the Territory needs your ideas, energy and leadership.

Many terrific sporting clubs and other groups have made their home in the rural area. Whilst there are too many to name individually, I acknowledge that what they provide to the community extends well beyond the oval, arena, craft room, garden or gathering place; it is the social connections, emotional support and confidence they provide and the memories that people will carry with them forever. Countless hours of volunteering go into each club to make sure that not only it survives but also thrives. I have nothing but admiration for the work these volunteers do for the enjoyment of others. Thank you to all the volunteers throughout the rural area.

This year I have also been fortunate to spend time with Goyder's senior residents from the Palmerston and Litchfield Seniors monthly morning teas at the Humpty Doo Golf Club to their bumper seniors fortnight program. I also enjoy a game of cards on a Thursday afternoon at the golfie with Chris and the gang—I am actually really good at cards too, Madam Speaker—and admiring the work of the craft ladies who get together and create at the Beehive, and the Woollybutt crew who craft in my electorate office and feed me a cake each week. It has been a pleasure to get to know you all and I appreciate the conversations, problem-solving, honest opinions—and they are very honest—and the tricky questions they throw my way.

Additionally, connecting with the local Lions and Rotary clubs and seeing the vital support they deliver to the wider community has reminded me how willing and ready they are to lend a hand. Seniors are invaluable, having a wealth of experience, skills and different perspectives to share. They are great role models and play an active part in educating the next generations, ensuring the survival of our history through storytelling.

Seniors are the most likely to volunteer for the betterment of the community, with their contributions often being overlooked. With some older Territorians experiencing feelings of isolation and loneliness, it is important that we provide the opportunity for connections. I must say that I appreciate each and every one of you and you are always welcome to call into my office if you need anything, even if it is just for a cuppa and a chat.

I hear from a lot of our seniors that when you retire, life apparently gets busier. I am really hoping that is not the case. A lot of fantastic volunteers are seniors, especially in the Rural Garden Club, the Litchfield Orchid Club and the 34 Mile Choir and so many different clubs. They are giving back in their senior years and it is fantastic to see them stay active and engaged. I love supporting them.

I say thank you to my staff, Mega, Sharia, Stuart and Cate, for their hard work, support, keeping me on track, making sure I look presentable and helping me deliver for the rural area and in my parliamentary duties.

To my family, Mel, Mum and Dad, Chris, Kath and Daniel, I could not do what I do without you and your constant support.

A special merry Christmas to Miss Louise De Dominico, and thank you for sharing your husband with the Territory.

I look forward to the elusive day off over Christmas to share the cheer with my fiancee, Mel, and our growing zoo. I was informed last night by Mel that we bought a new horse, which was delivered this afternoon and has been added to our collection. We have Dolly the horse, Sue the bull, 10 chickens and roosters—Mel tells me they all have names—and dogs Sunny and Thunder. Thank you for supporting me and lighting up my days. I love you, Mel. Welcome to the family, Cricket the horse.

In 2026 I will continue to fight to ensure the rural area gets its fair share. I will continue to work on the commitments I made during my election campaign and since. I remain focused on delivering upgrades to the Arnhem Highway and Freds Pass Road intersection, calling for road safety upgrades, installation of a playground at the Humpty Doo Golf Club, construction of a floating pontoon at Corroboree Billabong and an upgrade to the Kiss and Go area at the Humpty Doo Primary School.

To Senator Price, my CLP colleagues, our leader Lia Finocchiaro and especially the Member for Nelson, Gerard Maley, who I spend an incredible amount of time with going to rural events—I must drive him crazy—thank you for all the support you have given me and the strong drive you all have to improve the Territory. Similarly, a shout-out goes to Kris Civitarese, who works hard for the rural area alongside his colleagues at Litchfield Council, and Nicole, who keeps him on track and is always quick with a joke. I love you all.

I give a shout-out to a special volunteer in the Douglas Daly brigade, Ms Phoebe Maritz who, despite not being a landowner herself, is a hardworking volunteer and dedicates herself to keeping her community safe. She does not do it to receive praise and will be embarrassed that I am speaking of it now, but she deserves a special shout-out. Well done, Phoebe, and thank you to all the volunteer fire brigades that keep us safe.

Madam SPEAKER: That concludes parliament for 2025. I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.