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15th Assembly



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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

VISITORS
U3A Darwin

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of a community group from U3A Darwin. On behalf of honourable members, I welcome you to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Cameras in Gallery

Madam SPEAKER: I remind people in the gallery that they cannot use cameras. It is one of the rules of this parliament inside the Chamber.

YOUTH JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 31

Continued from 30 July 2025.

Mr MALEY (Corrections): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, our Territory Labor opposition team believes it is unacceptable that the CLP government has brought this legislation into the Northern Territory parliament on urgency. The government has given our team less than 24 hours to scrutinise and consider an important Bill that will have an impact on the whole of the Northern Territory. We have had less than 24 hours to do our job properly as members of parliament and scrutinise the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill that will impact the young people of the Territory—the future of the Territory.

The CLP has brought the Bill in on urgency. The changes to the processes of parliament under the CLP government have been skewed to provide less opportunity for scrutiny in lawmaking for the Northern Territory—this is unacceptable for any member of parliament in any jurisdiction in this country under the Westminster system—and to do our job properly in this democracy.

It is even more unacceptable that the CLP has disregarded not only fellow members of parliament but also deceived the people it claims to represent—Territorians—about the content of this Bill. The CLP government's claims that this Bill will somehow make our community safer are false. We have had less than 24 hours to scrutinise this Bill and get insight to the processes that have changed. The effect of this Bill will be to put more children and young people into prison and entrench them further in a cycle of crime with little opportunity for reform. There is little opportunity for these young people to have their behaviour, which has underlying causes, addressed. This is not the way forward for the Northern Territory.

Those who bother to do their job properly know intuitively that children are not born bad; they are a result of their circumstances and environment. Many young people in the justice system face a complex set of circumstances that result in their offending behaviour.

Let us not forget the fundamental truth that we are to consider this legislation with less than 24 hours to do our job. The substance of this Bill revolves around how Corrections staff deal with an overloaded and under-resourced youth detention facility. It reintroduces measures that have largely been outlawed in every other jurisdiction in Australia. Why does the CLP government think that will make a difference? These are regressive, punitive and traumatising measures and methods for children and young people.

The vast majority of Territorians do not believe that the answer to crime in the Territory is to lock up children. I have had many conversations in the last 11 months as the Opposition Leader, and this remains firmly a comment I hear. Surprisingly, people from big businesses and industry all say the same thing to me. The majority of Territorians understand that prison is a one-way street for further criminalisation of children and young people who present to these detention centres with a wide range of cognitive impairments, disabilities, mental health concerns and medical issues that underly their offending behaviour. Placing these young people in an overcrowded punitive environment is inappropriate.

On Monday we received a briefing about the Bill—not with the Bill. The Attorney-General told us to get a briefing when we said, 'Let us see the Bill'. To her dismay, the Attorney-General, the first law officer of the

Northern Territory, did not know that her government did not provide us with the Bill during that briefing. She does not even know that her government is incompetent; how embarrassing is that? We are talking about urgency and important issues for the Territory, but the Attorney-General does not know that her government cannot be bothered to give the opposition and the crossbench the Bill under urgency at the briefing. We received the Bill at 10.27 am yesterday—less than 24 hours ago.

In the urgent briefing on Monday there was no mention of a number of extremely regressive elements included in the Bill. We asked about the dismantling of the Youth Justice Advisory Committee, and it was confirmed during the briefing. The reintroduction of security dogs as a behaviour management measure was one that we did not hear about. The CLP government failed to consult with frontline services, Aboriginal legal organisations and the Children's Commissioner, and it did not tell parliament what was in the Bill. That is not urgency; that is cowardice. That is not doing your job; that is not being a good government. The CLP government went out of its way to deliberately hide some of the Bill's key elements because it knows how shocking and bad they are.

I must put my thoughts on the table and say I am sorry that the hardworking public servants, who do their jobs day-in and day-out, have an incompetent and deceptive CLP government at the helm. Those public servants know that the work they do is important and affects all Territorians, particularly the future of the Territory with our young people. It must have been gut-wrenching to see this play out in the public sphere, knowing that the government has been deceptive and created a false sense of what is in the Bill—the work that the hardworking public servants have done under the instruction of the incompetent CLP government.

It is beyond belief that nine years after the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory—I remind the Chamber that was a $50m royal commission—we are again talking about the use of spit hoods, increasing powers for the use of force against young people and the use of dogs to control young people. This is not about keeping the community safe; this is about the government's failing law and order regime. The deflection is now coming into play with the Northern Territory's legislation. It is about this government, just like the last CLP government, demonising and damaging children in the pursuit of a desperately populist agenda. That is a dangerous and slippery slope, and CLP members are already jumping from the top to slide down.

Almost every one of these measures—spit hoods, dog control and mechanical restraints—were either explicitly condemned or ruled out by the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. The CLP has chosen to ignore every lesson, testimony, Territorian, service provider and expert who participated in the process of that $50m royal commission.

I will return to this later, but I call out the deeply concerning trend emerging from this government, because this is relevant to today's debate and the future of the Northern Territory. We are increasingly hearing the government's deliberate use of language to demonise and silence large sections of the Territory community. More and more, Territorians who experience vulnerability or disadvantage, Territorians who raise their voice and ask questions or offer criticisms, Territorians with expertise in particular fields and even our hardworking public servants who have been silenced are being discredited or disparaged by the CLP government. It is a deliberate and divisive tactic to establish an us-and-them mentality across the community. It is uneducated and focused on demonising those who want good governance. It is demoralising and derogatory.

All the terms that the government has started using, particularly in the last week and a half, are small examples of weaponised language against critics to try to silence and shame them and to 'other' Territorians for daring to express their views and concerns, such as the times when they call out and criticise the CLP government when it is ignoring expert advice and evidence in favour of populist measures. The government will end up doing more harm to the Northern Territory than good.

The CLP's tactics have become even more insidious, seeking to dehumanise those in our community experiencing disadvantage, dysfunction, poverty and domestic violence in their everyday lives. Make no mistake: this is done deliberately; it is designed to smooth the path for the government's increasingly punitive measures under the guise of community safety. They are cheap and nasty tactics, which we have seen across the world and which ultimately make communities worse off. These tactics make us less safe, weaken our sense of a united community and whip up fear, hate and division. It is a disgraceful way for any government to govern, and we will continue to stand up and call it out for what it is.

It is no surprise that the CLP government is deploying this tactic with its proposed youth justice laws. It is also no surprise that the government politicised the horrific incident at the Darwin Show last weekend to justify ramming through these laws. The government claims to put victims first, yet the Chief Minister's statement on this incident made no offering of thoughts about the 15-year-old victim. There was not a single

mention of the victim. CLP members, go to your Facebook pages and double-check the words of your leader, Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro. You will see that she did not mention the victim of that stabbing. It has all been for political pointscoring, and that is disgusting behaviour from any leader, particularly the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

This is the fourth time in less than 12 months that the CLP has rewritten crime laws and made a big deal about rushing them through on urgency. Every time it has done this, including today, the CLP government has failed to consult frontline staff or the community about the changes and crime has worsened once the changes have been made. It is becoming a dangerous stunt. It is chaos disguised as policy and a kneejerk reaction to mounting public pressure, but there are no long-term solutions.

The approach the CLP takes is not an actual plan to break the cycle of youth offending. Stripping away basic sentencing principles and ramping up punitive measures might grab headlines but does nothing to change the root causes of crime in the community. This government is trying to fix crime with press releases and panic policies. After only 11 months in government, the CLP is out of touch and out of ideas.

There are two questions I hear from the community which deserve an answer. The CLP government has started to attack Territorians who ask questions. We will ask these questions on their behalf, as we are used to the government's aggression, abusive language, name-calling and deflection. We will wear the brunt of that on behalf of Territorians because they deserve answers. If these laws are so urgent, why has the government not already introduced them? If these laws are so good, why did this government not show anyone the Bill before introducing it yesterday and consult on those changes? Rather than answering these questions, the CLP has so far attacked anyone who asked them. I hope that the Corrections minister has the gumption to answer those questions in his wrap-up to this debate.

This is a deliberate strategy to deflect from what is going on in this government. It is a government without answers to improve community safety and tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. The CLP came to government full of arrogance, saying that it had all the answers. In reality the CLP had a handful of legislative amendments that looked good on Facebook posts and sounded good when campaigning in the community. Now that those laws are in place, where are the results? Territorians ask us that, and we are asking the government that.

Our justice system is in crisis. There are more Territorians on a path to lifelong criminal behaviour, and crime is on the rise. The CLP's approach is failing, but it refuses to admit that or take responsibility. We have seen the CLP introduce more laws to lock up more people, with no corresponding investment in prevention, rehabilitation, early intervention models or community engagement.

It is no secret that the Territory faces significant social challenges. This is not new. A disproportionate number of Territorians live below the poverty line, experiencing significant disadvantage. Without addressing these issues, we will never address the issue of crime. We never hear this government talk about those things. What is it implementing or supporting to create long-term sustainable change across the Territory, particularly when it comes to poverty and disadvantage? These are the fundamentals that will turn around the life of a young person or an adult. The government should be investing in housing, education, strong governance and community leadership, local decision-making and community-led justice solutions.

Six law and justice groups were established under the former Labor government. This week we heard that, shockingly, the Attorney-General has not bothered to visit any of those six groups. There are only six. She has been the Attorney-General for 11 months and has not bothered to visit any of the law and justice groups, to listen, learn and provide support.

The Member for Barkly made a big deal in Question Time yesterday about the housing builds, which is great because more than 200 houses have been built. As much as the member likes to take his selfies out on the road and claim credit for the former Labor government's work on remote housing investment, there was no mention that the former Territory Labor and current Albanese Labor governments were the signatories to the 10-year $4bn deal on remote housing. It is a sign of weak leadership not to acknowledge those who built the path before them.

The last time the CLP was in power it built exactly one house in the bush in its last two years of government.

Mr Edgington: We just delivered a record.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Ms UIBO: Of course it is a record if you deliver more than one house, because you only built one house in the last CLP government.

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35: Relevance to Subject. I thought we were debating youth crime, not housing. I cannot link them.

Madam SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has plenty of time and latitude to make her points on this Bill.

Ms UIBO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your ruling because obviously the Member for Goyder has no clue and ignored what I just spoke about. Let me repeat it for the record.

The fundamentals of turning a person's life around—for the benefit of the Member for Goyder—is housing. So, yes, housing does have something to do with youth justice. The Member for Goyder can perhaps ask his government members for a briefing about how housing affects youth justice. I will leave it to him to do the work because I have already done that and connected the dots. Unfortunately, some CLP members are a bit dimmer than others.

The former CLP government built one house in the last two years of being in power. This time it is at least honouring the housing agreement. We support you in this, Member for Barkly, because housing will make a difference by alleviating overcrowding, which is linked to health. Member for Goyder, housing is also linked to education, employment and justice outcomes. We will support the work on remote housing and honour that agreement. The good news is that the CLP cannot weasel its way out of that one; it is too late. Housing for remote communities is protected for the next 10 years.

The CLP government has no positive or meaningful plans for any community in the Territory. Some of the good news stories it has shared in the House are the impacts of decisions made or supported by the former Labor government.

Clearly the CLP has no economic vision. It has an absent Treasurer who does not attend economic forums and is out fishing during an important time for the Northern Territory budget. There is no plan for growth and development. The CLP government has no plans for jobs.

We talked about the social elements, so now I am speaking about the economic elements that will move the dial on crime and antisocial behaviour. Investing in and focusing on these fundamentals takes steady, sustained effort. The CLP continues to take the easy way out. It introduces or changes laws and writes more press releases and deflects, name-calls and blames when that does not work.

Government members have made it clear that they do not care for evidence or facts, except for the slip of the tongue by the Treasurer yesterday when he said, 'Why would we ignore the experts when given advice?' If the CLP listened to the experts, it would not be doing this to the Northern Territory's laws today. Let us give the CLP some facts, despite its inability to listen to the facts.

The Minister for Corrections described children in prison as having volatile and complex behaviours, presumably to justify the return of spit hoods and additional use-of-force powers on children and young people in detention. The suggestion from the Minister for Corrections is that children were just born this way.

The Minister for Corrections and the Chief Minister fail to acknowledge the reality of life for the young people we are talking about. Many have experienced maltreatment or neglect. Many have spent time in out-of-home care, meaning their homes and families are not safe for them. Many have turned to drugs and alcohol. Many have struggled at school and in their education journey. Many have lived with substance-abusing parents or carers who have been in and out of jail as adults. Many of these young people have experienced homelessness or unstable accommodation. There is the link, for the Member for Goyder's reference. Many are more likely to have poor physical and mental health and reduced cognitive ability.

The Minister for Corrections suggested that these kids were born bad and deserve to be locked up and their behaviour is volatile and complex for no reason. The CLP members are not doing their job and looking behind the facts. That is irresponsible and misleading. It is also destructive, feeding an us-and-them narrative—which the CLP does on a daily basis—and seeking to dehumanise our Territory kids who need therapeutic care, mental health and wellbeing support and medical assistance, rather than punishment and further abuse.

Yesterday I met with an organisation that engages with young people. I heard a heartfelt and positive story. The people in that organisation volunteer some of their time to engage with youth at the detention centre in

Darwin. The heartwarming story is that a young person, who had not engaged in any positive behaviour and had displayed quite negative and aggressive behaviour in the detention centre, has built a relationship with those hardworking NGO staff. The positive outcome is that young person will now engage with them for pathways out of detention and requested that this organisation to be their support in engaging in life after detention.

It was such an uplifting story—a small part of the day to hear an important message about not giving up on our young people even when on the outside, and after reading the list of offences a young person may have committed—to know that there is still light in that young person. It is important, particularly on a day like today, to remember that. Often people will just focus on the darkness in someone, but there is light inside some of those young people.

The vast majority of Territorians do not believe that locking up children is the answer. Unlike the CLP, Territorians understand many of these kids have come from incredibly difficult and traumatic backgrounds and that their behaviour is a direct result of that. If you do not address those underlying behaviours and complexities, things will never change.

I do not want the CLP members to jump into action and defend themselves now, but this is not an excuse; this is the reason. When people ask, 'Why would someone do that? Why would this happen in our community? Why are we unsafe because of the actions of a young person?', there are no excuses for it; let me be clear about that. There are no excuses, but there are reasons. I listed a multitude of the complexities and the reasons—not excuses—that young people offend.

The new youth detention facility at Holtze was specifically designed to provide children and young people with the right mental health, emotional and health supports to get them on a much-needed better path. As the CLP locks up more and more children in that facility, there will be no room and capacity for that therapeutic work. We asked about this in the briefing. We have been reassured that a therapeutic model of care will be continued, but, as we have unfortunately seen with the growing pressures in our adult Corrections facilities and now the spillover in the Palmerston watch house and other places across the Northern Territory, we do not have faith that our hardworking youth justice officers will be able to deliver the much-needed therapeutic care models to these young people with such an overload. That is what we expect to see over the next few months if these changes go through today.

Children are already being double-bunked in the youth justice facility, and overcrowding will only get worse. Can you imagine coming out of the overcrowding in your own home, offending and then being put in a similar situation when it is meant to be about trying to get you back on track? Putting children with FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder), mental disabilities, cognitive issues and mental health concerns in this sort of environment is definitely a recipe for disaster. Corrections staff know it, and this is why today we are talking about spit hoods, control dogs and the use of force rather than crime prevention and early intervention to stop kids and young people ending up in the detention facilities in the first place.

As usual, this government is treating the symptoms while ignoring the causes. This is not what the community wants or deserves. The community wants to see and our Labor opposition would support having:

- support services and programs outside of the justice system, and investment in these, to prevent and reduce children and young people's contact with the justice system

- wraparound support, working with vulnerable families to address whatever challenges they are facing, including alcohol and drug support, bail support accommodation and post-release support

- investment in diversion programs that move kids out of the cycle of offending

- investment in alternative first responder models, with police working alongside community workers, youth workers and health practitioners to get kids on a better path

- bail support accommodation, where kids are transitioned back into the community safely and effectively.

Territorians do not want to see kids locked up. They do not want this to be the first resort rather than the last resort, entrenching a young person further in a life of crime. Territorians have been listening to the debate, and we have heard from many people—often behind closed doors—that if they speak up against the government they will be targeted, ignored or punished through their funding models. That CLP government mentality and attitude and its lack of engagement with the wider community is becoming a dangerous and

slippery slope. Ultimately, it will lead to more harm than good. It is beyond belief that this CLP government simply does not get it.

Perhaps, deep down, the CLP does get it. I am a glass-half-full person. I have always been an optimist, and even with the pressures of the last 11 months I have tried to maintain that attitude. Maybe the CLP gets it and does not have the answers or is too afraid or too proud to ask for help from the experts. The CLP needs to ask the experts to provide it with the structures to support those in the field who know what the difference will be if effort is put into the medium and long-term changes.

I think some government members have doubt. Yesterday the Member for Barkly acknowledged that these rushed laws probably will not make a bit of difference to reducing crime. I would be happy to provide the transcript of the Member for Barkly's wording in his interview yesterday.

Ms BOOTHBY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The Leader of the Opposition cannot make up things about the Member for Barkly. Can you prove where he said that yesterday? That is not true.

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order. He will have an opportunity to respond later in the day.

Ms UIBO: We will be happy to table the ABC interview with the words from the Member for Barkly for the Attorney-General who, again, does not seem to know what is happening in her own government.

It is irresponsible and deceptive for the Chief Minister and her government to pass off these laws as crime solutions because they are not crime solutions.

The Member for Gwoja has spoken about the cost of locking up children and young people. As well as the well-documented social impact of the youth justice system in the Northern Territory, there is also an economic impact. We asked questions about that in Estimates last month. It costs Territory taxpayers—whom the CLP likes to mention—more than $3,600 a day for every child or young person who is put behind the wire. It is a phenomenal amount.

The CLP government says that it cannot afford critical road infrastructure, school infrastructure, health infrastructure and the law and justice groups that make a difference in the community solution space. The government says that it cannot afford to fund Aboriginal ranger groups or invest in renewables, the visitor economy or domestic, family and sexual violence prevention. However, the CLP apparently can afford to lock up more children, at $3,600 per day per young person in a Northern Territory detention facility. Government members can go to ministers and their departments to get briefings, if those members can bother to do their job, to find out who, what and how it would impact the economy. The CLP government has no positive solutions; it has only the wrong solutions for the betterment of the Northern Territory.

Youth justice is about children and young people who have been let down by many people in their lives, often the very people in whom they placed their trust to look after them, which is how they ended up going down the wrong path. There are no excuses, but a multitude of complex reasons. Imagine if the Northern Territory Government was to spend $3,600 a day on addressing the underlying causes of youth crime and put that money and investment into health screening for kids and young people to identify and address cognitive needs, disabilities and mental health and wellbeing issues and get them into appropriate diversion programs. We do not care, call them boot camps if you want, but get them up and running because that is what you promised Territorians. Not a single boot camp to date has been announced, supported or invested in by the CLP government.

Imagine if that $3,600 a day was invested into getting young people re-engaged in education or training pathways rather than penalising them or their families for not getting them to school. Imagine if there was true engagement and training pathways supported.

There is a constant swathe of anomalies and inconsistencies from CLP members. The Member for Fannie Bay said that people were not surprised by the horrific stabbing at the Royal Darwin Show on the weekend. According to the Member for Fannie Bay, everyone thinks that this is just how it is. I can assure the Member for Fannie Bay that this is not normal behaviour, it is not what people expect, and many people were shocked. No-one thinks this is normal or okay; even the Chief Minister said that. It is one thing I agree with the Chief Minister on.

We all have a responsibility to do better for the Northern Territory. Whether it is the government, the opposition or the crossbench, we all have a responsibility to make this place better, and that is our legacy. Upon coming to parliament, when you were first elected, make your milestone these four years of service to

your community. Using those four years as your end date, will you leave the Territory in a better place for your constituents?

The government's responsibility is to the whole of the Northern Territory, not just the 17 electorates you represent. Is it the responsibility of your government to address the underlying causes of children and young people's offending behaviour? If you believe that it is your responsibility, work with the community to do better. Do not shove through urgent pieces of legislation. Do not give less than 24 hours to scrutinise a Bill that will change the laws of the Northern Territory in a way that nine years ago the $50m royal commission told us not to do ever again.

Territory Labor will not support this Bill because we believe that if the CLP was truly serious about tackling crime it would fund preventive programs, diversion services and youth boot camps, as promised during the election campaign, and focus on areas such as bail support to transition and support young people out of the justice system. Instead, the CLP has gutted services, ignored communities and experts and is rewriting laws in desperation to cover up its failed law and order scheme. The CLP has ignored what the $50m royal commission wrote about the future of the Northern Territory.

Our Labor opposition believes in a justice system that keeps people safe and one that works. We admit that things were not perfect under our government; we talk about that openly. Fixing things in the Northern Territory does not take a day, a month or a year; it needs constant work. The Member for Braitling said, 'I am a fixer', so maybe he should be the Corrections minister to help fix the justice pipeline which is blocked at bursting at the seams. The Labor opposition would support a CLP government that truly supported long-term change to alleviate the pressures in the justice system. Maybe we need a fixer as the Minister for Corrections and maybe that should be the Member for Braitling.

The CLP government's approach is failing on every front. Territorians want safety in their community and we want real outcomes to support that. Accountability and responsibility go hand in hand for any government around the world. Rushed laws, treating symptoms and not the causes, will ensure that children and young people who enter the justice system will stay there or become career criminals. The CLP must front up to do this work, as it promised during the election. It must get serious about long-term investment, crime prevention and supporting community-led solutions such as the law and justice groups; otherwise, Territorians will continue to be failed on this front and our community will continue to become less safe.

The Labor opposition will not support this rushed, ill-conceived, regressive Bill because we want to be a part of the solution, not the problem. Unfortunately, the only people in the Northern Territory who do not see that are the members of the CLP government. Territorians deserve better.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I support the youth justice amendments.

It was interesting to listen to the Leader of the Opposition, as half of her speech was blatant emotional appeals. Territorians and victims have had enough of emotional appeals; they want action. Eleven months ago Territorians emphatically voted for change at the election.

We will not listen to your advice about what should or needs to be done; you had eight years to do that. You made things worse; crime was out of control, and there were many victims under horrific circumstances who were left out in the cold. You are trying to reinvent yourself as something different. How embarrassing for you to say that you care about victims. You did not even go to the Coffee Club in Katherine when Nikki was calling out for help—it is a couple of minutes from your office—yet you went on radio and said how horrible it was. You did not care at the time because you did not visit her, so do not try to reinvent yourself as a saviour of crime victims. You are not; otherwise, we would not be in this situation.

You were shocked that we brought this on urgency, but no other Territorian is shocked about this. For eight long years—the whole time you were in power—we told Territorians that in government we would crack down on crime and make stronger laws, because the laws were being watered down over time. There were no surprises; when we came to government we started making legislation to strengthen the laws. We continue to do that. Although some statistics look like they are trending in the right way and we are making it safer, there is still so much more work to be done. We will keep bringing forward legislation based on our election commitments and delivering those promises we made to Territorians.

Those on the other side do not know what that feels like because they went to elections with promises and never bloody delivered them! Sorry, Madam Speaker, but we will not stand being lectured to by the Leader of the Opposition.

This Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill to deal with youth offending is well overdue. In 11 months we have brought it to parliament on urgency. It is another step in our plan to do exactly what we said we would do, which is reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the lifestyle we love.

There is a lot of work to be done, but unlike this time a year ago, we are starting to see signs such as major reductions in property crime. Robbery is down by 29% across the Territory; house break-ins are down by 31%; commercial break-ins are down by 16%; and other theft is down by 15%. That is just the start because we know there are other statistics that are not great, and we have a lot of work to do. We are fixing decades of neglect in this space.

The other positive news that is coming out of the different datasets is some of the bail numbers. You will recall that we brought forward Declan's law straight after the election to stop the revolving door of bail for serious offenders. We brought in a second tranche to make our bail laws the strongest in the country. The good news is that it is starting to work. We now have 44% more people who were refused bail this year than last year, demonstrating that those new laws are working.

Under the Labor government the courts had a serious problem for many years with too many people being on remand. There are still too many, but the number of people on remand used to be higher than the number of sentenced prisoners, meaning that people were sitting in jail without having been to court. For the first time in a long time that number has flipped; we now have more sentenced prisoners who are on their way to rehabilitation and serving their time than we have people on remand. It is a big shift.

The other big challenge we still have is the number of days people who are awaiting their time in court spend on remand. However, we had a shift in that. Compared with a year ago, there has been a 7% decrease in the number of days that people are waiting for their court appearance. That is important because it means there is faster justice for victims.

We have much more work to do on court reform. We will keep bringing in important legislation and policy changes to this House.

We were elected to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our lifestyle. We have specific measures on how we are doing with that. One of them is how the economy is travelling.

Today the CommSec State of the States report was released for the July 2025 period. Some members may remember that under Chief Minister Michael Gunner, Labor discredited that report. He did not agree with that report because it used to say we were going backwards. He used to throw it in the bin or stick it on a shelf, basically not wanting to refer to it. He would cringe if you spoke about it. It was disgraceful. However, it is an important report done by finance experts who know what they are talking about.

The stats are painting a different picture. This is because of the work we are doing to reduce crime. If you reduce crime more people will want to stay and live in the place that we all know and love. More people are more likely to want to move, work and invest here. That is exactly what we need for the Territory.

There are positive stats. I will read from the CommSec State of the States report, because it is starting to paint a good picture. Population growth has been quoted as the Territory's strength. That is the first time we have been quoted as having population growth as a strength. It goes on to say:

> *The Northern Territory is now in top spot*

That is incredible. We are sitting at 1.21%. That is a massive increase on what it was under Labor. That is promising. If you are reducing crime, people will want to live, invest and work here. Then the population starts to grow, which we need.

Under the construction work measure, it says:

> *The Northern Territory leads annual growth*

These are wonderful words:

> *In terms of annual growth rates, five economies had construction work higher than a year ago. The Northern Territory was the strongest performer, up 5.5 per cent …*

I put that down to the game-changing policy that we had going into the election and delivered immediately upon coming to government—that is, the HomeGrown new build scheme. We have had 200 new builds contributing directly to our construction industry—that is the construction this report is talking about—not to mention all the other benefits. We know we need housing, and if we have more—I heard it from the Leader of the Opposition—we may have less crime.

The other interesting stat in the CommSec State of the States report was the dwelling starts, which is moving on from construction. The Northern Territory rose the most, up by 14.6% for dwelling starts. That is another trending sign that we are going in the right direction. We are taking action, which leads to certainty and security. That is what we have been talking about for the last 11 months. It means that the steps we are taking to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore the Territory lifestyle are moving in the right direction.

I move to this new youth offending legislation. I make it clear to Territorians that we will put the rights of victims above the rights of offenders in everything we do, including the youth justice changes. We are even going a step further. It will now become a part of the Act that the decision-makers must take into consideration the impact on the victim. That was not in there before; the victim was forgotten about, not even heard. Victims did not even have to give a statement. That is not how things should be. The victim should be able to explain the harm and trauma that has been caused, so that is changing.

With the bail law changes in April we removed imprisonment as a last resort. Now, this is happening through the youth justice laws as well. Some crimes are so horrific, serious or repeated that you cannot do anything other than have them incarcerated. It is an awful situation. None of us wants to lock up people, especially children and young people, but we are putting victims first. If something bad happened to one of your family members by a youth, you would want to know that they are being dealt with, and this amendment does that.

Under this legislation, the courts must consider the full youth criminal history in adult courts. That is a huge thing. If you are a youth offender, that history is taken with you when you are an adult. That is important because there are some people we cannot rehabilitate, as sad as that is, and the court system needs to know what it is dealing with, so judges have all the facts and all the evidence. That change is being made in this legislation as well.

We are delivering on our election commitments. For starters, that is our commitment to Territorians to reduce crime. This is another step of that plan, to deal with youth offending. A lot of work is being done to address the root causes, which is an important point to make. It is not just about putting people behind bars and throwing away the key; it is about making sure we look at how we can prevent the crime in the first place.

Mr Young: How are you doing that? Explain how you are doing it.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the interjections, please.

Ms BOOTHBY: You would have heard time and again in parliament and in the media ministers talking about the Circuit Breaker Program. It is an important program that engages with young people and families, and hundreds of families have been spoken with. Services are available to them now, and they are working with those families so that they do not enter the justice system and can have a life that is not on the same path that other people have taken their lives down.

The Minister for Education and Training talks at length about the school attendance officers, because if you cannot get kids to school, they have a tough life ahead of them. We do not want that for our young people; we need them to get to school and have a good education. That has been working; the minister talks about it all the time.

The Minister for Children and Families put out a homelessness strategy. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about homelessness and poverty. That strategy will go a long way to working on that issue. It has been a longstanding issue; none of these things we are talking about are new. Things do not appear overnight. Decades of problems were never dealt with under previous governments. Things were watered down over previous governments, which causes these problems.

All that work continues. As a team, we will continue to bring forward legislation, policy changes and everything else we need to. We will do it in a timely manner. In 11 months a lot of legislation has already been delivered. Change is already happening, and that will continue.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, I am very concerned about this Bill. This is not one small change; there are many changes in this Bill that will bring significant change to the law.

There is no reason for this Bill to be moved on urgency. This is just a political game by the government, moving it on urgency. I know that Aboriginal people are, once again, the political football. This Bill should have been sent for genuine scrutiny by the community, and there should have been widespread consultation before it even came to the Chamber. The Bill was provided to members of parliament 24 hours ago, which is unreasonable.

I thank the department for the briefing on Monday, but from what I heard in the briefing, the answer is no. There has been no consultation on these changes, and the result will be more kids in jail in conditions where more force and restraints can be used against them. This is not what elders and leaders are calling for. We have elders and leaders who have the title of the Prime Minister, the leaders in this Chamber and the leaders in the government departments. They have the power and authority, and they should be listened to.

I have spent much time talking in this Chamber about resourcing programs on country. Let us properly employ people in our communities out bush to do the jobs that we have held for tens of thousands of years. I hear people ask, 'What are the elders doing? Why are they not sorting out this problem?' The government has all the resources, with big budgets and whole departments of staff rolling out its agenda. The government has the decision-making power and the force to do what it wants.

What I say here is not about the CLP government or the ALP government; whoever is in the government, this is where the message goes to. I do not know how you do it in the government that is there now, the CLP, or what Labor does. I am a middle man trying to tell this Chamber that something is wrong, not working, with our Aboriginal communities. You are not listening to Aboriginal communities; you just want to play games—across the Chamber and the government in power. I sit here and have been here for nine years listening, but nobody is listening.

The elders and leaders in our communities do not have these resources or staff. The government has taken our decision-making power. Although we could use force, we choose to be peaceful. The result of this imbalance, between the government which has everything and our leaders who do not, is enormous.

I stand today because I came to the government to ask it to work with us. I have said, 'Let us work in partnership. We have peacekeepers, *raypirri* camps (discipline camps), community-led solutions and the laws of the land, but we need your support to roll it out.' Instead of building jails let us look at our solutions and how we can do this on our country. Without government support we cannot do these things; we are forced to do what the government decides, and it is deciding to put our children in jail in a system where they become criminals instead of working with us in our programs that are designed to rehabilitate.

When the government does not consult or listen and brings in laws that damage our communities, we fight the best that we can, which is why I am standing in parliament as a voice for our communities. We should not be fighting; we should be working together. This is why I brought the censure motion on Tuesday. I had to be clear with the government and say that enough is enough.

Last week the four land councils came together to stand outside this parliament and condemn the government for failing to work with the land councils and communities. Justice Not Jails called for a vote of no confidence in the government because many Aboriginal leaders feel that this government is not governing for everyone and there are significant human rights abuses for our people.

The ABC said last week that incarceration figures have risen by 30% since the CLP came to government. I have visited the jails and watch houses, and I am worried and disgusted by the conditions. I am concerned that we have an Attorney-General who states that she does not care about trauma caused to people in the watch houses, but this trauma will result in more crime and harm.

In Question Time yesterday the government would not tell us how long children are being kept in the watch houses. Watch houses are not places that adults should stay for any longer than 24 hours, nor are they places for children. Children should never be held in watch houses. To hear reports that an 11-year-old child was held in solitary confinement in a watch house overnight is disgusting and distressing. We all know that even though they may show they are tough on the outside and their behaviour may be rough, on the inside they are just a tired, sad, hurt child. They need to be made to feel proud of who they are and who they can be. They need to find their gifts and talents, and to have a government that does not care is distressing.

People who have committed an offence should be held accountable. There must be justice for victims, but it should not be the kind of justice that causes more harm and drives people even further into a life a crime. We need to see justice that breaks the cycle of offending and brings opportunities for everyone.

We also need to acknowledge that government action and inaction has contributed to the situation today. The oppression of Aboriginal people through the intervention, the Stolen Generations, the super shires, the first four hours of English only and an ongoing refusal to create treaty are all things that our children have watched while governments have oppressed the elders and our culture. This has caused deep damage for this generation of children.

Since coming into government there have been ongoing policy announcements from the CLP that have the greatest impact on Aboriginal people. These announcements, like the youth justice reforms on urgency this week, have occurred without consultation with Aboriginal leaders, organisations, land councils or otherwise. There are many other examples.

The sacred sites amendment Bill should never have been introduced to parliament without a proper consultation process that was about genuine changes. Elders have the authority for sacred sites, but we were ignored. Sacred sites—see this place here, parliament? We do not step in and try to run over your laws and on the Constitution that lies here. We are Indigenous people, and we respect the laws. You have broken the law, Yolngu law, and walked into a space where no-one should have walked. Sacred sites are lands where law of the land is an identity of who we are. We need to be respected. We are a sovereign nation; we are a sovereign people, yet we are being walked all over.

Earlier this year the Chief Minister refused to acknowledge the Larrakia people at a ceremony that was about the bombing of Darwin/Larrakia land. This is another example where elders have been ignored and disrespected on their country, but it also set an example to the Northern Territory that the Chief Minister says it is okay to disrespect the First Nations people on their land—really. It also sent a message to our children that Aboriginal people are not worthy of respect.

There was an initial rush of CLP Bills on urgency that have made bail harder to get and reintroduced mandatory sentencing, creating an incarceration crisis. Since then, we have also heard announcements of transit officers and public housing officers carrying guns, and capsicum spray for members of the public. We hear these things, and we know that guns kill people. Kumanjayi Walker died because he was shot. My *wawa* was shot by the police on the beach on Elcho Island. I have spoken about these deaths many times, because they were avoidable.

We also hear that new signs on buses say that wearing dirty or stained clothes is a reason that people cannot travel on the bus. We know that many vulnerable people who are experiencing poverty may have dirty clothes, but we also know that the majority of these people are Aboriginal.

We also see the increased number of private security guards around Darwin, moving people on from public places, regardless of whether they are causing a disturbance.

The young people who are getting caught up in crime also see and hear all these things.

There are problems in our community that need to be addressed—violence, drug addiction, mental health problems and physical health problems. This is happening now, and not only here; in communities, almost every day at public gathering places like shopping centres and stores, there are young people fighting and arguing because they are confused. They have confused minds. We try to stop them every day. This is not normal. It did not happen for a long time. Our leadership, law and ways of disciplining and honing children have been that we have respect. I grew up a responsible child, but these children have confused minds because some other law is controlling them. Some other law is confusing our people.

The issues of violence, drug addiction, mental health problems and physical health problems in our communities all need to be addressed. We need to protect people and look after victims. However, the government approach of aggressive action that targets Aboriginal people and locks up people in watch houses for weeks on end does not address the underlying problems and creates a dehumanised system that tells people they are animals.

This is how we feel—I am on the side of my colleagues where I stand, and this is how I feel—every time we hear an announcement from government because our elders and our leaders are not being consulted. We are not being brought to the table diplomatically to sit side by side together, not one on top of and controlling the other. We should sit down together.

Barbara Shaw said that this government is racking and stacking Aboriginal people in prisons. We feel that we are not being seen as people; we are just being shoved away.

Our communities in the bush are also experiencing harm. There is escalating violence and problems, and I am still calling for community-led solutions. My people and I have answers, but the government needs to listen and work with us, regardless of who is in government. I am talking about this Chamber; this parliament needs to listen.

This government forgets that it is working with sovereign nations; we never ceded sovereignty to anyone. We have a right to be decision-makers in this space. We are fed up with the disrespect.

My intention has always been to come together and work with government. The censure motion was about discipline, to say to the government, 'Wake up. Stop ignoring the elders and leaders. Come and work with us.' I have been talking to you openly and honestly, and you have been talking in circles. Stop playing games and blaming the last government. You are here now, and your actions are destroying our communities.

We just do not have hope anymore. Almost every announcement this government makes brings harm to Aboriginal communities and the broader community in the long term. If we do not address the underlying issues now, everyone will become less safe as the issues spiral out of control.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr GUYULA: There are many people feeling this pain. I will read this poem by Ngarla Kunoth-Monks, the daughter of Rosalie Kunoth-Monks:

What pariahs we must be for you to hate us so
What devils you must think we are,
You in your Ivory Towers passing judgement on a broken people …
Oh, the enjoyment in your eyes as you break us even more,
I hope on your deathbed all you hear are the screams of the souls you are tormenting.

This poem reflects the distress that many people are feeling. This Bill and locking up kids is part of this distress.

I have been sitting here and listening. I did not come here to enjoy life and play games. This is not where I would want to be for that. I stood for a parliament position, and my people kept voting for me. It is now my third term. We are desperate and want to see change in this Chamber. We are listening to the government and the opposition; when will you start listening to our people? All we want to say is, 'Let us work together. Let us make this pathway a better road, as we are being left behind.' You all say, 'It's okay, we think we know what is best for you'.

For 50 years or more I have learned the English language, and I have lived with balanda languages in big cities, living how they live. They taught me how to behave and how to live and how systems work, but I still do not know how to run your business. You have never walked in or put your foot in and come closer to us, and asked us, 'How can we help? What can we do to make this a better place?' I cannot see anything that anyone has done to step in and ask. You will not really know who we are, what we are made of and what we are asking for unless we sit together, talk to one another and create a pathway so that our place will have fewer people in jail and less crime, and everything will be better—going back to how it was before colonisation.

VISITORS
National Seniors Australia

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of a community group from National Seniors Australia Top End branch. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I will pick up on a couple of the contributions made so far.

In response to the Leader of the Opposition, whose words this morning were, 'the responsibility of representing not just your own electorate but those across the Territory', I have to say that is pot calling kettle black if she wants to represent everyone. Yesterday we spoke about the fact that her office is two doors down from the Coffee Club. She spoke on Katie Woolf's show about Nikki at the Coffee Club, yet she could not be bothered to walk about 50 metres to chat to Nikki, Mel and the other staff after the horrific incident the Wednesday before the show. That is appalling. We all have a responsibility to represent every one of the 25 electorates. Whether we are in government or opposition, it does not mean you just stay in your lane. That is not how good government works.

The other day in the MPI the Member for Arafura said, 'The CLP government promised to get Territory kids back into school with the truancy program. I have not seen any truancy officers in my West Arnhem region.' Member for Arafura, there are eight attendance officers in the Top End region and they go across all the areas in your region. I have asked the department to let me know exactly where they have gone, and I will let you know.

I have met the Member for Mulka through Education many times. As a man who has been representing his electorate—now in his third term—I respect him, as do his constituents, and think he is a very good person to represent them. I have met with him about education and bilingual education. We have nine schools that deliver bilingual education, four of them for more than 50 years, but out of those nine schools attendance at one is over 50%, one is at 50% and the other seven are around 35%.

I want to know where the parental responsibility starts. We do not talk about that enough. When it comes to getting your children to school, it is not up to you whether they go to school; it is the law. We have attendance officers working with families. The Member for Mulka and I have spoken about how bilingual education works in communities, and I am more than happy to catch up again to find out some of his ideas to increase attendance rates in schools where bilingual education is delivered.

Mr Young: Did you listen to his speech? You did not, clearly.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the interjections, please.

Mrs HERSEY: I pick up on the interjections. You will get your turn, Member for Daly. I sat and listened in silence, so perhaps you can give me the same courtesy.

Mr Young: But you did not listen, did you?

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, you have interjected four times despite me asking you not to. You are on a warning.

Mrs HERSEY: Our government is making important amendments to the *Youth Justice Act* and Youth Justice Regulations. The amendments give the courts the tools to do what Territorians expect them to do. To be clear, we are dealing with a generation of hardcore repeat young offenders created by decades of Labor rule in the Territory.

Since coming to government in August last year our Finocchiaro CLP government has taken swift action to make community safety our top priority, delivering on the sweeping mandate we received at that election. Regional towns like Katherine are in the situation they are today because of the former Labor government's soft-on-crime approach, when we had eight years of catch-and-release policies that put the rights of offenders over the rights of the victim.

Our government has made it clear for the last 11 months that we will put the rights of victims above the rights of offenders. We will continue to fix Labor's broken systems and put victims and community first.

A key aspect to these changes is the prioritisation of victims' rights in sentencing youth offenders. This means the victim's impact statement is considered more heavily and sentencing may more accurately reflect the harm caused to victims, providing them with a sense of justice and closure.

We are removing the slow and outdated process of obtaining consent for diversion. The removal of the requirement for consent from the youth or a responsible adult will make it quicker and easier to enrol the youth in a diversion program. We need to address the root causes of crime. This can lead to faster

rehabilitation opportunities and less strain on the court system. Before the election we told Territorians we would address the root causes of crime and get kids back to school and on a better path.

As I have discussed many times in this parliament, our school attendance officers work hard every day with children and families to get kids to school, especially those on the intensive support roll. These are the kids who have not been to school for 20 days or more. This was Opposition Leader Selena Uibo's secret list of more than 1,500 kids who were forgotten, hidden, not counted and lost in the system. She was one of four Education ministers responsible for the poor attendance and poor literacy and numeracy that we have been left with since coming to government.

I have no doubt that some offences being committed by youth criminals are a direct result of them not having the opportunity to be engaged in education. We on this side want to change that.

No-one is talking about parental responsibility, looking after your child and teaching your child right from wrong. No child is born a criminal. Removing detention as a last resort will allow for more direct consequences for serious offences. We are freeing the shackles of the courts and letting the sunshine in to give the courts more flexibility to impose custodial sentences when deemed appropriate. For many disadvantaged youths, detention is the first time they experience structure and routine in their lives.

In fact, four years ago when I visited the Tivendale campus I was met with friendly teachers and students who were engaged. One of the staff, who was a fantastic mentor to those children, told me a story of one of many of the youths who were in the centre. It hit a chord with me and made me feel quite sad when I left that place. John told me the story of a youth who had been in there numerous times. He asked the youth why he was in there. The youth replied it was because his friends were in there, he had a roof over his head and he was getting three meals a day. I cannot imagine it. I know that members on the other side talk about youth disadvantage, but the fact that someone thinks that is a better life for them is seriously concerning. That is what we want to turn around.

This is why it is so important to get youth attending programs and education in custody to give them hope for a better life and life skills for a better future. This is why the Minister for Children and Families speaks at every opportunity about the Circuit Breaker Program, which works on prevention and provides intensive support to young people aged between 10 and 17 years.

In Katherine I have met with the night patrollers. This Circuit Breaker team offers youths a safe place to sleep if none are available. Frontline supervision provides support and interventions that meet individual needs. The team works with families on family responsibility agreements. Over the last six months the minister has seen 129 families enter into family responsibility agreements, and 29 of those are in the Big Rivers region.

This is not set and forget; this is the hard work that our government will continue to do. We are continuing to get on with turning things around.

The Department of Education and Training provides education to detainees five days a week for 45 weeks a year. These programs are important. Tivendale School focuses on providing core literacy and numeracy, as well as programs that meet students' individual interests and needs, including academic, physical, artistic, cultural and social and emotional wellbeing.

Detainees have the opportunity to engage in the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training and skills development through partnerships with third parties such as Palmerston Youth Skills Centre, Royal Life Saving NT, DriveSafe NT, Darwin Wildlife Sanctuary, YouthWorX NT, Indigenous Marathon Foundation, Athletics NT, Army Indigenous Development Program, Hoops 4 Health and Clontarf, to name a few.

Detention programs continue to enhance program delivery to offer structured support that helps young people build accountability, recognise consequences, contribute to community safety and reintegrate into community with the goal of reducing repeat offending.

The change to the revolving bail system means that young offenders will be sentenced and will spend longer in detention when necessary, allowing for proper cognitive assessments and consistent engagement in education. These changes are about putting victims first and giving victims visibility because, for far too long, we have been following Labor's catch-and-release offender-first policies.

I am sure we will hear the usual naysayers come after our government for making these changes. The Opposition Leader's contribution was astonishing. It has been almost a year and she seems to have forgotten

she was part of the Labor team that was soft on crime, and this is how we got to this point. I say to those naysayers: what is your solution? You had it your way for decades, and it got us nowhere.

We had the highest crime rates upon coming to government and a Territory where people did not feel safe, a place people were leaving. We on this side are turning this around slowly. Territorians voted for us to make these changes, and we are delivering. It is up to our government to keep Territorians safe. We will be accountable to them and be judged at the next election.

We are often lectured by Labor and Independent members about human rights and the rights of offenders. When I talk about human rights, I talk about the rights of seniors in Katherine who want to go to bed at night and know they are safe; the rights of small business owners, like Nikki and her staff at the Coffee Club, to rock up to work in the morning and not be physically assaulted; and the rights of people like Ros at the Red Cross Shop in the main street who should be able to go to work in the morning and not be cleaning up after a break-in. When I talk about human rights, I see the opportunity to address the root causes of crime and turn around the lives of young offenders, particularly through education. Those are the human rights I stand for.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, this is an important Bill.

It is important that I start by setting out what we promised to do for Territorians when campaigning last year. We said that we would reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. That was 'reduce' not 'remove' and we are working on it, unlike those opposite. The Member for Daly on *The Week That Was* on 4 July summed up the approach of those opposite when he said, 'We would never promise that we would actually fix crime, and that is the difference between us and what the CLP said they would do'. We said that we would address crime and would work hard every day to reduce it.

Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I will talk about some of the results from the things we have done in this House which have been vociferously opposed by those opposite. In fact, all the major reforms that we have put forward have been opposed. I thank the Member for Nightcliff for the one time she voted with us and some Labor members who voted with us to support workers' rights when we brought in mandatory sentencing for assaults on workers.

Today's CommSec State of the States report has some good news that has come from our economic reform packages which were opposed by those opposite. I quote:

> *The Northern Territory recorded the fastest economic growth, soaring 10.2 per cent over the year.*

That is a good news story. It also says:

> *The Northern Territory leads on relative population growth*
>
> *…*
>
> *The Northern Territory is now ranked first on the relative population growth measure …*

There is another one:

> *Growth leaders*
>
> *…*
>
> *The Northern Territory lifts from fifth to third due to robust growth in business investment and construction activity.*

Investment means that people are starting to believe in the Territory once again. After eight long years of Labor mismanagement, the Territory is once again open for business.

Why am I talking about this good news story of the positive results in the CommSec report, which previous Chief Minister Michael Gunner rubbished every time it came out? He laid bare his economic failings and said that it was not worth the paper it is written on, so put it in the bin. I talk about it because when we were

campaigning over the last few years, we had a clear plan—I am holding Our Plan—to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle.

A key plank in that plan was the Territory Coordinator, which everyone on the other side of the Chamber fought. We were here until 3 am pushing that through. We did that because we had to restore confidence and send a clear signal to investors around the world that we meant business. The Territory was open for business and investors could come, work, visit, invest and put down roots. Those changes were heavily opposed, but we are starting to see the results. It has been 11 months and we are not quite there yet, but things are looking positive. It is the first positive CommSec report in eight years—correct me if I am wrong.

Most of the crime reforms that we on this side of the Chamber have brought to the House have been opposed by those opposite with a few exceptions. Unfortunately, the previous government could not even manage updating an IT system. We do not have comprehensive stats from August to July because when the former government rolled out SerPro it broke the crime reporting. We were unable to compare crime stats from before SerPro with those after SerPro.

My background is in IT, and I do not know how you can do that. You are reporting on home break-ins, assaults and charges laid. Reporting is reporting, but it is another example of Labor mismanagement. It was handy for the former government that crime statistics from 2023 and earlier could not be compared with statistics from 2024 leading into an election where crime and the economy were the two main issues—crime being head and shoulders above the rest.

Crime statistics for the whole of the Territory: robbery, violence and theft are down by 29%; and house break-ins are down by 31%. Robberies and house break-ins sound like a stat, but each incident is a traumatic occurrence in someone's life.

Early in my first campaign in 2020 I met a lady in Woodroffe—for her privacy I will not name her—who lives next to a laneway. If she is listening, she will know who I am speaking of. She and her husband went on a fishing and camping holiday for the weekend, which is the great Territory lifestyle. We put that lifestyle out to the world—come here to go fishing; the great promise of *Crocodile Dundee;* explore our wonderful nature; go to a community; and visit our wonderful traditional lands.

Unfortunately, as they were driving out, some juveniles were observing them from the laneway. When they saw the couple leave, they jumped the fence, broke in, did a round of the house and then jumped out. This was all caught on CCTV. They realised that the couple were not coming back for a while, so guess what? They invited their mates, who invited other mates, and they all had a big party all weekend.

When this poor lady came home with her husband from their wonderful weekend away, her entire house contents were tipped upside down. Her dogs—we just introduced an animal welfare Bill about Evie's Bark—were traumatised. They were cowering in a corner of the yard because rocks and fireworks were thrown at them. The dogs had burns on them. This poor woman is still traumatised to this day. Every home break-in is not just a number; it is a deeply traumatic event for a law-abiding citizen of this Territory.

Commercial break-ins are down by 16%; other theft is down by 15%; and Palmerston house-break-ins are down by 9%, but we have a lot more work to do. DV assaults are up by 9% and alcohol-related assaults are up by 8%.

The Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence had a fantastic interview on the ABC, talking about our approach to fixing the root causes of offending and the learnings that we will take away from the DV coronial. The incidents and the drivers of the incidents were documented well in the coronial, although what was documented unfortunately did not find its way into the recommendations, which was underwhelming and disappointing.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Eva Eustace – Retirement

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge the retirement of a long-serving staff member of the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

Eva Eustace commenced her Northern Territory Public Sector career more than 20 years ago and transferred to the People, Performance and Culture unit in the Department of the Legislative Assembly in 2008. Eva has provided continued support to Members of the Legislative Assembly, their electorate office staff and her colleagues in the DLA for the past 17 years.

On behalf of the Assembly, I thank Eva for her services and wish her a happy retirement.

Members: Hear, hear!

NOTICES

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall move:

That the NT Legislative Assembly:

1. recognises that the Northern Territory is one of only two Australian jurisdictions without a chief scientist or equivalent advisory role

2. notes that chief scientists in other jurisdictions have delivered significant benefits including:

    - attracting research investment and infrastructure to build scientific capacity
    - facilitating partnerships between academia, government and industry
    - providing independent advice on complex challenges, including natural disasters and new transitions and emerging technologies
    - supporting technology commercialisation and innovation programs that drive economic growth
    - enhancing the jurisdiction's reputation as a science and technology leader

3. calls on the CLP government to establish a Northern Territory chief scientist position that would:

    - provide independent, evidence-based advice to government on science technology, engineering and innovation matters
    - attract Commonwealth and industry investment in Northern Territory science and research
    - facilitate collaboration between Territory research institutions, industry and government
    - advocate for the importance of STEM education and science engagement across the community
    - represent the Territory on national science forums and advisory bodies
    - provide expert advice on environmental, energy and technological challenges facing the Territory.

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

That this Assembly:

- recognises the serious health and economic impacts of air pollution in the Northern Territory
- notes that Darwin now has the worst air quality in Australia, costing over $100m annually
- calls on the Northern Territory Government to develop and implement a clean air Act within two years, with enforceable standards, real-time monitoring and community involvement.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion calling on the Assembly to:

1. acknowledge the impact of the cessation of mining in both Jabiru and the Gove Peninsula, their local communities, businesses, government services and broader regions

2. recognise the need for ongoing government investment to ensure a strong and sustainable future for both Jabiru and the Gove Peninsula, helping the transition from mining towns to vibrant and sustainable regional service hubs that support thriving communities and diverse economies.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion calling on the Assembly to:

- acknowledge the importance of improving access to timely, quality and culturally safe patient-focused healthcare across remote areas in the Northern Territory

- condemn the Finocchiaro CLP government for scrapping the $20m health centre and morgue designated for the Gunbalanya community.

QUESTION TIME

Investment Summit – Treasurer's Absence

Ms UIBO to CHIEF MINISTER

Yesterday your Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations spoke about the importance of the first Northern Territory Investment Summit. She said that the summit is the cornerstone of the CLP government's plan to rebuild the economy. Why was the Treasurer, the Territory's first minister on the economy, sidelined for the summit? Why did you instead send a junior minister with zero economic credibility? If the investment summit is so important for your CLP government, why did you leave your Treasurer out of the picture and perhaps out on a boat? Have you lost confidence in the ability of your Treasurer to manage the Territory economy, or was he simply not up to the job?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Opposition Leader might not have won the election but she wins the award for being the biggest gutter trash politician in the Chamber. Congratulations to her. We are in day three of parliament—we have not had parliament for about two months—and her first question to me is rubbish and nonsense that does not reduce crime, rebuild the economy or restore our lifestyle. It does not talk about Territorians; it is self-serving political guff.

The Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations is right. Our Investment Summit was fantastic. We had more than 100 delegates in the Northern Territory, and we spun that event and tipped it on its head. The previous government was more focused on dragging every Territory business to Canberra, giving free champagne to Canberra politicians, praying and hoping that they would look sideways at us and maybe throw us a dollar. We were not supporting that model. We said, 'Why don't we target businesses looking to invest, ask them to come to the Territory, give them a solid experience and explain to them the benefits of the Northern Territory in accordance with our economic strategy?' That is what we did, and it was a success.

The first day was a range of different tours and opportunities for people to go across the Territory, and they picked which ones they wanted to do. People were raving about it. The next day we had a range of informative sessions …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. Regarding the conciseness of answer, the Chief Minister was specifically asked about the absence of the Treasurer at the summit.

Madam SPEAKER: We will not have frivolous points of order. The Chief Minister is only halfway through her response, and she has time to be relevant.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: On the second day we had a range of guest speakers. Joe Hockey kicked off the morning, and then people got to understand in greater detail. The feedback was truly fantastic.

The Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations did a wonderful job. We created an Asian Relations minister, which Labor could not bring itself to do. Labor did not care about our nearest neighbours; it did not care about the fact that millions of people live in our region closer than to the nearest Australian capital city. Labor did not care about the jobs, opportunities and examples for growth.

Opposition Leader, I do not know who you are talking about as a junior minister. You were a pretty bad minister. That is all I can remember, so I do not know who you are talking about.

When it comes to the Treasurer, you of all people, Opposition Leader, should know that members of parliament are entitled to take personal leave, and sometimes personal leave clashes with other events. You of all people should not be throwing stones about that. Territorians understand that every now and again people need to take a couple of days off.

Nonetheless, it was an outstanding Investment Summit. We are proud to have delivered it. We cannot wait to take all the feedback and make it even bigger and better next year. It yielded some great results.

Rebuilding the Economy

Mr PATEL to CHIEF MINISTER

At last year's election Territorians voted for change. What does the latest CommSec report show about our plan to rebuild the economy?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it shows that our Rebuilding the Economy strategy is working. The CommSec State of the States report was continuously thrown in the bin by Labor. Its fearless leader once said, 'It is a garbage report that I either keep in the bin or shred; it is not even worth the paper it is written on.' That is how much respect Labor had for growing our economy. This report is starting to show the signs we need. We are encouraged and buoyed by them, and we will keep going.

We have undertaken so much economic reform in the last 11 months, but the fact that this CommSec State of the States report shows that the Territory had the fastest annual economic growth in the nation at 10.2%, nearly three times more than our next closest jurisdiction, shows that we are on the right path. We came third in the country when accounting for eight annual economic indicators. We had the strongest annual growth in construction work, up by 5.5% ahead of WA and New South Wales, and we are leading the nation on population growth, which means more people are coming to live here. It is unbelievable. The CommSec report blares headlines like, 'The Northern Territory leads on relative population growth' and 'The Northern Territory is now in top spot'.

With that population growth and economic growth, and lending was up, we are excited about the future. It means Territorians are seeing the change and the push we are doing to make sure there is certainty and confidence for people to live, work, visit and invest in the Territory. The work we have done on crime means people are more confident to be here, live here, stay here, visit here and run a business here.

I acknowledge in the gallery a lovely couple, who I met at lunchtime, who have visited the Northern Territory seven years in a row and nearly did not come this year because things were getting worse every year. They said that they cannot believe the change that has happened under our government since they last visited. I thank them for their feedback because that is exactly what we are about.

This is not a status quo government. This is not a government that puts up its hand and says that everything is too hard. This is not an apologist government or a government that puts the rights of offenders first. This is a government that is Territory-first every day of the week. We live, love and breathe this place, and we will make sure we rebuild the economy. We will make sure we are reducing crime. We will restore our iconic beautiful lifestyle for us to enjoy now and for our kids and grandkids to enjoy in the future. The Territory deserves a government that backs her. This CommSec State of the States report data clearly shows that we are on the right track, and we are not stopping.

Investment Summit – Treasurer's Absence

Mr YOUNG to the TREASURER

Industry groups and businesses all noticed your absence for the Territory Investment Summit. Why were you not at the summit to fight for the Territory? Did you go fishing again instead of doing your job?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is like a broken record from those on the other side; it is extraordinary. It seems it is quite easy to hook the Member for Daly; he is easier to hook than a starving barra.

I thank the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations for putting on the summit in Darwin. As the Chief Minister said, Labor scrapped our Asian Relations minister many years ago. One of the first things that we did in government was to bring it back. Look at what that portfolio is now achieving. As the Chief Minister said, previously the Labor government sent people to Canberra to do stuff in Parliament House. This government made the specific change to bring this forum back to Darwin and the Top End. Look at the people we had here. The stuff that we are doing is working. All these people came to Darwin to this forum to come and see the Territory because they want to invest in the Northern Territory.

I will explain to those on the other side why. You only have to look at the numbers that have come out in the latest CommSec report to understand where the Territory now sits in the national economy and the opportunities that will come globally from the work that is being done by the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations.

State final demand in the Territory increased by 4.6% over the year to the March quarter 2025, which is the strongest growth rate of any jurisdiction in Australia. That shows that what we are doing is working. The Territory's business investment rose by 13.8% over the year to the March quarter 2025, which is the strongest growth rate amongst the jurisdictions in Australia. It says that people are willing to come here and invest. There is certainty within the business community. There is certainty with investors to come to the Northern Territory and invest.

Labor was unable to do that. Under Labor the economic numbers were poor, which was why it did not like the CommSec report. I sat on the other side of the Chamber and listened to former Chief Ministers and Treasurers bag that report.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The question was direct. Why were you, as the Treasurer, not at that summit?

Mrs ZIO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Repetition; the Chief Minister already answered this question when the Leader of the Opposition asked it.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, finish your answer. If you keep interjecting, Member for Daly, you will be asked to leave.

Mr YAN: I have 19 seconds left, and I will keep on with my history lesson for those opposite. They did not like the CommSec report because it did not show the numbers they wanted. They used to throw it in the bin, and they bagged it.

All of a sudden, the numbers have turned around. Why? It is because we are doing the work to rebuild the Territory's economy.

Housing Initiatives

Mrs CARLSON to TREASURER

Last year under the previous Labor government, Master Builders said that the Territory was on track to have the worst year for home building since records began. Fast-forward one year, and CommSec's new State of the States report shows that the CLP has turned around our dying residential construction industry with a massive 42.4% increase in new building starts. Can you outline to the Assembly how this report shows that the CLP government's housing construction initiatives are actually working?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: The minister will be heard in silence.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, if the latest CommSec State of the States report was a report card for the CLP housing and construction industry, we would be getting an A+; that is a guarantee.

Those opposite bagged this report for years. I was at Estimates in 2024 when the previous Chief Minister said that she would not lose sleep at night because CommSec has said that our economy is not doing well. The numbers never lie, but Labor was asleep at the wheel and Territorians paid the price as our economy and housing market tanked.

With our Rebuilding the Economy strategy, CommSec's report shows that the Territory construction industry has done a 180-degree turn. The Territory is now leading the nation in construction work, which has increased by 5.5%, and housing finance has leaped up by 30.1%. The number of dwelling starts under our government has also jumped, increasing by 42.9%; there is a 0.5% difference between the Territory bumping Western Australia off the top spot.

It has been clear to Territorians that the issue was never CommSec's reporting; it was Labor's mismanagement of our economy. Data from the Department of Treasury and Finance backs this up. Its data shows that the CLP is rebuilding the economy, brick by brick, with residential building work on new houses increasing by 22.1% and new units increasing by 10.2%. With residential building approvals up by 37.8% and $171m of residential work yet to be done, builders are set to keep building with plenty more in the pipeline.

Territorians are not only building more homes; they are buying more too. Rewind a year ago and no-one wanted to buy property amidst Labor's crime crisis and economic death spiral. The number of houses sold over the last year has increased by 64%, and the number of units sold has increased by 19.7%. This positive activity in the market has seen house prices grow by 5.1% over the last year, because people want to live here and be part of our economy. Even with such positive growth, Territorians still enjoy the most affordable housing market in the country, but now their house is worth something it makes putting down roots in the Territory worth it too.

We have extended this program in our budget to continue to build on the success of our first year in government. Unlike Labor, the state of our economy was something that the CLP and many Territorians lost sleep over. With the CLP in the driver's seat, the latest CommSec report makes it clear that our plan and our budget is about not only rebuilding our housing construction industry but also building back—better.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Frontline Services

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for PREVENTION of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On Tuesday you told the Assembly that the government had accepted the Coroner's recommendation to boost funding for domestic, family and sexual violence frontline services by 10%. When exactly will these hardworking organisations receive this funding? Will you guarantee that the funding hits the ground immediately, or will you make them wait another 12 months?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not sure where the Member for Gwoja has been over the last couple of months, but on 9 May we issued a press release where the $36m that we have committed in annual ongoing funding for the prevention of domestic violence was listed. I am more than happy to go through that list and let you know exactly where the money is going and how it addresses the initiatives and the recommendations that were laid out in the Coroner's report.

We have boosted funding to family safety frameworks. We boosted funding and expanded the domestic, family and sexual violence co-responder model. We have boosted funding in the domestic, family and sexual violence specialist services for integrated system response model. We have committed money to see frontline service deliveries to a number of organisations, including the YWCA; CatholicCare NT; Darwin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Shelter; Top End Women's Legal Service; Mission Aviation Fellowship; Barkly Regional Council; Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit; Central Australian Women's Legal Service; Dawn House; Galiwinku Women's Space Aboriginal Corporation; Katherine Women's Crisis Centre; Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service; Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Indigenous Corporation; North Australian Aboriginal justice family and domestic violence service; NT Working Women's Centre; One Tree Community Services; Ruby Gaea—I could go on, Member for Gwoja.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; although I am heartened to hear that investment, it is a direct question. Can the minister guarantee that all frontline service organisations will receive the 10% increase in baseline funding, and when?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call.

Ms CAHILL: We have also boosted funding into prison programs and prison settings for people who are committing domestic, family and sexual violence. We have increased funding in community settings for people who have committed domestic, family and sexual violence. We are looking at new domestic, family and sexual violence offender programs for prisons.

We are looking at behaviour and lifestyle changes, social reintegration, mental health and cognitive improvement, victim safety and wellbeing. We are looking at areas regarding counselling, supporting women who are in prison so that we can assist them in healing and returning to their communities.

We are investing in expanding specialist domestic, family and sexual violence courts and remote safe houses. We are looking at making sure that risk assessment is promoted and is universal across our services. We are 100% committed.

This money is there for these organisations in the 2025–26 budget, and it will continue to be there as we move forward into future years. This money will go on until we start to see changes. We will start to adjust where that money is spent as is needed into the future.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Frontline Services – Supplementary Question

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for PREVENTION of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Can you guarantee that every frontline service in the Northern Territory, when it comes to domestic, family and sexual violence, has had an increase of 10% or over in their baseline funding?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I can guarantee, as we committed, that every organisation that was receiving funding up until the end of 2025—which was about to fall off a funding cliff because on those on the other side failed to support them into the future; they failed to give a commitment to continue funding domestic, family and sexual violence services—will never need to have that worry again because we have committed to do that.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. I am not after a history lesson; I am after what you committed to. When will every frontline DV organisation see the 10% increase in baseline funding that your government has promised?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call.

Ms CAHILL: Our government promised to dedicate $36m per year every year, ongoing, to domestic, family and sexual violence services because that is what was needed. In her report the Coroner asked that $180m be dedicated over five years. We went one better; we did $36m a year, every year, year-in and year-out.

Economic Growth

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

According to the latest CommSec report, the Territory economy is finally heading in the right direction after a decade of going backwards under Labor. I was pleased to hear that retail spending in the Territory is up by 1.7% on the decade average and annual growth and retail trade is up by 0.6%, only marginally behind Queensland. Can you update the Assembly on how the work our government is doing to back business and build confidence in the economy has helped to deliver these positive signs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Blain for his ongoing strong advocacy for Territory businesses and jobs, especially in his electorate.

Yes, the latest CommSec report confirms what Territorians are seeing and feeling—real momentum in our economy. That is not just encouraging; it is a clear sign that our CLP government's plan to back local businesses and attract investment is working. There is a confidence for our businesses that has been lacking for almost a decade. In not even a year we have managed to turn that around and show businesses what is possible if the right people are driving and pushing forward for the economy.

We are turning the tide because we have made a commitment to businesses to invest in and support them, promote our Territory and make sure people know that this is the place to come to live, work and invest. The Northern Territory has jumped from fifth to third in the national rankings, driven by robust growth in business investment. It is not an accident; our message is cutting through.

The Territory has what so many are looking for: opportunity, proximity and potential, backed by a strong stable government that knows what it is doing. We are unapologetically focused on progress and getting things done. Business investment is growing and, as the Member for Blain said, retail spending is up.

When you talk to business owners in Darwin and across the Territory—I have been to the Barkly and Alice Springs, talking to businesses and hearing my colleagues' feedback from other regions such as Katherine—they all say, 'We feel the difference'. You walk down the mall and people say how much this place has changed in such a short period. How amazing is it! The feeling is so positive. We are heading in the right direction because businesses are feeling heard.

In the March quarter 2025 a Territory-wide business confidence survey showed that business confidence is positive, at 64%. That is up from 58% in the December quarter 2024 and 54% in the March quarter 2024. That is incredible. In a few short months we have shown businesses what is possible.

We have invested in them, supported them and shown them that this is the place for people to come live and work. We are working to rebuild our economy and confidence. We are making sure people know that this is where they need to be. We are building a stronger, more confident economy that delivers opportunity for Territorians today and in the future. Our future has never looked brighter.

Health – Staff Numbers

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Professional Pharmacists Australia has sounded the alarm. Its members are threatening industrial action unless workforce shortages and unfilled vacancies are addressed urgently. On *360 with Katie Woolf*, Lead Organiser Jessica Hensman told Territorians that her organisation wrote to you, requesting a meeting to raise these serious issues. Instead of fronting up and listening, you responded in writing, declining its request and shutting it down.

With industrial action looming and Katherine Hospital at real risk of losing the pharmacy altogether, when will you do your job and meet with the workforce to take people's concerns seriously—or are you just planning to bury your head in the sand again, like you did with the maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about staff issues, because I have a media article in front of me dated 15 May 2024. It says:

> *NT Health continues to haemorrhage staff with the hospitals and clinics losing more than 800 workers in two years.*

Guess who the Health minister was at the time? The health system just over 12 months ago reported that it had lost more than 800 staff in the two years prior. The article states that there were negative staffing numbers for the eighth quarter in a row, falling from more than 8,000 to only 7,000 in December 2023. Therefore, it is interesting that the Opposition Leader is questioning whether I have met with Professional Pharmacists Australia. Yes, it wrote to me on 4 July.

As I highlighted, the Opposition Leader is well aware of the health workforce skills shortage, but these challenges did not magically begin in 2024. The Opposition Leader wants everyone to believe that these things happened overnight, but they have not. They happened under her watch for a substantial number of years. What did she do about it? Nothing.

Like the rest of Australia we are experiencing significant staff shortages. The NT Health pharmacy department is no exception. That is why I sought and received advice from NT Health. There is a clear plan to address these challenges with short, medium and longer-term strategies to try to fill these long-time vacant positions …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; it is in regard to the specifics of the question. That was: will you meet with members of that workforce to hear their concerns?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, continue.

Mr EDGINGTON: We are taking action to deal with trying to attract and retain staff.

As to whether I will meet with the union, depending on my schedule, yes, I am happy to meet with anyone. I remind the Assembly that enterprise bargaining is going on. As the minister I am not the person responsible for negotiating enterprise bargaining agreements with unions. I think the former Minister for Health is somewhat confused; I do not negotiate enterprise bargaining agreements, but I am happy to meet with the union.

In regard to the staffing issues, yes, we are working across the board to deal with them as we speak.

Private Sector Investment Confidence

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

The latest CommSec report has finally delivered good news for the Territory. Since the election the private sector is seeing the Territory as a place to invest. After two decades of a Labor government that ran our economy into the ground, we are turning things around. CommSec says that the Territory has the fastest annual economic growth in the nation, a clear sign of confidence in our future. Can you outline how the CLP government has supported this growth through our recent reforms which are helping to drive economic development, cut red tape and provide greater certainty for investors?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Goyder loves the Territory and the CommSec report. Unlike those opposite who throw the report in the bin, he picks it up and laps it right up. Whilst he is reading it he will find out that the latest CommSec report confirms what we already know: confidence in the Territory is growing. We are leading the nation in population growth and that momentum is being driven by our CLP government's bold reform agenda to cut red tape, streamline regulation and make it easier to do business in the NT.

Unlike Labor, when we came into office we did not waste time; we immediately delivered our commitment to scrap third-party merits reviews in legislation. This significant change removed unnecessary barriers that only added time, cost and uncertainty to projects and investments. Removing merits reviews for developments that already meet the required standards sent a strong message that the Territory is open for business.

We also scrapped the ad hoc overlapping policies that the former government threw together and followed up that by strengthening the Territory's already robust environmental protections.

We delivered the first-ever Mataranka Water Allocation Plan and re-declared the Western Davenport, providing long-term certainty to the environment and the community.

Further strengthening investor confidence is the reform of our water laws—changes that are long overdue. For too long, 60,000 megalitres of water sat idle because of unclear and bureaucratic processes brought in by the former Labor government. We fixed them. The recent reforms provide clarity under the *Water Act* and unlock the economic potential of the Aboriginal water reserves, with real jobs and opportunities for people in the regions, putting the power in the hands of Aboriginal communities and driving growth across this great Territory. Water is an economic enabler. Now it will finally be used in that way.

Yesterday we introduced legislation to streamline even more planning, land and environmental laws, cutting red tape, removing duplication and bringing processes into the 21st century. These are real reforms and outcomes. The latest CommSec report is proof that our plan to rebuild the economy is working. These reforms give industry the clarity it has been asking for and reinforce what we have said from day one: the Territory is open for business.

Corrections – Gender-diverse Offenders

J DAVIS to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

Is Northern Territory Corrections implementing its own policy titled Management of Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex Offenders at the Darwin Correctional Centre? The policy states that transgender, gender-diverse and intersex offenders should be given the opportunity to express a preference for segregated, single-bed or shared accommodation with other transgender or intersex individuals.

Can the minister confirm whether this provision is being implemented in practice at the Darwin Correctional Centre? What specific steps are being taken by NT Corrections to implement this policy in a way that ensures the safety, dignity and wellbeing of sistergirls housed in the male prison?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, when we came to office 11 months ago there was an overcrowded, under-resourced Corrections facility. The previous Labor government ended up putting prisoners and officers into watch houses, and it did not resource Corrections. We were overcrowded, bursting at the seams, and rehabilitation and education programs had been cut.

Since we came to office, we have started a master plan and brought online 500 beds—100 in Alice Springs and 400 in Darwin—with more to come. We know that overcrowding is a problem in prisons, and we are fixing it, unlike the previous Labor government, which for eight years sat on its hands and did nothing. It resourced the police but did not resource the courts or the Corrections system, which created overcrowding and problems because there were a lot of people in a small space.

We are making room and adding beds because we are committed to community safety. We will rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. We cannot do that without having a properly resourced Corrections facility. We are putting $495m into Corrections to make sure there is more space and that prisoners who need a single bed can have it. We will not compromise on community safety. We will make sure that if you commit crime and are remanded in custody in the Northern Territory, you will go into custody, and we will make sure there is rehabilitation …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. Is Northern Territory Corrections implementing your policy in relation to the safety of sistergirls in prison who are also members of our community?

Mr MALEY: I will continue with where I am going.

We are dealing with an overcrowding problem of mega proportions. We are ensuring there are more beds so that we can put people in single beds. We need to do that. It will take some time; you cannot pop up a prison overnight. Unfortunately, the previous Labor government failed to invest. There was overcrowding, watch houses, resourcing problems and staffing problems. We are fixing that. Our policies are in play. We ensure those policies are followed, but we need to do it with common sense. We were left with overcrowding and under-resourcing, and we are fixing that. We have a master plan, and we are working. We have beds in Alice Springs and bail support facilities in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

We want to break the cycle of offending. Community safety is our number one priority and breaking the cycle to give people an opportunity not to go back into prison is our laser focus. We will make sure our policies are implemented …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order? You are not getting the answer you want, but I will give you the benefit of asking again.

J DAVIS: Is Corrections following your policy in relation to transgender people in prison?

Madam SPEAKER: The minister gets it; he has 15 seconds.

Mr MALEY: We are dealing with that in relation to our policies, and with health issues and overcrowding. We need to make sure we have beds for people to be able to implement our policies.

Retail and Economic Confidence

Mrs ZIO to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The CLP government was elected on a clear mandate to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our Territory lifestyle. Since coming to government we have introduced Declan's law, restored the presumption against bail and put victims and community first. I also loved the CommSec State of the States report, and the latest report shows that Territory retail confidence is strengthening and the economy is growing. Fannie Bay residents who have small businesses and retailers are seeing it every day and are saying the same thing.

Can you update the Assembly on how safer streets are contributing to this renewed retail and economic confidence across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, plenty of people in the Member for Fannie Bay's district are shopping and spending all of their money, and a lot of them are tourists.

The CommSec State of the States report is looking much better than it ever did under Labor—we remember Labor wanted to throw it in the bin—because of the work we are doing. A big part of that work is the reducing-crime strategy. Declan's law and the stronger bail laws have resulted in a 44% increase in the number of people who have been refused bail. This means that there are fewer people committing serious offences on our streets, and the community is safer. That is a huge result.

It also shows in the crime stats. An example for our retailers is that commercial break-ins are down by 16% Territory-wide and house break-ins are down by 31%. These downward trends mean that the Territory can be a safer place.

The Chief Minister mentioned that in the mall we met Sue and Des, the tourists who have visited each year for the last seven years. The Chief Minister said that it was great they were positive about how things were looking better. They told me that they had thought about not coming last year, which was sad to hear but not surprising. They also told me that they will bring their children and grandchildren to visit Darwin. We know that they will be at our retailers, cafes, hospitality venues and the Parap markets. I was at the Parap markets a few weeks ago and it was humming. Plenty of tourists were there. It is important for our retail spend, which is up by 1.7% in the CommSec State of States report.

We still have more work to do in court reform, with the police in the criminal space, with Corrections, education and domestic violence—you name it; there is so much more work to be done. If our tourists are starting feel like they are safer, that is really good.

I shout out to Claire and John from Edinburgh who are in the gallery. I think it is fabulous that they are here, having come from all the way over there, to watch us in parliament; that is quite special. Thank you for being here with us. We love our tourists. We hope you come back.

Sue and Des, you are welcome back every year. We hope you continue to return. They told us that they watched us a couple of years ago in opposition, and how things have changed. Thank you for joining us.

Gunbalanya Health Clinic

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for HEALTH

You have scrapped the critical health clinic upgrade in Gunbalanya, denying residents a quality health service in their community and forcing patients to be transported to an already overcrowded Darwin hospital. Will you visit Gunbalanya to explain to the families why you feel that their current health services are fine and that they are wrong about needing a new health clinic?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Gunbalanya health clinic transitioned to Red Lily Health Board on 1 July. That is a fantastic announcement. Our government is focused on returning services to Aboriginal people in remote areas. We look forward to seeing Red Lily Health Board manage the Gunbalanya health clinic. This is a fantastic outcome for the community which has been asking for it for quite some time. We are all about empowering communities, and we want to ensure that there are jobs on country and people living in remote areas are getting the healthcare that they need on country. A lot of work has been put into that transition. I thank all the health staff who were part of working on the transition for some time. The work that they did with Red Lily to ensure the smooth transition has been fantastic. Well done to all the health staff.

Labor made lots of promises regarding the delivery of infrastructure across the Northern Territory. The former Labor government contributed only about $300m to its wish list infrastructure program during its term. The truth is that we inherited a large deficit coming into government. There was nothing more than a wish list in many cases. It is true that in the 2025 budget we were unable to deliver a new health clinic for Gunbalanya.

It is important to track this matter over many years. This is the same health clinic that the former Chief Minister Michael Gunner announced as a $20m commitment in 2020. Labor announced that it would replace the health clinic five years ago. What did Labor do with the $20m it promised in 2020? This seems to be the missing information. I listened to the Opposition Leader talking on radio, and she forgot the most important

part of the information—that Labor promised it in 2020. The most important bit of information was left out of her radio interview. It is a good opportunity to correct the record.

The former Labor government promised this in 2020. What had it done since then? There was a $100m overspend on the Tiger Brennan Drive overpass. If you look out the door you will see that the former Labor government spent $150m on an art gallery, but it did not deliver the Gunbalanya health clinic. We will put it back on the budget for next year.

Defence Industry Growth

Mr O'GALLAGHER to CHIEF MINISTER

The latest CommSec report shows renewed confidence in the Northern Territory. It is proof that our plan to rebuild our economy is working. Like you, I value the flyovers conducted by our Air Force on Territory Day. Noting that a key part of our economic strategy is to grow our Defence industry in the Territory, can you update the Assembly on how those efforts are going?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, Defence is critical to the Northern Territory and the defence of our nation and the freedoms that we enjoy. It is critical to our allied partners and our regional partners. It is an important part of making sure that everyday Australians can go about and live their lives in the freedom we deserve and expect.

I thank our service men and women across this country and those of our allied partners and our regional partners. Without their sacrifice, commitment and dedication we would not be standing in this parliament, enjoying our beautiful freedoms and have the privilege of watching things like a flyover, which represent peace, security and freedom. When people hear the jets flying above them that is the sound of freedom. In Australia that is the sound of freedom, and it is important.

Defence is so much bigger than security. It is also economically and socially important to the Northern Territory. It is part of our five key pillars of rebuilding the economy with our growing the economy strategy. It accounts for 10% of our gross state product, and we have just seen the fantastic results in the CommSec State of the States report that shows that our government has taken the Territory back in the right direction.

We know that when Defence dollars are spent in the Territory, about 90% of that money, which is about $1bn per year, goes to feeding Territory families. It goes to local contractors. Almost 90% is significant. That is real jobs and growth, supporting our economy and social environment.

The Territory has everything this nation needs, and that is our pitch. That is what I talk about to our federal colleagues and business. I say it repeatedly: we have everything this country needs for national security. We have everything this country needs for food security with our vast agricultural landscapes. We have everything this country, our allies and our regional partners need for energy security with our abundance of gas in the Beetaloo. We have every opportunity in the Northern Territory to be the allied partner of choice and the national partner of choice because we can fix this country's problems and support safety and prosperity in our region, so the role of the Northern Territory is profound.

We are the fastest-growing economy by 10.2% with the strongest population growth, and we can be proud of that. Our economic strategy is working. Today on radio, Hospitality NT attributed the work of Defence to the best July numbers it has seen in five years.

Rheumatic Heart Disease Medication Supply

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for HEALTH

Will all the residents in the NT with rheumatic heart disease be able to get their medication this month? In August and September some people will miss out. How is the government helping community health centres manage this crisis?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, benzathine is one of 350 medicines listed on the Therapeutic Goods Administration medicine shortage database; there is a shortage of that medication. The current shortage is expected to be resolved in September 2025 as per the TGA Medicine Shortage Reports Database. There has been

a shortage of benzathine globally since 2023, and supplies have been carefully managed to ensure people who need this medicine continue to receive it.

NT Health develops guidance for clinicians to advise of suitable conservation strategies and appropriate alternatives for medicine shortages that impact the whole of the Territory. NT Health has an agreed process to share this information. It is working closely with Aboriginal-controlled health centres to ensure there is distribution within their networks.

Medicine shortages are caused by a variety of factors, including manufacturing and supply chain issues, regulatory and trade issues and fluctuations in demand.

Member for Mulka, I can assure you that NT Health is working closely with the Aboriginal-controlled health sector to ensure that all patients receive medication as needed. The medicines management update provided health practitioners with the most recent information and guidance to ensure that there is ongoing access to available products.

There is a shortage of benzathine in the Northern Territory. It is used to treat acute rheumatic heart disease and to prevent future damage to heart valves due to rheumatic fever. It is also used to treat other medical problems.

I assure you, Member for Mulka, that NT Health is working closely with all the Aboriginal-controlled health clinics to ensure that suitable medication is available until the shortage is resolved in September.

Restoring the Territory Lifestyle – Population Growth

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for RECREATIONAL FISHING

The latest CommSec State of the States report shows that the Northern Territory is turning a corner. Confidence is rebuilding, momentum is growing and we are restoring our unique Territory lifestyle. This is helping to grow our population and economy. Can you outline how our government is driving this population growth through our work to restore our Territory lifestyle and one of our favourite pastimes—yours and mine—fishing?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I could talk about lifestyle for hours. It is a true passion of mine. I have done most of the Territory lifestyle things you could possibly think of. The Member for Blain also does that. He has his camper on the back of his Hilux and goes out bush a lot. That is what the Territory is about—being able to park up where you want, put up your tent or put your swag on the ground and enjoy the lifestyle.

Lifestyle is a key pillar of our election commitments. We are restoring community safety and rebuilding the economy and lifestyle. Lifestyle is what we are here for.

What is that doing? It is showing off because the CommSec report says that we are now moving up by 66% on our average in population growth. Confidence is returning to our economy and lifestyle because this government is taking real action. The tide is turning—literally turning—as we speak. From the bush to the boat ramp we are restoring the Territory lifestyle.

Fishing is a huge part of my life. I do it as regularly as I can. It is also a part of other people's lifestyle. It injects millions and millions of dollars into the community, as well as direct and indirect jobs. That is what it is about. There is no point in having a great lifestyle if you cannot afford to live here.

We need to restore our lifestyle hand in hand—on this side of the Chamber we can do more than one thing at once—with reducing crime and rebuilding the economy. We are doing those things together because we want the Territory to be a great place.

The data backs that. Our population is increasing, which means more people here, buying things at the shops, going to the hairdresser and buying fuel, putting money back into the economy.

We recently released the Recreational Fishing Grants. I was in Katherine a couple of weeks ago. I went to the Kids Fishing Fun Day with the Member for Katherine. We went to the river and spoke to the people there.

We are stocking 120,000 barramundi into lakes so that you do not need to have a boat to catch a barramundi anymore. That might help me because I have a boat and I do not catch many barramundi. I try my best. People can go down to the lakes, take their family and catch a fish—enjoy the whole outdoor lifestyle experience.

We are growing golden snapper. They will be stocked into the harbour soon. Again, it is about the Territory lifestyle. These changes are paying off with 1.2% population growth.

This is about Silkwood. We bought more land. Robin Falls will be available and open to the public. There is a spot around the back, a heated pool, that will be open to the public.

We have expanded hunting, and we have fixed firearm issues. It is all about the Territory lifestyle, and we are doing a great job.

Paediatricians

K McNAMARA to CHIEF MINISTER

You recently received a letter from 45 Northern Territory paediatricians expressing their professional concerns over the impacts of your government's changes to youth justice and asking for a meeting with you. Last time you received a letter from these paediatricians asking for a meeting, I asked you about it in Question Time. Territorians were appalled when you rubbished their professional medical expertise as 'political opinion' and refused to meet with them. I give you some advice for free: it is not a vote winner to rubbish some of our community's most respected and trusted medical professionals. I will give you a chance to redeem yourself. Will you meet with the paediatricians this time and listen to their professional medical feedback?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I love this question because the Member for Nightcliff is not worried about what is happening in her electorate, crime, graffiti or jobs for her community. We get a lot of feedback from her constituents who come to us because they cannot get any traction with her. However, that is okay; she can ask me whatever question she likes.

The last time I was asked this question about the paediatricians I made a pertinent comment; that is, paediatricians have an important role in the community. As a mother of two, I frequent the paediatrician. It is an important part of our annual calendar for my children. I have firsthand experience, as a Territory mother, of how difficult it is to get your sick child to see a paediatrician or to have regular meetings with one.

My advice to you and the 45 paediatricians who wasted their time writing to me is that you should spend more time supporting Territory children because that is your job. I will do my job, which is to run the Northern Territory, and they can do their job, which is to look after sick children. I have to regularly look mothers in the eye who, like me, cannot get in to see one. You of all people should know that.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Everyone, take your seat. We will have silence. You might not like what the Chief Minister is saying, but she has the right to reply to the question asked—in silence.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I have not seen the letter or the invitation. If it about what it was last time, the answer is probably the same as last time. I appreciate they have their own views and so-called evidence that they will be looking to.

K McNamara: Their views are good enough for your children but not for other children.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I have no idea what you are talking about. I want to see doctors making people better. We want to see professionals doing the work they have to do across the Territory. Most importantly, I want to see kids getting appointments with paediatricians. If that means they are spending their time writing to me when it could be spent helping a sick Territory child, I would prefer they spend their time with sick children rather than huddled up in my office talking to me about whatever the topic is, which I am yet to understand.

That is my answer. I will sit down. I have nothing more to say except I am sure the letter will get to me eventually.

Member for Nightcliff, I encourage you to ask me an actual question that will impact the lives of your community because people keep coming to us wondering where you are on that.

Seniors Month

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for YOUTH, SENIORS and EQUALITY

Tomorrow marks the start of Seniors Month which will see thousands of senior Territorians participate in a spate of activities across the Territory. I am keen to learn about how our government is ensuring seniors are supported to engage in our Territory lifestyle. Even more so, I too note, as per the CommSec State of the States report, that today we have learned our relative population growth figure is finally improving after years of it declining under the former government. Can you explain to the Assembly how our work to reduce crime and restore our lifestyle helped to deliver this positive news and, in particular, what we are doing to help keep more senior Territorians in the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fong Lim is passionate about getting more seniors involved and active in our lifestyle.

The Finocchiaro CLP government is proud to be delivering on our election commitment to restore our great Territory lifestyle, with the results now showing. Based on the data we have seen today from the CommSec report, we have a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our economy and provide even better care and support for our senior Territorians. As the Member for Fong Lim mentioned, tomorrow marks the official commencement of Seniors Month in the Northern Territory. Seniors Month encourages older people to get physically active, learn or try something new and celebrate the contribution they make in the community, including within their families, workplaces and intergenerationally.

Our government has invested more than $63,000 to support Seniors Month events, providing up to $2,000 to organisations to host activities and events to celebrate our seniors. More than 40 activities are being funded by the Northern Territory Government, with events spanning Darwin, Palmerston, Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Victoria–Daly and Alice Springs. Alice Springs will have its own seniors expo on 12 August, with free entry, free morning tea, barbecue and interactive information stalls. Several favourites from previous years are being funded again, such as Argentinian tango dance classes, Royal Life Saving Society seniors aquatic activities and the much-loved Darwin High School morning tea of entertainment. Many exciting new events have also been funded for the first time, including a guided seniors-tailored mountain biking event and an immersive virtual reality experience.

The Council on the Ageing Northern Territory (COTA NT) has once again done a fantastic job administering and publishing the NT Seniors Month calendar in digital and print copies for distribution across the Territory. Printed calendars will be available for pick-up from several locations across the Territory, including COTA NT offices, libraries, retirement villages, electorate offices and more. The full list of activities can be found on the COTA NT website.

I highlight one particular event that caught my eye in this calendar—that is, the 2025 seniors' lunch with its fun 'In the Jungle' theme. It is proudly hosted by the Member for Namatjira, Bill Yan, and Member for Braitling, Josh Burgoyne. I have no doubt that these two fantastic local MLAs will put on a great show for our senior residents in Alice Springs; however, I am not quite sure about the dress code for the event, which says to dress in your best animal print. I look forward to seeing the photos from the event.

To answer the question, restoring the Territory lifestyle will help the seniors, and we want more seniors enjoying the Territory.

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

YOUTH JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 31

Continued from earlier this day.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I do not want to pad this out because this is important legislation and we need to get on with it, but reforms to youth justice are key. It is something that was raised with me many

times when I was campaigning to enter this House. In my first campaign in 2020 the talk at the time was about then Chief Minister Michael Gunner continuously weakening laws and the *Youth Justice Act* and removing consequences for offenders. That was the beginning of the catch and release of people patrolling the streets, stealing keys and cars, performing grand theft auto on our streets, leaving abandoned stolen vehicles smashed and destroyed, littering the streets of my good Palmerston and driving people up the wall.

I remember clearly in 2017 we had a series of crime meetings in Palmerston facilitated by the then Member for Blain, Terry Mills, because people were so up in arms about it. The response from Michael Gunner was to water down the *Youth Justice Act* and make it harder and harder. Over the last few years police have expressed to me their frustration that rather than the offenders being handcuffed, the police are handcuffed in terms of dealing with young offenders.

An example given was if an adult was pulled over for driving dangerously, the police could deal with them as you would expect, but if they pulled over someone under the age of 18 with the same behaviour, they had to sit on their hands and wait for a support person to turn up. Those endemic issues were brought in by the previous government.

I will quickly run through this Bill. We will go through it in consideration in detail, but there are a few things that jumped out at me and amazed me, which I had not realised the previous government had slipped in.

I had a lot of complaints during campaigning that youth diversion was basically a bit of a joke. Previously youths had to consent to youth diversion, whereas now—in clause 9, which replaces section 40—if a youth denies engaging in behaviour, they must not be diverted. That is common sense. What is the sense of diverting a youth if they do not admit responsibility? The first step to changing behaviour is to take ownership of behaviour.

It is sad and shameful that the Leader of the Opposition still has not apologised to Territorians for the performance of the previous government.

Ms Uibo: You do not like apologists, so why would I apologise?

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, refrain from interjecting, please.

Mr KERLE: I have said before that Gary Higgins, the then Leader of the Opposition in 2016 …

Ms Uibo: The best CLP member I ever met.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader! Enough of the sideline dialogue, please. We have to get through this last day of sittings.

Mr KERLE: One of the first things Gary Higgins did was to take responsibility for and ownership of the behaviour of the previous government, even though it was not his fault. He was an adult; he took ownership and apologised to Territorians. Territorians are still waiting for the Leader of the Opposition, the current Leader of the Labor Party, to apologise for what her party did to them over the last eight years. All the victims of crime, all the people whose homes were broken into, are still waiting.

We are removing diversion for prescribed offences or if the person was previously found to be unsuitable. I am flabbergasted that we have to do that, but it was there. It was open to the courts that police had to divert someone even if they committed a serious offence. That is crazy.

This is the big one; it is key. Many victims of crime told me that they felt ignored and left out of the justice system. The previous government changed the law to put offenders first, and victims were nowhere in the picture. Clause 11 of this Bill amends section 81 to require that when sentencing a youth who has been found guilty of an offence, the court must have primary regard to the impact of the offence on each victim. Member for Nelson, the people of Blain and I thank you for bringing this change. This is what has been missing for eight long years—putting the good citizens of the Territory, the victims of crime, first and foremost at the centre of our legislation.

There is a new section, Assistance to deal with or prevent emergency or escape. Apparently, if a young detainee in a youth detention facility tried to escape, the youth justice and Corrections officers were powerless to stop them. They had to stand there and say, ‘No, please don’t escape. Please don’t climb onto the roof. Please don’t jump the fence and run away.’ Then the police had to divert their important time and resources from doing the things they needed to do—keeping people safe—to chase down someone who was already

in custody but had escaped. The law, passed by the previous government, tied the hands of officers in the detention facility and prevented them from taking reasonable steps. I welcome these changes that will empower Corrections officers to maintain detainees in custody and the good order of the facility. There is a lot more there, but I want to move on.

Nearly 23 years ago, I worked as a security guard. That was in a gap year of uni, and I found it was a good way to get out, meet people and earn money so that I could save up to finish my degree. One of the things we had to deal with was people emitting bodily fluids. One of the more disgusting ones was when they would spit. There were a few people who were well known, and we knew they had certain communicable diseases and had a propensity for spitting. When dealing with them, we always had to keep our distance. If they did not respond, we had to call the police because we did not want to cop a gob in the eye or mouth. The worst thing that could happen when you were giving verbal instructions to someone was if they took a big hock and chucked a loogie right into your face. It is disgusting. I encourage everyone listening, or reading this, to think about the impact of having a big loogie hocked straight in your face while you are giving verbal instructions to someone. It is disgusting.

Our side of the House supports the good workers of the Northern Territory. We support police, Corrections officers, nurses and doctors—anyone who must deal with a person who, for whatever reason, is choosing to be disgusting and emit bodily fluids and aim it at other people. We support the rights of workers to be safe in their workplace, to go to work and expect to go home after their shift to hug, kiss and cuddle their loved ones.

During the campaign a police officer described to me how, when he finished his shift, he would need a complete change of clothes and go home and leave all his work accoutrements outside his house. He refused to take them into his house because he had a wife, a baby and a toddler. He said that he would regularly finish a shift and there would be ropes of saliva on his uniform that had been spat on him. I thank that police officer for putting his life on the line and putting service before self, turning up to work every day and protecting the good people of Palmerston.

How can we expect people who look after detainees to go unprotected? Yes, this Bill will reintroduce spit guards, but it is straightforward stuff. What makes more sense: to put a light cloth on one person who is trying to assault—if you spit on someone that is assault—people in their workplace; or to force every other worker that person comes in contact with to cover up and wear a biohazard suit? A worker needs to wear a face shield with plastic covering if someone is actively spitting. That was the alternative. If the offender who is emitting bodily fluids is not be covered up, everyone who comes within range of that person has to be covered up.

Members of the previous government put their fragile egos and criticism by leftist elites ahead of the safety of NT workers. They exposed NT workers to harm.

I support this Bill. I support putting victims' rights ahead of the rights of offenders and making sure that the people of the Territory are safe.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I support the amendments to the *Youth Justice Act 2005*.

Our Finocchiaro CLP government was elected on a platform of creating a safer community where antisocial behaviour would not be tolerated and those breaking the law would be held to account. Resoundingly, Territorians said that is what they wanted, so that is what we are working to deliver.

We will not, as those on the other side would like us to, simply maintain the status quo, to continue their failed legacy in this space and continue to send the message to young people that they can do whatever they want to whomever they want as often as they want without consequence. It is incomprehensible to me that the previous Labor government considered that an action that caused harm to a person or damage to property did not warrant a consequence.

I invite those on the other side to meet with the residents of Port Darwin, look them in the eye and explain to them why young people should not expect consequences. I want them to look in the eye the expectant mum and her husband who were randomly attacked by three young people a few weeks ago as they walked along the street in front of their home and explain why they do not believe those young people should face serious consequences for that action. I challenge those opposite to meet with and explain to the residents of the inner-city apartment building who have been terrorised by a group of young people over the past few years

breaking into their cars and damaging their property why they think their approach of no consequences for bad behaviour will keep those residents safe.

In my role as Minister for Children and Families I consistently see the results that a no-consequence system delivers. It delivers broken families and young people who believe they can act with impunity, ransack the shelves of businesses in the mall and threaten staff with an edged weapon if they dare to intervene to protect their property. They rampage through the streets of Alice Springs, stealing cars and creating mayhem without expectation of a consequence. A no-consequence approach perpetuates behaviours across generations. If all you have known is an environment of disregard for the law where offending does not have a consequence, breaking the law becomes the norm.

I agree with the Member for Mulka that communities have a critical role to play in reversing the trend of offending for our young people, but I do not agree that more money needs to be spent. Millions of dollars have already been and continue to be invested in programs across departments to support communities to create opportunities that foster change. Funding in and of itself will not result in changed behaviours. This rests with families and community members leading by example and holding young people to account.

The simple fact is that if there is no consequence for an action, no matter the action, behaviour will not change; outcomes will not change. That is why these changes to the *Youth Justice Act* are so critical.

These changes deliver a framework that will ensure there are consequences for breaking the law. They give assurance to all Territorians that if they are a victim of crime, their rights will be prioritised. This does not diminish the support that will be provided to offenders. To the contrary, the changes before the parliament today focus on accountability and achieving real, tangible and positive outcomes for young offenders.

The Leader of the Opposition proposed that diversionary programs should be a focus, and she is right in that regard. However, it will be different from when those on the other side were in government, because participation in diversionary programs will be made mandatory.

I must confess that prior to coming to government I was, like most Territorians, of the understanding that a young person who was diverted from a custodial sentence was required to complete the program; otherwise, what would be the point? The fact that was not the case is unforgivable.

Much was made by those on the other side that diversionary programs as an alternative to a custodial sentence would result in a reduction in reoffending and help young people who were heading down a path toward a life of incarceration. Referral to a program that was not mandatory was not a legitimate alternative to a custodial sentence; it was a get-out-of-jail-free card. No more. This egregious oversight will be corrected. Going forward, diversionary programs will deliver a consequence and I will be able to report to the residents of my electorate that a youth sentenced to a diversionary program will have to complete that program, giving them the real opportunity to change their behaviour and the trajectory of their life.

The other significant change is that detention as a last resort being removed. Too often I have met people who have explained to me that although their home had been broken into, their property had been damaged or their business had been vandalised, they had not reported it because what was the point. They could not see how the young people committing these offences were being held to account. Learning that detention as a last resort will be removed, they understand that their rights as victims will be at the forefront and there will be a purpose to reporting those crimes.

We may see in the near future an escalation of numbers in that space as people report to police what has been happening to them over the past decade so that they can see a consequence for the actions of those young people. That is a good thing because it means those young people will end up in programs that, hopefully, change the direction of their lives. That is why we are all working so incredibly hard to see what we can do to change those young people's lives.

As the Minister for Children and Families I tasked my department to identify how we can wrap children at risk in a supportive environment that engages with those responsible for their care and offers the best possible circumstances to get these at-risk children on track and out of the path to prison. That will always be the priority. However, if they find themselves in a situation where they have repeatedly done the wrong thing and are faced with a sentence, they may have the opportunity to do a mandated diversionary program. We may still have the opportunity to change the direction of their life and see them lead a much more purposeful and directed life than one that leads to a life of crime.

So much has already been done by the Finocchiaro CLP government on this. There is still much to undertake, but the focus will remain on looking after the kids, trying to keep them out of trouble and if they get into trouble, putting them in an environment where they learn that it is not okay and they have an opportunity to change their approach. Most importantly, the people who are living in our communities will know that they will be safer.

That is why I commend this legislation to the Assembly.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I offer my contribution to this debate. Although the word 'contribution' implies that what I have to offer is taken with equal weight to others in this Chamber, the Chief Minister has made it clear that she does not listen to us or anyone else.

This week our Chief Minister told concerned citizens, 'Pack up your placards and go home. We are not listening to you.' She went further on a radio show, declaring that anyone with criticisms of her policies has 'no place in the future of the Territory'. These statements should alarm every person who values democratic governance. In a healthy democracy criticism is not something to be silenced; it is essential.

When elected officials tell citizens that their voices do not matter and declare that dissent has no place in our future, they abandon the principles that legitimise their authority. The Chief Minister seems to have forgotten that she serves the people and not the other way around. Her mandate comes from voters, including those who disagree with her. Dismissing their concerns as irrelevant does not make those concerns disappear; it simply reveals a government that has lost sight of its democratic obligations.

Great leaders welcome scrutiny because they understand that robust debate strengthens policy. They engage with critics because they recognise that even uncomfortable truths can improve outcomes. They remember that in a democracy there is always room for dissenting voices.

When any government declares that criticism is unwelcome and tells its citizens to simply go home or that they have no place in the future of the Territory rather than engage with their concerns, it crosses a dangerous line. This is not leadership; it is the language of authoritarianism. History shows us where this path leads. When leaders begin dividing citizens into those who belong and those who do not and suggest that dissent is illegitimate, they erode the foundations of democratic society. Such rhetoric does not just silence today's critics; it signals to future generations that their voices matter only when they echo those in power.

Our Territory deserves better. It deserves leaders who listen, engage and remember that democracy thrives on debate, not decree.

On Monday, alongside other members of the crossbench, I was briefed on these changes. We did not receive the Bill. As other members pointed out, we had only 24 hours to look at this incredibly serious legislation. In our briefing we heard that these proposed amendments will see at least 100 more children aged as young as 10 in prison each year. We were passed a spit hood to examine. Spit hoods are considered a tool of torture under international law, yet this government feels it is appropriate to use them on children as young as 10.

Children do not belong in prisons, yet this government is shamelessly rushing through these changes without any evidence that they will effectively reduce crime or keep community members safe. The government knows this goes against the evidence, but it does not care. This is action for the sake of action. Worse than that, it is cruel and punitive, and evidence shows that it will only increase the rates of recidivism and violent offending.

Not only will these changes not work but also they are a breach of international law, yet for some reason this government thinks it is above the law and that because the CLP was elected on this tough-on-crime agenda, it is allowed to ignore basic human rights.

Thirty-five years ago Australia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that Australia has a duty to ensure that all children in Australia enjoy the rights set out in the treaty. I will share one of the multiple internationally agreed upon rights that this government is flagrantly breaching through the changes in this Act. Article 37(b) states:

> *No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time …*

This government has removed this. Prison as a last resort is not a weak approach to crime; rather, it is a sensible approach to ensure that children have the opportunity to be rehabilitated. As a Law Society Northern Territory President stated when the age of criminal responsibility was lowered:

> *These laws … are a retrograde step which flies in the face of reason and will simply place vulnerable children—many of whom are themselves victims of crime and neglect—on a pathway to more offending …*

These changes are sacrificing the futures of young people simply for this government to score cheap political points.

The CLP has repeatedly misrepresented our youth justice system. The CLP suggests that it is too soft, there are no consequences for offenders and diversion is like a get-out-of-jail-free card for offenders. There are good reasons why children are treated differently under the law.

The law recognises two fundamental facts. First, the factors that cause a child to offend, like poverty, abuse or neglect, are a collective responsibility, not solely the responsibility of the child. Second, are the scientific realities of brain development, that young people cannot understand consequences or appreciate the wrongness of their actions in the same way that adults can—not that they cannot understand them at all, but not in the same way—because, and this is super simplified, the frontal cortex of our brain that allows this high-order thinking or executive functioning is simply not yet developed. This is why we need to respond to children's offending in a way that acknowledges these fundamental facts or behaviours.

In the past week the CLP has painted a misleading picture of how youth diversion operates. It is by no means a get-out-of-jail-free card. In practice, diversion programs can require a lot more work from a child than simply sitting in a prison cell. In diversion group conferences a child has to sit face-to-face with victims, police, parents and youth workers and be accountable for their actions. A child may have to attend several meetings in the lead-up to the conference to reflect on their behaviour. At a group conference they will have to speak in detail about how their actions affected each person at the table and think about how they will make amends.

Decades of slow progress have led us to a place where there are alternatives to policing and imprisonment. These are borne out of the collective understanding that our children deserve care and compassion and that early interactions with the justice system can lead to further offending. We have a system where there are opportunities for police, prosecutors and judges to take a young person's circumstances into account and put them on alternative pathways. That is because we know that children who are interacting with the justice system are overwhelmingly from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is easy for those opposite to turn a blind eye to these reforms because they do not think it will ever apply to their kids. The kids who will be affected by these laws are overwhelmingly First Nations kids. On any given day between 90% and 100% of the kids incarcerated in the Northern Territory are Aboriginal kids. The kids who will be affected by these laws are those who have experienced family and domestic violence, have neurodevelopmental disorders such as FASD, have a history of use or misuse of alcohol and other drugs, had at least one parent go to prison, have been in foster care or other parts of the child protection system, are homeless or have insecure housing. We should be working hard to address these factors, but this government does not care about what works. It simply wants to punish young offenders, causing more division and trauma in our communities.

I wholeheartedly object to these proposed amendments. I will take the time to summarise the evidence and outline the issues with some of the amendments being proposed. The Chief Minister and the Minister for Corrections are content to bury their heads in the sand, but it is appropriate that the rest of the CLP members and the public who are watching this closely get a chance to understand how destructive these amendments are.

The first issue is the principle of detention as a last resort. The requirement for courts and police to consider all other options before imprisoning a child is a fundamental principle in international children's law for a good reason. Extensive research has found that prison damages children and dramatically increases the likelihood that a child will reoffend. It is as though that simple fact has not gotten through to the heads of the people on the other side. It is literally making more offenders. We want fewer, not more.

Prison does not work as a circuit breaker for offending. It does not teach children a lesson, as we are told. Prisons make children feel scared, isolated, hopeless and lonely. Imprisoning children robs them of high-quality school education and training in critical developmental years. Older teenagers are deprived of alternative education pathways, including apprenticeships and training. Employment is a known protective factor against reoffending in adult life. Prisons make children feel disconnected and disengaged from society on their release. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, being separated from country, family

connections, language and culture has lasting and devastating impacts on the wellbeing of the child and their family.

It is, therefore, no surprise—and consistent with the evidence—that children revert to offending behaviours when they are released from youth prisons. It is a fact that it is not helping anyone.

The majority of children incarcerated in the NT have cognitive disabilities, are neurodiverse and come from backgrounds of extreme disadvantage. In fact, the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory found that 56% of the children and young people had FASD, 56% had a history of self-harm/suicidal ideation and 31% had some form of brain injury. It has been well established that children with FASD should not be incarcerated when it is not appropriate.

As the Children's Commissioner published last year:

> *The criminal justice system is unable and ill-equipped to play a 'therapeutic role' in responses to challenging behaviours associated with disability. Reliance on the criminal justice system as a management response to children with disability is unconscionable and may contribute to ongoing harm by compounding their already adverse life experiences.*

These children and their families already face systemic discrimination and many barriers to participating in our community and living full lives. The CLP's disastrous kneejerk bail reforms and now the proposed removal of the principle of prison as a last resort will cause children to be incarcerated more often and for longer periods. The CLP will be responsible for failing a generation of children who needed its support—the most vulnerable children in our community. The CLP will be responsible for another generation of children who were never offered meaningful ways out of their offending behaviour and will most likely go on to offend as adults. The CLP will be responsible for a Northern Territory community that still does not feel safe.

Imprisonment is a brutal and lazy response to a complex issue—that is, addressing offending behaviour in children. Addressing the legitimate concerns of Territorians requires listening to experts and investing in youth supports and strong diversion programs. The CLP misleads Territorians when it says that imprisoning children will work to keep communities safe.

The second issue that I call out is the reintroduction of the use of spit hoods and restraining devices on young people. Frankly, I cannot believe we are having this debate again. You all know the history of this issue.

In 2016 *Four Corners* did a report on the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre, a story aptly titled 'Australia's Shame'. The report showed young people being restrained, hooded, isolated and tortured. The report compelled then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to call a Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

That royal commission was unequivocal about the harms of using spit hoods and restraint devices on children and recommended that their use be prohibited. At that point, in 2017, we made a collective decision as a community that we do not condone the torture of incarcerated young people and stopped their use. Now the CLP wants to reintroduce them because it cannot control the enormous prison population it has created.

The NT Corrections Commissioner says that these are needed to ensure the safety and security of staff and young people in Corrections. I would argue that there is no safe detention of children in the Northern Territory. If there was truly any concern for the safety of children in detention, we would not be talking about spit hoods; we would be talking about the conditions that lead to challenging behaviours in incarceration. We would be talking about trauma-informed practice, counsellors and psychologists, family, culture and community, medical care and disability support—that one in particular is severely lacking in our prisons for young people—education and training, sports, creativity and recreation.

Today my heart is with Dylan Voller, the First Nations young man whose abuse and torture in Don Dale was brought into the spotlight by this *Four Corners* report. He now has a young family and a thriving music career, but that is in spite of his treatment by the state, not because of it.

The third issue is the expansion of the prescribed offences for which young people will be ineligible for diversion unless the court determines it, but in the meantime they will likely be remanded in prison anyway, so it virtually removes the possibility of diversion.

International and domestic evidence is abundantly clear that the vast majority of children who participate in youth diversion programs do not reoffend. For this reason the National Children's Commissioner,

Anne Hollonds, recently called on Australian governments to resource and expand the availability of evidence-based diversionary programs for children. These programs are successful because they address the root causes of offending, support children to take responsibility for offending—which they do, which is what you want—and hold children accountable in an age-appropriate way.

If the CLP invested as much money in diversion programs as it did in flying children from Alice Springs to Darwin, the outcomes for those offending children in Alice Springs would look very different. The NT has an opportunity to invest in youth diversion.

Recent research highlighted the need for expanded intensive diversionary options for children who have more chronic entrenched patterns of offending behaviour, including culturally appropriate case management. The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services found diversion programs reduced youth reoffending. It also found that diversion programs were significantly cheaper than incarceration. In 2022–23 the average cost for each adolescent under community-based supervision was $305 per day compared with the $2,827 per day for adolescents in custody.

However, the CLP government is legislating to further restrict the opportunity for children to participate in youth diversion programs for offences, including minor offences.

There is the matter of prioritising the rights of victims over the supposed rights of offenders in sentencing. This is a classic case of the CLP making up an imaginary issue to sound as though it is taking action. Nobody is arguing that victims should not have rights—nobody. The way the government is banging on about it you would think that Labor's policy was that victims would have to move in next door to their offenders.

The fundamental issue is that we need to stop crime from happening in the first place. The best way to protect victims is by preventing crime and stopping anyone from being a victim of crime. When crimes occur, we need to help victims to seek justice whilst giving offenders the best possible chance of understanding the consequences of their actions and being supported not to commit further crimes.

All the evidence says that incarceration is not rehabilitative, especially for young offenders. Incarceration locks people into cycles of reoffending, resulting in more crime not less.

All this begs the question: where is the CLP getting these policy ideas from? I see that the CLP has been meeting its LNP mates in Queensland to share ideas about crime in their respective jurisdictions. This is the same Queensland Government that is introducing adult time for adult crime, despite it being condemned by the United Nations, the Law Council of Australia, Amnesty International and the Human Rights Law Centre. Is that where the CLP is getting these policies from?

The Office of the Children's Commissioner put out a statement on Monday saying that the Corrections minister did not consult with the Children's Commissioner on the rewrite of this Act. I suspect that the Corrections minister has not read Commissioner Musk's statement, so I will do the service for her and read out a few lines. The Commissioner said:

> *The Government promised to be transparent and accountable to the community. Despite this, they have failed to consult with important stakeholders with significant expertise to inform the development of effective laws and policy. We want Government to work with us on crime prevention initiatives that tackle the root causes of crime. The Government's failure to listen is failing our children and our communities …*
>
> *…*
>
> *Any potential amendments that erode important safeguards on the use of force including use of restraints, separation and isolation practices will seriously compromise the safety of children and staff in youth detention centres.*
>
> *These safeguards exist to limit and strictly confine the circumstances for permissible use of restrictive practices that can cause harm to children, building off recommendations from the Royal Commission and other Inquiries.*

Commissioner Musk is not an activist nor a crime apologist; she is an independent statutory officer whose job it is to look out for the rights and wellbeing of children in the Northern Territory and provide advice to our government. I suggest that the CLP allow her to do the job she was appointed to do.

If you would indulge me, I will propose a few alternative amendments that the CLP should introduce if it really wants to see crime fall. At a bare minimum the government needs to:

- raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years in line with strong evidence showing that 14 is the absolute minimum age at which children should be held criminally responsible

- implement all the recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory

- legislate the presumption in favour of bail for children and ensure there are appropriate community-led bail support programs that give kids and families the best possible chance to meet their bail conditions

- legislate a ban on the use of spit hoods and restraining devices on children

- prevent interactions with the youth justice system through a Territory-wide prevention and early intervention program

- divert young people from courts by properly resourcing diversion programs, including ensuring equal access for young people living in remote communities, to be led by First Nations people, families and communities, who deserve support and compassion to help their children grow up healthy, safe and strong.

In addition to these bare minimum changes to the *Youth Justice Act*, the government must also take a far more holistic approach to crime prevention. The solutions to crime and community safety must be sought outside of the police, courts and prisons. We need to invest in alternative first responder models to help kids stay out of trouble and bail support accommodation for young people.

I point to the money we are spending on this in terms of meeting people's fundamental human needs. The Corrections budget this year is the highest it has ever been. The government is boasting about spending more money than ever on locking up people, but it is spending that money on something that does not deter crime, rehabilitate offenders or make the community safer.

I am sure you have heard this figure already in the last few days, but it deserves to be said again. A total of $1.3m is how much it costs per year on average to incarcerate a young person in the Northern Territory. That feels like a colossal waste of money to me. If we spent that money on providing culturally appropriate education, secure housing, power, clean water, nourishing food, access to country and culture, engaging in diversionary programs, proper disability diagnosis and support services, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and domestic and family violence programs, we might actually help keep our kids out of the justice system and give our communities a chance to be safe, inclusive and thriving once again. Instead, those opposite would prefer to funnel money into police and prisons.

On Monday, the Chief Minister told Katie Woolf on radio that she did not care that the land councils and community members were calling her racist. She said that she was simply listening to the community and engaging legislative changes to better protect community members. It is deeply disrespectful to ignore the calls of senior First Nations community leaders to reflect on the racist laws she is enacting. This speaks again to the government's wilful ignorance of structural and systemic racism.

I have said it before and will continue to do so: applying the law equally upon all members of the public does not rid legislation or this government of racism. When people rightfully accuse these changes and the CLP's approach to crime of being racist—I know it is a word we are all a bit terrified of in here—they are not saying that one group of people have different laws from others; they are recognising the disproportionate impact that a law will have on a specific group of people.

When you have a law or system that disproportionately impacts or harms one type of person or a particular racial or cultural group—it happens because of a bunch of disparities such as discrimination, colonisation, poverty, systemic failures and historical reasons such as genocide—and you do not do anything to acknowledge or address these reasons but still enact the law, knowing full well the disproportionate impacts it will have, that is what makes it racist.

The youth prison population in the NT is predominantly Aboriginal. The most recent data I have access to was from 30 March. We have a daily average of 33 youth detainees, and only three of them were not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. This will have a significant and disproportionate impact on First Nations youths, their families and communities. This is why people call this racist legislation. We cannot continue to

perpetuate systemic racism, and we cannot continue to further entrench cycles of trauma. We are damning a generation of young people through these punitive laws, and every Territorian should be outraged.

I close by acknowledging the activists and community members who have been routinely denigrated by this government. The people you call crime apologists are real people who live in the Northern Territory, work here and vote here. Those people are proud to live in the NT, and they want their communities to be safe, inclusive and harmonious in the future. They do not want to live in fear. They want human rights, children and people protected. They want to reduce crime; we all do. We want our First Nations communities to be respected and heard.

With legislative changes like this, I despair for the future of the NT. I genuinely despair and dread what this place will look like in five, 10 and 15 years' time when a whole next generation of Aboriginal children is brutalised and traumatised by this system. If you listened and followed the advice of leaders like the Member for Mulka, the future could look different, but it will not; it will be worse.

This is frustrating and disheartening because, as I have said before, if you put the moral and ethical implications of legislation like this to the side—not that we should ever put aside moral implications; it is simply that the CLP government has made it clear that it has no interest in morals or ethics—and look simply at what will work, you see that this will not work. It will only make things worse and make us more unsafe. I despair for the future of this place with this reckless, ignorant and hateful government at the helm.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I have deep concern about the government's decision to push through on urgency this significant Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill. It is troubling to find ourselves debating complex, far-reaching changes to a law affecting some of the Territory's most vulnerable young people with no time for proper consideration, consultation or scrutiny.

Like everyone else who is not in the CLP, I received this Bill at 10.23 yesterday morning. We had the opportunity for a briefing on Monday, for which I am grateful, but a briefing without seeing the Bill and having time to understand the complexities of it is not good enough. Withholding the Bill until the day before we have to vote on it prohibits us, your fellow elected representatives, from analysing it, seeking legal and policy advice, consulting our constituents, consulting experts and peak bodies and proposing amendments to it. It prohibits us from making the Bill better and from participating in the lawmaking process, and it undermines democracy.

We cannot make good law for the whole of the Northern Territory if proposed laws are withheld from those of us who need to make decisions about them. We are all elected representatives, and we all represent people equally. This government's insistence on consistently using urgency powers shows its disregard for the community and erodes the validity of this parliament and the work that we do here.

This area of law and the amendments which deal with force and emergency situations which were a fundamental part of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody deserve scrutiny, but this government refused to send the Bill to the scrutiny committee. In such an important area of law in the Territory, we must take a measured approach and carefully look at and think through the detail.

The CLP is not using urgency powers to respond to urgent situations. As I said, it is using urgency powers to bypass the democratically elected parliament to pass laws unilaterally and in service of its own political aims without consultation or regard for the outcome.

It raises the question for me of what I am doing here. I cannot put this more clearly than our current Chief Minister did when the previous government passed amendments to the *Youth Justice Act* on urgency in 2019. She said then:

> *Urgency has a threshold. It is about detriment to Territorians and something that must be dealt with as extremely undesirable or dangerous might happen if it is not passed.*

When urgency was first invoked in parliament last year I said, and I say it again, that passing laws in haste without adequate scrutiny risks creating more problems than we solve.

This government has not consulted with the Children's Commissioner or key legal services in developing this Bill. Worse still, it has labelled as apologists those who believe in smart, evidence-based approaches that will keep us all safer. This rhetoric does a disservice to all of us—the community, young people, frontline workers and the victims who will be hurt because these laws will not work—and to the integrity of our democratic process.

There is no valid reason to pass this Bill on urgency. The Attorney-General told the Leader of the Opposition that no other Territorian would be surprised by the government bringing this Bill on urgency. The only reason Territorians would not be surprised is that the CLP is normalising the undermining of democracy by consistently misusing urgency powers to bypass the parliament, community, experts and evidence, refusing to listen to anyone who does not agree with its punitive and unilateral approach to lawmaking. I can tell the Attorney-General that I have had hundreds of messages from people who are surprised and worried and who do not think rushing laws and ignoring evidence is the way forward to make all of us safer.

I am so tired of being told that there is no space for our whole community in this Chamber. Every one of us is here for every person in the Northern Territory and—spoiler alert—that includes the people who do not agree with government.

I am also tired of being told by people in this Chamber that I do not care about safety and victims, I do not understand crime and I am not committed to a safe community for every person in the Northern Territory. I have worked in the justice system in the Northern Territory for more than 30 years with young people, victims and people who have committed crimes throughout the Territory and beyond. I can tell you that I know—what every piece of evidence says—what we are doing now will not work and is making all of us less safe. For people to tell me that I do not care about community safety and people being able to live their lives fully and safely is shameful and untrue. I believe in accountability and making sure that people and communities are safe. It is not soft to say, 'Let us do what works'; it is weak to shut this conversation down.

To the communities and all the people who have voices who are not being heard, and for all those in the Northern Territory who heard our Chief Minister say in this parliament this week, 'We say to you that you have no place in the future of the Territory', I am here to tell you that your voices and views belong in this Chamber and that you are part of our community too.

I am committed to doing everything I can, along with everyone else who is working outside this Chamber, to make the Territory the kind of place we know it can be—a place that is safe for every person and where every person has the chance to thrive and grow, no matter who they are or where they live, where we care for our children first, not lock them up.

Every day people are being harmed by this government's obsession with incarceration. For our children, women, men and everyone in our community, we do not have time to continue doing what we know does not work. How many times must we remind people in this Chamber of the overwhelming evidence that the drivers of youth offending—trauma, poverty, dislocation, family instability and lack of safe housing—are at the heart of this crisis? The longer we ignore this the worse the problems will get for children, families and all of us.

If we want to reduce crime we have to tackle these root issues. I see the Minister for Corrections is making notes. I presume he will say, 'We are attacking these root issues; look at our Circuit Breaker Program.' It is not enough, minister …

Mr Maley: Exactly right! It is right.

Mr Young: It is not funny.

J DAVIS: It is not funny, and it is not enough …

Mr Maley: That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr Young: You are a disgrace.

Madam SPEAKER: That is enough. Stop the interjections.

Mr Young: Stop laughing. What have you done? Nothing.

Mr Maley: You had eight years. You did nothing. You are a disgrace. You are embarrassing.

Madam SPEAKER: Let the Member for Johnston complete her speech in silence. You can both have your opportunity this afternoon to contribute to this debate.

J DAVIS: If we want to reduce crime we must properly attack these root issues. We must not deepen them by imposing harsher penalties without support or rehabilitation options that are properly set up, properly funded and which will actually work.

This legislation will worsen outcomes for vulnerable children in detention, reduce meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation and continue to harden policies that have already contributed to increasing harm and higher recidivism. Harm creates harm. The more we force our communities to suffer, the more we drive people away from family, connection, meaning and safety and the more we can be certain that our society and people will be hurting, and the crisis will only continue. The only reason the government cannot hear this simple truth is that it refuses to listen. CLP members refuse to listen to the community, experts and true leaders like the Member for Mulka.

It has been almost a year since this government started on this path of harm, passing law after law which centralises power with vested interests and individuals, takes away power and harms vulnerable people. What this government is doing is not working. Crime overall and particularly violent crime rates have risen because the underlying causes remain unaddressed, because people feel like they are being pushed out of a community rather than being brought in and because in many cases the underlying causes have been exacerbated.

Housing remains unstable. To hear the Member for Goyder this morning say to the Leader of the Opposition that it is irrelevant to talk about housing when we are talking about youth justice shows exactly how the CLP thinks about crime—out of context with no understanding of where crime comes from and a clear disinterest in the drivers and the evidence.

The path to a strong, connected and safe community does not include fining families into extreme poverty, jailing 10-year-olds and sidelining and punishing Aboriginal voices and leadership. It will not work; we see that already.

Our young people are part of our community. They live with us. If we hurt them, we hurt ourselves. As I said on Tuesday, I am deeply worried for all our futures. A 15-year-old carrying a knife and committing violence is not something any of us want to see. It is not a failure of leniency; it is a failure of every system that came before it—child protection, health, housing and justice. That is what we need to be fixing.

Most children in detention have more than 60 harm reports before they are ever locked up. These are children who are victims of trauma, violence and neglect. Ignoring the causes of their behaviour only ensures more victims tomorrow. There is no justice in locking up traumatised undiagnosed children and calling it safety. It will not create more safety; it will create more harm for everyone.

Every member of this Chamber received a joint letter from the Northern Territory's leading paediatricians, the doctors who care for all our children, including our own children and the children who are in our detention centres. The Chief Minister made it clear in this Chamber this afternoon that she is not interested in what these experts have to say. Chief Minister, if they are good enough to look after your children, surely they are good enough to care for other children in our community.

I seek leave to table their letter so that people can have access to read it in case they have not.

Leave granted.

J DAVIS: I will read a couple of things they said:

> *Reinstating the use of spithoods in youth detention. This poses a real and unacceptable risk of asphyxiation or other medical event which could result in death or permanent disability.*

They remind us that many children in detention here suffer from chronic lung disease and that we have the highest rate of rheumatic heart disease in the world. These conditions make spit hood use not only dangerous but deadly. They say:

> *Spithood use will also result in psychological harm amounting to child abuse, which will have significant acute and long term mental health effects on children who already have very high rates of psychiatric and cognitive disabilities.*

These children from backgrounds of trauma, disability and neglect will be retraumatised and further damaged by this law. This is not justice, and this is not safety. They say:

> *This will result in increasing numbers of incarcerated children, thereby criminalising a significant proportion of adolescent Territorians, whose broad ranging disadvantage … is already overrepresented.*

The paediatricians say:

> *The current youth justice system further entrenches systemic racism and inequality and violates Australia's commitment to international human rights standards.*

To every member of this Assembly, if our own paediatricians, people trained to protect and heal children, are warning us that this Bill will cause medical harm, psychological damage and increase inequality, how can we pass it? When the Chief Minister dismisses or criticises those who support a smart evidence-based approach to justice as offender apologists or somehow not on the side of community safety, is she talking about all the following respected experts, professionals and community leaders, because these are the people calling for an evidence-based, community-led, restorative approach? Craig Kelly, CEO of Anglicare, says:

> *If we are serious about creating a just and safe society, we need to rethink how we treat children who break the law … ensuring that every child—regardless of background—has the support they need to thrive.*

Ana Aitcheson, CEO of Dawn House, says:

> *The children we work with have already experienced violence and disconnection. Responses that punish instead of support only deepen the trauma.*

Clare Horsfall, a senior manager at Jesuit Social Services, says:

> *Restorative, community-based responses hold young people accountable in ways that heal, not harm—and they're far more effective at keeping communities safe.*

Geoff Radford, NT Mental Health Coalition CEO, says:

> *Real justice must centre on support for healing and recovery, not just consequences.*

Rob McPhee, CEO of Danila Dilba, says:

> *Too many of our young people end up in the justice system when what they really need is care, support and connection to culture.*

Kirsten Wilson from the Justice Reform Initiative says:

> *Prisons don't prevent crime—they exacerbate it … The Northern Territory has a choice: invest in solutions that work, or deepen the failures that make our communities unsafe.*

Janise Mitchell, Australian Childhood Foundation CEO, says:

> *Children who come into contact with the justice system have often experienced significant trauma, loss and disconnection. Responding with punishment only compounds that harm.*

Sally Sievers, CEO of the Northern Territory Council of Social Service, says:

> *Restorative justice gives victims a voice, supports real healing, and builds long-term safety.*

Karly Warner, Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS), says:

> *These laws will disproportionately harm our children and the NT Government knows that …*

She also said that these are children with complex, unmet needs who:

> *… need our care, support and guidance—not to be locked away, subjected to force, and hooded.*

When the Chief Minister calls people apologists and says that they have no place here, is she talking about Dr Paul Bauert OAM, Professor Peter Morris, Dr Louise Woodward, Dr Rosie Rock, Dr Fiona Kay, Dr Sophie Dunn, Dr Jennifer Yan, Dr James Dowler, Dr Anna Lithgow, Dr Angela Titmuss, Dr Nerida Moore and the more than 25 specialist paediatricians across the Territory who have spoken out about their concerns in regard to these changes? Is she talking about Craig Kelly, CEO of Anglicare; Ana Aitcheson, CEO of Dawn House; Clare Horsfall, manager at Jesuit Social Services; Geoff Radford, CEO of the NT Mental Health

Coalition; Rob McPhee, CEO of Danila Dilba; Kirsten Wilson from the Justice Reform Initiative; Janise Mitchell, CEO of the Australian Childhood Foundation; Sally Sievers, CEO of NTCOSS; and Karly Warner, Chair of NATSILS? When the Chief Minister uses divisive language and implies that only one side cares about safety, is she really talking about all these people? These are the people on the ground. They are the experts in trauma, justice, child welfare, community safety and mental health. These are the people caring for all our children, including children in contact with the justice system.

The whole community wants us to be safe. Every Territorian, no matter where they live, how they vote or their background wants to feel secure in their home, street and daily life. Is the Chief Minister saying that these people do not care about victims, that they are naive and standing in the way of safety? These are people building the real solutions.

We need to stop pretending that there are no alternatives because there are and they work. Around the world and at home we have seen real results when governments back evidence over fear and communities over control.

Take Glasgow, for example, which was once dubbed the murder capital of Europe. It was the knife crime capital of Europe. It faced a crisis of violent youth crime. Instead of doubling down on punishment, the city adopted a public health approach and treated violence like a disease, something that you could prevent, not just punish. That meant investing in education, employment, housing, trauma recovery and community connection. Police worked alongside teachers, social workers, youth mentors and mental health professionals. What happened? There was a 56% reduction in violent crime and an 85% drop in the number of young men admitted to hospital with knife wounds. Lives were saved and communities became safer.

Baltimore is a city in the US long associated with incredibly high rates of violence. Its multipronged public health and safety strategy led to a 45% drop in homicide over four years, and it keeps dropping every year. As I heard someone say the other day, that is unheard of in crime statistics. The approach combined community violence interruption, mental health services, support for families impacted by trauma and firm but fair accountability. Young people were not written off; they were made accountable for their behaviour, but they were supported to break the cycles of harm.

In the Northern Territory on Groote Eylandt when youth crime began to rise, it was not a punitive response that turned things around; it was community-led action. Elders, families, local organisations and police worked together on a shared plan, ensuring young people were reconnected to culture, engaged in meaningful activity and supported to deal with issues such as substance use, grief and violence at home. Youth diversion programs were strengthened, on-country education was prioritised and, as we have heard before, within a few years the rates of youth offending dropped extremely significantly.

Let us listen to our colleague the Member for Mulka, who has said over and again, and today again said to us:

‘Work with us. Work with our leaders. I came to government to ask you to work with us. I have said, “Let us work in partnership. We have peacekeepers, *raypirri* camps and community-led solutions, but we need your support. Instead of building jails, let us look at our solutions on our country.”

‘This government decided to put our children in jail in a system where they become criminals instead of working with us on our programs which are designed to rehabilitate. We should not be fighting; we should be working together.

‘Enough is enough.’

We need to stop repeating what does not work—early detention, mandatory sentencing and criminalising children without properly addressing why they are in trouble in the first place.

I call on this government not to pass this harmful Bill. We must pause and listen to experts and communities and commit to real solutions that build safety, healing and opportunity.

I support the Member for Mulka’s invitation. We are all here to work together to make this a safe, wonderful place for every Territorian. The truth is that the only way we will stop crime and build a safer community is by working together, not through division, fear or blame. We must listen to each other, stand beside one another and walk forward together. That means responding to the generous invitation of the Member for Mulka, land councils, paediatricians, Children’s Commissioner, your fellow elected representatives and the community. It means resourcing solutions that heal, not harm, and recognising that every child, family and neighbourhood

matters, not just some. It means recognising that safety is not built by locking people away but by ensuring that every person has a place to belong, be supported and thrive. The future we want—a safe, strong and united Northern Territory—can only be built together. That is the real work. That is the path to justice. The commitment I make to every Territorian is that I will do that work.

I do not support passing this Bill.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, this Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill is a significant piece of reform. We have worked on this legislation all year. It is part of our election commitments we took to Territorians in August last year. It is a part of our plan to continue to reduce crime across the Northern Territory.

We have already undertaken significant reform. Immediately upon coming to government we passed several pieces of legislation entirely on urgency, recognising the crisis that had been left behind by Labor. Make no mistake: when we say 'crisis' that is not to incite fear, division or blame, as the Member for Johnston would have people believe; that is the lived experience and reality for everyday Territorians who began to wonder whether the Territory was the place for them and their families' future. That is a terrible shame.

That is why we were elected. It is the platform which we took to the election. We were clear about what we would do if we were elected to government. I stand with 16 proud Territorians whom I call colleagues, who represent their communities fearlessly and are in step with the community with what we promised and said we would deliver. We are delivering on that today.

This legislation has been contributed to by Police, Corrections and the Attorney-General's Office. I thank them for their efforts. It is a significant body of work. It represents what we are calling tranche 1. There is a second piece to this *Youth Justice Act* reform, looking specifically at diversion. We are predominantly making sure that Corrections—which now has responsibility for youth justice—has all the important powers and support it needs to fulfil that function, and we are strengthening the law and accountability.

Those opposite would have you believe the sky is falling down and all this other stuff. That is entirely a matter for them. Again, they are hypocrites because when we talk about fear, division and blame, they are the masters. You cannot speak sweetly and think that you are tricking anyone about your position on law and order.

We will continue to do what we were elected to do because it is our intention to deliver our election commitments as governments should. We just spent 10 years under Labor—or really 20 years—when it did not deliver what it said it would. We are quietly and carefully doing the work that was too hard for Labor. It is incomprehensible to Labor members.

Part of the changes relate to giving our youth justice workers important powers. These powers are to stop them from being assaulted, to stop detainees from assaulting other detainees, to stop injury to violent detainees and to stop things happening in the first place. These are practical powers that Labor took away from them.

I stood in this parliament then and I stand here now condemning what Labor did when it gutted power from the system. You cannot run a correctional facility and expect your staff to have zero powers to protect themselves or others. What happened was a disgrace. Over the years I have doorknocked in my electorate, I cannot tell you how many youth justice officers quietly told me how horrific it was working in youth justice under Labor with Territory Families. They were being assaulted and constantly on sick leave. They feared to go back to work. It was a disgrace.

People from Corrections were on radio earlier this week talking about the reaction from their staff, saying that staff were encouraged and supported because we are giving them the right powers to take the right steps. Today I happened to run into someone who works in youth justice. It was out of the blue and unprompted by me. They mentioned how well these changes went down with the staff this week. That is exactly what we want. They deserve to be safe. Detainees deserve to be safe. That is most important when you have to run facilities like these.

We all wish we lived in the perfect world that the Member for Johnston lives in where you do not need any of these things, but we do not live in that perfect world; it is imperfect. Unfortunately, we need detention facilities of the size and breadth we have because crime and accountability have been ignored.

If all the evidence-based approaches that keep being quoted at me and shoved down people's throats worked, then what are we talking about? For two decades Labor told us that is what it was doing, but the

data shows that crime is worse. There are more offenders. Things are pretty bad, and we need to build more prison beds and have more interventions. We are seeing hideous behaviour. If all that stuff was working, which Labor told us it was doing—it was either lying or that does not work. It cannot be both. We had Labor tell us constantly that it was listening to all the experts, the providers, the people—whoever—and it delivered what all those people wanted, and it did not work.

We will continue on our path, which is at that crisis point, to put the rights of people to be safe above all else and ensure that our laws are contemporary and meet community expectation. That is the job of the parliament—to represent our community.

We will make sure, as we have been, that we do everything we can while we have people in the system to turn their life around.

Already in the adult justice system we are seeing more completions of programs by incarcerated prisoners than under Labor. That is despite us adding hundreds more people into the system and having to bring online more beds and all the other work we have done.

We can do more than one thing at a time. Those opposite will have you believe that you cannot, but it is not true. You want to talk about data and evidence. How is this for data and evidence? Labor could not even get completions on domestic violence programs, the RAGE program and all these other things when it had a system that was not at the point that ours is at now; whereas, we have given police better powers, put more people who are criminals in prison, managed the system, hired 200 more staff and made sure that more people are completing programs while in prison. Please, spare me the lecture because you have no credibility whatsoever on this issue.

Part of what is so important about our youth justice amendments is making diversion, for example, mandatory. There is a lot of talk about diversion. For those opposite, diversion is a holy grail and to every other person in the community it is a joke because under Labor the success of diversion was not measured. Our police were a taxi service, just dropping home people who were literally hours and days later committing more crimes. That is not diversion.

We are not only holding organisations accountable, reviewing the KPIs and delivering more diversion but also supporting our police with stronger powers of discretion. Those opposite want to talk about inciting fear, division and blame, Member for Johnston. What about the scaremongering by those opposite about there being no more diversion? Wrong—it is about giving greater discretion to our police to make that decision. Will they be a taxi or will they proceed to charge? That is the discretion we are giving.

We are ensuring that if the court says someone must do diversion, they actually do it. It is not okay for a young person who has done the wrong thing to be given an opportunity to change their life and have an alternative to custody—something those opposite also talk a lot about—to then say, ‘No, I don’t feel like doing that’. I do not know what universe you live in where that would be okay; it is not in my universe or that of my colleagues and the tens of thousands of Territorians who agree with us, so we are making it mandatory to do diversion.

We are giving our youth justice officers the powers they need to do their job. We should talk about human rights because that gets thrown at me a lot as well. What about the human right of every Territorian to be safe? Does anyone on the other side care about that? Do you care about that, Members for Gwoja and Johnston? Do you care about people’s human rights to be safe? Come on.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 1; the Chief Minister knows that members cannot respond directly to her while she is delivering a parliamentary debate. Of course we care about the human rights of all Territorians.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: A big part of what we are doing is delivering on the human right of every Territorian to be safe and the human rights of offenders to have access to support to turn around their lives and have a safe environment in custody.

We are making sure that detention is not the last resort. We are not forcing the courts and our police to explore all the minutiae and every possible option before they have to make the ultimate right decision. They will be able to make the right decision now. If that right decision is to do nothing, that is for them to justify to the community. If it is to incarcerate an offender, so be it. These are decisions they need to make freely, using their discretion at the right time.

There are also no-trouble orders, which we have not talked a lot about. If Territorians knew more about that, they would be horrified that judges can sentence, if you like, young people to what is colloquially called a no-trouble order, whereby the judge basically says, 'Please do not do that again', and it is unenforceable. We are dealing with that to make it enforceable because I do not think it is okay for the judge to say, 'Right now, Johnny, you have been a really bad boy, and I do not think you should do that again. We want you to stay on the right path and do X, Y and Z' and then Johnny nicks off and commits another crime. That is a total lack of accountability. We have had examples anecdotally across the board about repeated no-trouble orders being ordered by our judges. This legislation now deals with that properly. That is a fair and rational reform that indisputably reinforces the intention of the judge in the first instance.

This is another significant reform that we are proud to deliver. It originally had the additional Declan's law components that we brought forward on urgency when we recalled parliament in response to the tragic death of Mr Feick. We have continued with that reform. We pulled out those bits, which have already been dealt with on urgency. We continue to do what we can to give our police the best possible powers and our courts the best possible frameworks to meet the intention of our community.

Under Labor, we saw young people climbing up detention facilities trying to escape and run away. Time and again we heard stories of youth justice officers who had few powers, if any, having to try to coax detainees off the roof with McDonald's and Domino's meals and all sorts of other things because they were not allowed to do anything. Minister for Corrections, correct me if I am wrong, but if a youth justice officer saw someone climbing the fence they could not try to pull them down; is that correct? He is nodding. How ridiculous is that? Imagine working at a detention facility, watching a detainee trying to escape and having to stand there and say, 'Come on, mate, you do not want to do this. Please do not climb up the fence.' How ridiculous! It defies any logic, reality or practical on-the-ground experience. It is also demoralising for the staff. There are numerous examples.

My colleagues have made outstanding contributions. The minister went into the legislation in great detail. It obviously covers a range of things. We are proud to be bringing this first tranche through. I have been talking about it repeatedly in the media all year, as have my colleagues.

We look forward to continuing to deliver our commitments to reduce crime. When you compare January through to May this year with the same period last year, you see solid results. It is encouraging data. Is there more to do? Absolutely. That is why we are here.

There is more in the pipeline. We have *Traffic Act* and *Bail Act* changes to come and more court reform to do. There is plenty to be done. Those opposite do not want to hear this, but that is on top of all the work we are doing to deal with the root causes of crime. We have a huge $1.5bn allocated to the pointy end of law and order in this budget, which is on top of all the work we are doing in getting kids to school and delivering programs like Circuit Breaker and those that address domestic and family violence and alcohol-related harm—all those other things that need to be addressed.

Those opposite want to paint us in a certain way because it serves their political narrative. They want to pretend that they are not political in order to deliver that narrative. That is fine. If you truly believe it, God help you.

At the end of the day we have a job to do. We are on the ground across the Territory listening to people in our community about what is important to them. What is important to them is important to us. We are all proud Territorians living here, raising our families and wanting our kids to have the future they deserve. We want to live in a place we can be proud of and where we feel safe and enjoy all the offerings of our beautiful unique Territory lifestyle. People cannot do that if they are constantly looking over their shoulders.

I commend the Minister for Corrections for bringing this Bill to the Chamber. It is urgent because the quicker we can get the right powers to the police and the courts, the better justice we can get. At the end of the day we are focused on better justice for victims. That is why we are driving down remand numbers and doing all the reforms of the courts and the system. Labor left this issue to wither on the vine, and we have inherited a mess. Slowly, systematically and surely, we are working through each component, making the necessary improvements and moving forward. The results are showing that what we are doing across the board to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle is working.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the amendments to the *Youth Justice Act*. Youth crime across the Territory is clearly one of our biggest challenges, and our government is taking critical steps to change the course of our future. Every week stories reach us of hardworking Territorians, shopkeepers, families and retirees whose lives have been turned upside down by youth crime. The message from our

communities is unmistakable—enough is enough. Territorians are demanding real action, accountability and change.

For years the system has too often placed the rights of offenders ahead of community safety. The old strategy of treating detention as a last resort and opting for ongoing diversion, even for repeat serious offenders, has failed to protect law-abiding Territorians. The Northern Territory has tolerated some of the highest rates of youth reoffending in the country, and it is our duty as representatives to say, 'No more'.

Tragic events have rocked our community in 2025 and previous years. A respected local business owner lost their life at the hands of a repeat youth offender. This government did not turn away. We listened. We moved decisively to amend the law.

We are removing the presumption that young offenders should be detained only as a last resort. More importantly, community safety is being made paramount in all bail decisions. These strong reforms send a clear message across the Territory that anyone committing a crime will have serious consequences.

The amendments we have put forward mean that serious and repeat youth offenders will finally face real consequences, including detention, not just cautions or warnings. In deciding bail, our courts must make the safety of the community their highest priority; no longer will one more chance be granted endlessly, while victims suffer and our communities lose faith in justice. Victims will have the opportunity to request offenders participate in mediation as part of the victim's healing.

Legislation alone cannot solve these problems. The law is only one arm; in this work, the community must be the other. That is why I call on all parents, relatives, elders, mentors, teachers and role models across the Northern Territory to step up alongside us. The Member for Nightcliff said that crimes should not be happening in the first place, and we could not agree more. For generations elders have guided our youths, teaching them respect, discipline and belonging. Those people need to step up. We need that wisdom now more than ever.

No-one in this room or in a government department is stopping this from happening, and it should not cost a cent. There are no approvals needed. This can happen without any kind of government support, agreements or funding. I urge all elders, coaches, mentors, faith leaders, relatives and parents to reclaim their vital role in their community to help our young people see a life beyond offending to a life filled with meaning, hard work and respect for self and others.

Young people need to experience consequences for wrongdoing. They need to experience the benefits of a hard day's work. They need hope. Most importantly, they need direction from the leaders in their community. They need people to look up to. No amount of government action can replace the daily guidance of young people and a strong community, and this government is not stopping anyone from working in their community to do this.

Our reforms put the rights of the innocent first. They make it clear that we will protect our hardworking families and businesses before all else. The voices of victims matter. While we continue to support early intervention and rehabilitation for those at risk, we are also saying that when crime becomes a pattern, offenders will be held accountable. We will not allow the Northern Territory to be a haven for youth gangs or serial offenders.

Some critics argue that our approach is too tough. I say to them: look at the suffering in our community. We are not destroying communities, as those opposite continue to try to headline, and we are not abandoning our young people. We are asking parents, relatives, community leaders, role models, mentors and teachers to step up for their people. We are doing our job in this parliament; we are safeguarding their future and the future of every law-abiding Territorian. We are restoring respect for the law and the values that bind us together.

It is important to say that no-one in this Chamber or out in the world wants to see our youth detention centre or adult correctional centres full; no-one wants that. We are doing what the previous Labor government would not do; we are stepping up to respond to the current situation. We need parents, relatives, elders, families, mentors and everybody in the community to be united in our commitment for a safer, stronger and more hopeful Northern Territory.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, the Member for Fannie Bay's contribution shows that she has no idea outside of Darwin what is going on in the Northern Territory. She has never been to an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory since she has been in this role. To blame Aboriginal elders …

Mrs Zio: I am not blaming them.

Mr YOUNG: You just did. You put in a contribution saying that there are opportunities out in Aboriginal communities.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: A point of order, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker! Can comments be directed through the Chair, please?

Mr YOUNG: The Member for Fannie Bay admitted that she has not gone to any Aboriginal communities to see what is going on and whether there are any opportunities out there.

I represent many Aboriginal communities in the seat of Daly. I represent Peppimenarti, Daly River, Wadeye, Belyuen and also rural areas. I am out there constantly seeing how we can work better with Aboriginal people to give them opportunities. We need governments to work with Aboriginal communities to give them those opportunities, as many members have spoken about today, including the Members for Mulka and Arnhem. I am sure that the Member for Barkly would agree with me, having a predominantly Aboriginal electorate.

To just wipe your hands clean, saying, 'This is not our problem. We will not work with you; we will not give you any opportunities', is a disgrace. The only legacy that you have, Member for Fannie Bay, is standing on the side of history, lowering the age of criminal responsibility to put in place locking up 10 and 11-year-old kids. That is your legacy, Member for Fannie Bay, and that is what you have to live with when you go to bed at night, knowing that you are further traumatising our kids. I hope you are proud of yourself coming in here to attack our people like that; it is a disgrace.

I will go to our legacy because there are many good things that we have done, but I am sure you do not want to listen because you cannot even get out to communities to listen to people.

Mrs Zio: I have lived in remote communities.

Mr YOUNG: Good on you; you have lived in remote communities, and you still have not learned a thing. There we go; the Member for Fannie Bay admitted she has lived in communities, but she still has not learned a thing.

I firmly oppose the CLP's rushed and harmful overhaul of the *Youth Justice Act*—legislation that will see children as young as 10 years old subjected to further harsh, punitive measures that do nothing to support their rehabilitation or wellbeing.

The government is rushing through this Bill on urgency, rushing through reforms that fundamentally change how we treat our youth offenders without proper consultation or consideration for better alternatives. I do not understand why we are here again, rushing through amendments to the *Youth Justice Act* on urgency, for the fourth time in the 11 months since the CLP government came to power. Each time this CLP government has promised that the community will be safer when we put through legislation on urgency. It clearly is not, because we would not be here time and again amending the *Youth Justice Act*.

I thought the CLP members would have learned the first time that legislation like this does not work, dismissing experts in their field does not work and dismissing the community by not letting it have a say on legislation does not work.

The Member for Gwoja said that there is not a lot of work for the scrutiny committee because the CLP government—without giving us advice—changed the sessional orders so that only members on its side can control how legislation is referred to the scrutiny committee. You have the numbers, so I am not sure why you are worried about us referring legislation to the scrutiny committee, because that is good and proper process.

Mr Edgington: Read your sessional orders.

Mr YOUNG: I have read the sessional orders, and I know they have changed. You were caught out the other day when we tried to get legislation through to the scrutiny committee. We saw the Whip running around. He did not know what was going on because he did not understand the standing orders. The Chief Minister came in later and was confused; she had to speak to the Deputy Chief Minister about what was going on. The government still shut it down when we used the standing orders to try to put this Bill to the scrutiny committee.

This is the fourth time in 11 months—less than a year—that this CLP government has rushed through, on urgency, amendments to the *Youth Justice Act*.

Some of these key changes are alarming. Courts will be able to consider a youth's full criminal history when sentencing them for adult offences, including past offences committed when they were as young as 10 or 11. The principle of detention as a last resort will be removed, so courts will no longer need to exhaust all other alternatives before remanding a child to detention. Youth justice officers will be given stronger powers to use spit hoods and reasonable force tools that can easily be misused and further traumatise vulnerable children.

It is a disgrace that those in government, I assume, will support the use of spit hoods on our children, further harming and traumatising them, not getting them out of a life of crime. The stats show that when a child is in touch with the justice system and put into detention, they are more likely to stay in that cycle and be sent to detention. That is the legacy you are leaving the Northern Territory.

It is easy to put out media releases and political statements and not put in the hard work needed over time to look at the systemic issues and at what the experts have been telling us works in regard to housing, justice, education and jobs.

The current Leader of the Opposition was in Groote Eylandt in 2018 when we signed a local decision-making agreement empowering Anindilyakwa people to start the transition of taking over services in their community. That agreement with the Northern Territory Government was put in place in good faith. There were negotiations on law and justice and rehabilitation; how the education system would work; handing housing back to community control; health services; and, as the Member for Barkly would know as he was recently there as the minister, how we could transition local government to community control. There are good examples about what the LDM agreement achieved.

What was initially established, and is still in place, is the cultural rehabilitation centre which will provide an alternative to custody for male youths aged between 17 and 25 years old. The facility will provide those persons with access to tailored rehabilitation services that target the risk factors that contribute to criminal behaviour. The parties also agreed to establish a community justice group to oversee the development and operations of the cultural rehabilitation centre to work with NT Police to educate and positively engage members of the community in ways that aim to reduce the rate of offending in the Groote Archipelago and to work to establish community courts.

That was part of that implementation plan in 2019, but we knew that more needed to be done. We need an holistic approach to tackling the underlying issues.

This is the data from the Northern Territory Police. Member for Fannie Bay, I hope you are listening and talking to your colleagues about this. Data from the Groote Eylandt local decision-making agreement reveals a dramatic decrease in the number of youth offences on the island, falling from 346 recorded incidents in 2018–19 to only 17 offences in 2021–22. Member for Fannie Bay, are you listening to the data and do you agree that working with communities and having community-led solutions actually work; or will you be blind and pretend that you know what is best for and not engage with Aboriginal people? The data does not lie. You should look at that local decision-making agreement in detail because it is a good example of reducing youth crime in the Northern Territory.

Mr Kerle: Who got rid of the local councils? Wasn't that Labor? You got rid of the local councils.

Mr YOUNG: The Member for Blain is calling out, thinking he knows best about what is good for Aboriginal communities when I have just given a practical and tangible example of what works in the Northern Territory. It is concerning that the member is still yelling across the Chamber because he does not like the facts. He has proven my point that he does not want to listen.

This local decision-making agreement is there for everyone to see. If you google it the Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement will be all laid out there for you. There are also many media releases for you to see.

Through this agreement we saw a sharp decline in youth crime. That has been driven largely by a decrease in offending among boys aged between 10 and 17 years, a demographic that had previously accounted for a significant portion of the island's youth offences. Before 2018 when the agreement was put in place, I believe it had one of the highest incarceration rates for young offenders—children—in jail and detention. We turned that around.

The positive shifts coincide with the introduction and ongoing efforts of local justice initiatives led by the Anindilyakwa traditional owners who have taken a hands-on role in steering young people away from the criminal justice system. These community-led programs focus on not only diverting youths from engaging in criminal behaviour but also addressing the underlying issues that can contribute to offending such as disengagement from education and a lack of employment opportunities. The initiatives implemented on Groote Eylandt take a culturally informed and restorative approach, emphasising support, connection to country and culture and holistic wellbeing, by fostering strong relationships between young people, their family and the wider community. The programs aim to build resilience and provide positive pathways for youths.

This approach contrasts with punitive responses and highlights the importance of empowering traditional owners to lead efforts in justice and social support tailored to their community's unique needs. This success underscores the value of First Nations-led solutions in tackling complex social issues such as youth crime. By combining cultural knowledge with practical support and education opportunities, the traditional owners have created a framework that not only reduces offending but also nurtures the future of the community. The Groote Eylandt example serves as a powerful reminder that empowering First Nations communities to lead justice and social programs can lead to meaningful sustainable change.

As I have stated many times, not only today, children in detention face significant emotional, physical and psychological harm. Many of these kids are victims of generational disadvantage. Putting 10 and 11-year-old children behind bars is a devastating failure of our justice and social systems.

This Bill does not make our community safer; it simply pushes young children deeper into a cycle of incarceration and despair. There are better ways. Instead of locking up our children we should be investing in early intervention, trauma-informed care, family support, education and community-led programs that address the root causes of the offending behaviour, such as the example I gave of the Groote Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement. That has seen a huge reduction in youth crime—up to 90%—because it takes a holistic approach to tackling youth crime, not the simplistic or punitive measure of changing a few sections of the *Youth Justice Act* and rushing it through as we are seeing today.

We need people in this Assembly to listen to First Nations communities, youth justice experts and child welfare advocates who constantly call for care over punishment. I call on this government to stop this reckless Bill; pause and truly engage with communities; invest in alternatives that nurture and protect our children, not punish them; and show empathy, sympathy, love and care for our children instead of putting them behind bars and reintroducing spit hoods to further traumatise them. I hope that all government members go home tonight and have a good think about it because it is disgraceful and shameful that they think this is the approach to fixing youth crime. They would rather torture our kids, and that is a shame.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I support the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. There is no doubt it is a significant Bill and it has implications.

As a father and grandfather—I am proud to be a grandfather as well—I give a big shout-out to the overwhelming majority of our youths, whom I consider wonderful and inspiring people. A lot of that is lost in this because we tend to focus on a small minority. When I go to the Malak Oval on Friday night and watch the junior soccer teams playing—including those of the Darwin Olympic Sporting Club, of which I am a proud sponsor—I am impressed with the confident, courteous and vibrant children enjoying each other's company and that of their families and carers.

Let us be honest: our youths face many challenges in dealing with the fast-changing modern world. There are challenges we never had to face, including rapid technology changes and workplaces. I struggled to go from the phone book to Facebook, but our children are way ahead and into artificial intelligence; the whole thing is changing around them. They come under a lot of different pressures that we did not when we grew up, but they are doing their best. I am confident that the youths coming through today will be fantastic leaders of the Territory in the future and will create a wonderful Territory for everyone.

However, regrettably, we have to admit that some of our youths are not so fortunate. They fall through the cracks, and some are caught up in violent behaviour. Despite the claims of the opposition and the crossbenchers, our focus is on getting to these children early to help them get back on a better path. That may include sending them to meaningful intervention programs that turn around their lives. Some of those intervention or diversion programs we will make mandatory because it is not optional; we want to turn their lives around, and we do not want them missing out due to some sort of quirk in the system.

Yes, we have to balance that with the seriousness of the violent crime some of these children perpetrate, because the community demands consequences. We cannot ignore that. People want a safer community.

You cannot have serious crime occurring without consequences. I admit I wish it did not happen—I am sure everyone in this Chamber wishes it did not happen—but some of those children will need to be detained and placed in Correctional facilities. That is the nature of it. We have to use that system to try to turn them around.

I will talk about a couple of clauses in the Bill. I will read out the first part of clause 18, which deals with the use of restraint devices. It will insert new sections 155(1) and (2):

(1) The Regulations may prescribe a device that may be used to restrain a detainee.

(2) The superintendent of a detention centre or a person authorised by the superintendent may appropriately use a permitted restraint on a detainee if the superintendent or authorised person believes on reasonable grounds that restraint is necessary to:

(a) prevent a risk of the detainee:

(i) inflicting self-harm; or

We do not want them to inflict self-harm:

(ii) harming another person; or

We do not want them to harm another person:

(iii) damaging property; or

(iv) escaping, or attempting to escape, from lawful detention …

These are reasonable grounds why you would need to maybe stop someone; we do not want self-harm, and we do not want them hurting someone else.

Clause 34 inserts regulation 70, which is about the type of permitted restraints:

(1) For section 155(1) of the Act, the following devices that may be used to restrain a detainee are prescribed:

(a) handcuffs;

(b) ankle cuffs;

(c) waist restraining systems;

(d) anti-spit guards;

(e) personal body shields.

(2) A personal body shield is to be used only to restrain the movement of a detainee.

If the use of these devices stops the kids who are being held there from self-harming or from harming another person, if that is the only way we can do it, so be it.

The Member for Daly referred to anti-spit guards. In previous debates about frontline workers I have reminded people in this Chamber that my son is a paramedic. I am proud of him. He has openly said, 'Dad, I would prefer to be punched in the face than spat upon', and we are talking about being deliberately spat upon, not involuntarily. Can you imagine it? We are talking about the kids spitting. What about the person who is getting spat upon? What is it? It can be spit, blood or phlegm—all over their face. You do not know what communicable diseases come in that. We have a right to defend our workers, including our Corrections officers and protection officers.

You keep turning around to the child who should not be doing it but is deliberately spitting, and saying, 'They have rights'. What about the person who is trying to do their legitimate job and is spat upon? It is not right. If it is on reasonable grounds—do not forget that these are kids who may want to self-harm, so we are trying to help them in that way, or they are deliberately trying to harm another person—there needs to be consequences. It is only on reasonable grounds that they will be used.

I will not go much further. I wanted to talk about those clauses in the Bill as examples of how this Bill improves what went before it.

I commend the Bill.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I note that from all sides of politics there has been a number of contributions about the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill brought forward by the Minister for Corrections.

It is important from the outset to acknowledge that we are talking about Territory kids. These are children. Many of these children have had a difficult life and upbringing. I am not saying that to excuse the bad behaviour that many people have witnessed and been exposed to, but because we need to do more work to support those Territory children to have a better life.

There are issues about young people's cognitive understanding, ability and regulation when it comes to being able to rationalise and realise the difference between right and wrong. That is a fundamental principle of the justice system. We often talk about *doli incapax*. The Attorney-General does not know what that means, but many other Territorians do. The Attorney-General was unable to answer that simple question in Estimates this year, which was surprising considering she was the person who lowered the age of criminal responsibility in the Northern Territory some months ago.

There are a lot of hardworking people across the Northern Territory in the youth justice space. I acknowledge them, including the hardworking public servants who are on the streets every night engaging with young people and children and trying to find a place of safety for those young people if they do not have a place to go to.

I acknowledge the hardworking organisations in the non-government sector that do an incredible job every day, working to make life better for children in the Northern Territory.

As the Corrections minister and other members of this parliament said, our Corrections, youth justice and detention centre workers do an incredible job. Many of them speak to all side of this parliament. Therefore, I will not make comments in this Chamber about what people have and have not said.

I am in strong opposition to the CLP government's youth justice Bill because, for me, it is about being honest. This Bill is not a plan to prevent youth crime, to make our community safer or to support our children who are struggling before they spiral into harm. This Bill will do nothing except deepen the crisis we are already in. Nothing in this legislation will address the behaviours that need addressing. There is nothing to support young people, their families or their communities that have been left for too long. There is nothing that responds to the mountains of expert advice laid bare in the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

That royal commission told us clearly and urgently that the youth detention system is not fit for purpose and does not help reduce youth offending. It called for a rethink of how we work with young people—more diversion, not detention; more support, not surveillance; and more culture, care and connection, not cages. Instead of listening to that, the CLP has brought us a Bill built on fear. It is a Bill that offers no solutions, just sharper tools to warehouse kids in prisons. Let us be clear that when you cage a child, strip away their hope and ignore every expert voice, you are not solving crime; you are creating it.

The CLP knows this. It has been told this by commissioners, judges, frontline workers, families and the kids themselves, yet the CLP keeps on doing it. This is not a justice system that the CLP is running; it is a factory of trauma, a cycle of incarceration that traps children in violence and spits them back out into a world that has done nothing to help them heal. This is what happens when you legislate from headlines instead of from humanity.

The international evidence is clear. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Australia has ratified, says that detention must be a last resort, not a default setting. In New Zealand youth offending dropped by nearly 60% because it invested in what works—family group conferencing, early intervention, culturally grounded supports and supported transitions. In Australia the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare tell us the same. What works is early support, housing stability, mental health care, not bars and handcuffs.

The CLP is not interested in the evidence. That was made clear by the Northern Territory Attorney-General who said in this parliament this week that she was sick to death of being told about the evidence-based responses. It is alarming that the Northern Territory's first law officer is choosing to ignore evidence.

The CLP members are not interested in prevention or helping our young kids; they are interested in punishment alone. They call it being tough on crime, but I will tell you what tough really looks like: standing up to the root causes of crime, not just the symptoms; investing in kids early, not locking them up late; and doing the work, not chasing the votes.

This Bill is lazy, political and dangerous. It is a retreat from everything we know that works. We have had royal commissions, coronial inquests and countless reports that say the same thing: you cannot punish your way to prevention. The government has ignored all of them. It has ignored the role that its failures in housing, child protection, mental health and community infrastructure are playing in this crisis. The government is now trying to clean up this situation it has put itself in.

We do not need more concrete cells; we need culture, care and programs, not prisons. When everything is stripped from a child except their trauma, do not be surprised when their trauma turns outward. We cannot keep locking up another generation of people to a lifetime of harm.

This Bill will not make our community safer; it will make young people harder. I will not support a Bill that offers our young people nothing but a locked door and a criminal record. We can and must do better than this. For every young person who just needed a helping hand, not a handcuff; for every community asking for support, not punishment; and for every Territorian who believes that children are worth more than their worst mistake, I oppose this Bill.

I ask honourable members to think about these children. I re-emphasise that we cannot continue the path that we are going down. When young people are treated like hardened criminals they turn into hardened criminals, the cycle deepens and the outcomes are worse.

The last time the CLP government was in charge, we had a royal commission. It is back, repeating the same failures, this time with its eyes wide open. I am holding the report of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. Although people will talk this down and try to erode the information in this document, it is incredibly important work that captures people's lived experiences and the testimonies of our hardworking frontline staff.

The Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory was commissioned and called for as a result of the inhumane and unjust treatment of young people in detention. This document is the example of what happens when that is not taken seriously. It was co-funded by the Northern Territory Government and the Liberal–National Coalition Commonwealth Government at the time.

Upon the completion of the royal commission there were 227 recommendations to improve conditions across the Northern Territory. A number of them were the responsibility of the Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth, but the then Liberal–National federal government refused to come to the table to fund those recommendations. We had the opportunity to change the landscape for our young people by investing in what works. Sadly, the Morrison government refused to come to the table with the money. The then Northern Territory Government had to work through what it could invest in and what it could roll out.

The commission did an enormous amount of work. Commissioner Margaret White said:

> *… at every level …*
>
> *We've seen that a detention system which focuses on punitive, not rehabilitative measures, fails our young people, it fails those who work in those systems, and it fails the people of the Northern Territory who are entitled to live in safer communities …*

We also heard from former youth detainees. One said:

> *I think that most of us come out of detention—come out more angry and acting tougher than when we went in. It didn't make me want to be a better person.*

This Bill has been brought in on urgency by the government, which is claiming that it will have an instant effect on our community. What will have an instant effect on our community is investing in stopping and preventing crime and antisocial behaviour before it happens.

It is sickening that the Chief Minister chose to use a horrific event that happened at the Darwin Show as her justification to bring this Bill in on urgency and has not allowed any community, stakeholder, organisation or expert to look at it. This government flagged months ago that it would reform the *Youth Justice Act*. It had opportunities to work with the community, stakeholders and organisations, but the government repeatedly chose to slam the door in the faces of Territorians who have come willing and wanting to help.

Diversion is crucial because if we can steer young people away from the criminal justice system, we can hopefully ensure that their relationship with the criminal justice system either never starts or is not embedded forever. We know from history, research and evidence-based approaches across the world and Australia that the earlier a young person comes into contact with the criminal justice system and ends up in detention, the earlier their lifelong relationship with that system starts. We need to stop that process and break that cycle. Making these changes will not do that.

I acknowledge that the judiciary will have to consider matters case by case as to whether detention is an option, but we should not allow this government to demonise and discredit the power of diversion. Diversion works. If diversion programs are well resourced, they work.

I have seen diversion work. I am the proud Member for Gwoja and amazing diversion programs have operated over many years in my own patch. Mount Theo, north of Alice Springs near Yuendumu in the beautiful Western Desert, ran a successful youth diversion program over many years. It primarily started when petrol sniffing was an issue, and it worked really well; it provided a great avenue. Recently, in the Coroner's inquest into the death of Kumanjayi Walker people referenced how successful that diversion program was.

That is what we need to invest in, not allowing dogs back in youth detention centres, traumatising kids who have already had extreme trauma. We need to be preventing it before it starts. No-one on this side of the House is saying that there should not be consequences. Yes, there should be—but consequences that work. We need to address housing, education, healthcare and economic development opportunities across the region. We need therapeutic responses that are trauma informed and deliver the outcomes that these communities are crying for, not simply locking up people.

The government talks about being fiscally responsible, but we have heard that we are spending, on average, more than $2,700 a day on a young person in youth detention. Is that the best use of money? Could we be using that money for alternatives to custody, diversion and prevention? These are the important questions that members of our community are asking. They should not be dismissed. They should be listened to and offered an opportunity to sit with government members and talk to them and come up with what those solutions might look like.

Many people have spoken at length about a number of experiences and have given accounts of testimonies from their electorates. That is important because it helps inform, but so does the evidence. You cannot pick and choose evidence. The evidence helps us make good policy.

For this purpose today we are not following any evidence, and we are going back to the future. I hope to God that these government members look at themselves, because any person you ask about the footage that we saw in 2015 of the treatment of young people in those detention centres would say, 'Of course they were coming out worse than when they went in'. The level of trauma that they were experiencing was truly horrific.

I acknowledge that the level of trauma, anxiety, uncomfortableness and stress that people in our wider community face when they have been subject to crime and antisocial behaviour is terrifying, scary and nerve-racking. People sometimes do not want to leave their house if they have been broken into. Sometimes they are scared when walking down the street and see people who are out late on the streets at night.

However, locking up people and not doing the hard work to change their behaviour and address the situations early on will not fix the problems we are experiencing. We have to do stuff with our families as well. If you are simply removing one young person, throwing them into a detention centre to serve a term and then picking them up and throwing them out the front door, they will go home to an environment that might have needed support and an opportunity for people to come in and help them change their behaviours and access important services to help the family get their lives on track.

We have not heard anything like that from this government. We have simply heard that this must be done on urgency. Why? Will this stop a crime in the community tomorrow? No. More investment in prevention will stop crime in the community tomorrow. Urgency, urgency, urgency—you cannot say that it was urgent when months ago you said, 'We're working on the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill'. You have been saying that for months, but you have deprived Territorians of the opportunity to have a say in what you were working on. That is not fair to Territorians who might have wanted a say, whether they were for or against it, and whether they wanted it to look at particular areas and avenues.

If we want to talk tough, let us be tough on overcoming trauma and tackling poverty and the systems that are failing. Let us do more to empower local decision-making; invest in housing, education and healthcare; and support our elders.

There have been lots of comments about our community members, leaders and elders, many of whom are willing and want to work with the government and many of whom have reached out to this government only to be met with silence, crickets, being ignored.

If the Minister for Education and Training continues to talk about parental responsibility, the government should be tough on supporting families to achieve that. Help the families to ensure their home is a thriving, loving, caring place. Help families to have a bed in every room in the house. Support them to buy a fridge and washing machine and provide the child with the resources they need. Help them to work with Centrepay and have power running 24/7 in the house. We do not hear about any of that.

I remain firm in my opposition to this Bill. If you are serious about overcoming crime and antisocial behaviour, you need to let the community have a say and let people come to the table with solutions. Although you might not agree with those solutions, give them the chance to articulate why they think it will work.

Look across the world to Scotland, where people have done amazing work. Their knife crime strategy and processes to tackle antisocial behaviour are incredibly important. Look to the United States—we do not often encourage that because it is a bit of a basket case at the moment—where justice reinvestment started in Texas because of the economic rationale. When you prevent people from entering the justice system, the economy performs better.

Justice reinvestment is important. We need more justice reinvestment not only in the Territory but also around the country. The Commonwealth has a responsibility to look at justice reinvestment and invest more in that space.

Albuquerque in New Mexico has an alternative first responder model. That model does not solely rely on hardworking police; it looks at social workers, AOD workers, mental health clinicians and local American Indian community members who speak language going out on the beat and triaging. That model saw a significant reduction in crime, antisocial behaviour and incarceration because the young people on the streets could be triaged before they committed crime. We should look at an alternative first responder model. It works and would work in the Northern Territory. These are the types of things that would make our streets safer and see us no longer needing to spend nearly $3,000 a day to have a young person held in a detention centre.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I support the Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill. This Bill is necessary, timely and firmly grounded in the expectations of Territorians. We all want to live in safe communities.

Under the former Labor government, the *Youth Justice Act* was watered down, and the focus was put on keeping violent offenders in the community instead of keeping the community safe. The youth justice system in the Territory lacked the tools, powers and clarity to effectively respond to repeat offenders, to support victims and to equip youth justice officers on the front line with the tools they need. This Bill changes that.

The reforms in this Bill are substantial, will help keep Territorians safe and make sense. They deliver on our commitment to strengthen community safety and restore consequences for offending.

That is exactly what the people of Goyder expect. From Virginia and Bees Creek in the west, to Humpty Doo and Noonamah in the centre, Acacia and Manton in the south and Marrakai in the east, I hear it all the time. People are fed up. They are sick of reading about catch and release, break-ins, vehicles being stolen and dumped out bush, people feeling unsafe in their own homes and of hearing about the little angels and the woke activists protecting them instead of the community. They want action, accountability and the rights of victims and law-abiding Territorians to come first and foremost. This Bill is a direct response to what people in my electorate have been calling for—real change and consequences for actions, not lip-service.

Firstly, the Bill puts victims back at the centre of the justice system. When sentencing young offenders courts will be required to give primary regard to the impact of an offence on the victim. This sends a clear message that crime causes harm, harm must be recognised and the community deserves to feel safe.

Secondly, this Bill streamlines diversion programs. Under the old system, young people or their parents could refuse diversion, even when it was in everyone's best interest. This is no longer the case. Diversion will be mandatory where the offence is admitted, allowing early intervention to break the cycle of reoffending.

Thirdly, it modernises our response to detention management and gives our hardworking Corrections staff the tools they need to do their job. We on this side of the Chamber want to keep our hardworking Corrections officers safe. I give a shout-out to all those who dedicate themselves to working both in front of and behind the wire to keep Territorians safe.

Corrections officers will have access to anti-spit guards and waist restraints under controlled, lawful circumstances. This Bill also clarifies the use of force, separation protocols and expands search powers, ensuring that youth detention centres are safer for both staff and detainees.

This Bill removes the outdated principle that imprisonment must be a last resort. That principle no longer reflects the reality we face. When serious offences occur, such as armed robberies, break-ins, home invasions and knife crime, the court needs to be able to impose real consequences and keep the community safe. It is the community's expectation that these offenders will end up behind bars.

These changes are about drawing a firm line, showing that serious crime will not be excused just because of the age of the offender, while still giving young people a chance to turn their lives around through appropriate programs.

To those who say these reforms go too far, I say this: Territorians have had enough. The people of Goyder have had enough. They want a justice system that works for them, not the offenders. They want safety, accountability and justice for victims. This Bill works towards that. We will always support rehabilitation, but it cannot come at the expense of community safety or accountability. These reforms strike the right balance with stronger laws, smarter management and a fairer, safer system for all.

I will address the undertones of what the opposition and crossbench have been alluding to today. This Bill is not racist; it applies equally to all Territorians. It is simple: if you do not want to go to jail, do not break the law, do not break into someone's house and do not assault someone or steal their purse.

I will not, and this CLP government will not, apologise for putting Territorians in the community above violent thugs who do harm.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr MALEY (Corrections)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank everyone for their contributions.

I thank all the people involved in the drafting, preparation and the work that went into this Bill. I acknowledge that there has been a lot of hard work, research and toing and froing. Everyone has gone above and beyond. A lot of people in the public service worked hard behind the scenes. The result is a lot of good work that will make a difference to the Northern Territory as we move forward.

We do not live in a perfect world. Labor members and the crossbenchers talked about facts and figures and all sorts of things, but, unfortunately, in the real world there is crime and there needs to be a consequence for that crime. For far too long, young offenders and adult offenders have been getting away with crime, assaulting people, breaking into people's homes, stealing people's cars—a range of criminal offences. In my and the community's view there have been no consequences for those actions.

Since the CLP has come into power, we have drawn a line in the sand. Under our leader, Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro, we have done a lot of work to make the community safe. The crime stats are starting to go in the right direction; there is a trend that things are getting better. I thank the Chief Minister for her leadership, her drive and her laser-like focus on community safety.

I will go back one step. Under the previous government a new youth justice facility was built at Holtze, replacing the former Don Dale at Berrimah. That facility was two years overdue and $70m over budget. Where would we be now in regard to community safety if we had that facility two years ago? Imagine the wraparound support we could have given young offenders two years ago. Think about the $70m overspend

that could have been used to support young offenders two years ago. We have been left in this situation because the previous Labor government failed to invest in infrastructure, and I spoke about that earlier. Now I will focus on the $70m overspend and the two-year delay for the Holtze youth justice facility, not to mention the 18-month delay for the 100 beds in the Alice Springs facility and its $12m overspend.

It is all right for the opposition to throw stones about what we should or should not be doing. It goes back to the previous Labor government failing to invest in youth justice infrastructure for two years to provide wraparound support for young offenders, and that is exactly what needs to happen.

Some young offenders come from broken homes and broken communities. People on our side have said that this is not a matter that the government alone can fix. It relies on family, community, elders and a range of people. All Territorians need to step up and say that this is not good enough. We will work on this where we can, but some of the parents and community members need to step up, and we will work with them because we want to make sure that the Territory is a safer place.

The Leader of the Opposition said that this is not the way forward, but she did not give an alternative. In my view the role of the opposition is not to just throw stones but also give alternative ways forward. She gave no alternatives. What she gave us was an overloaded, under-resourced Corrections system, and they are her words. That is what we inherited, so the Leader of the Opposition was right. Labor operated that for eight years. In 11 months the CLP government has moved forward, and community safety is working well.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the royal commission and the us-and-them mentality across the community. It is not us and them; this is about the community in general, community safety and balancing that with the rights of everyone in the community to live in a place that is safe. We will never stop crime—I think everyone accepts that—but we need balance so that people can go shopping, to a friend's house or to a party and walk home without being harassed or assaulted.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke for 45 minutes on this matter, but she did not mention the Bill once. She did not mention any specific parts of the Bill. She spoke about high-level things—'You can't do this; you can't do that'—but she did not get down to what the Bill is about. In the same breath, she said that the opposition did not have enough notice and had only 24 hours to look at the Bill. We know she had a briefing; clearly, that did not help her because she did not mention any specifics. She did not ask for clarification on the 10 or so major changes in this Bill. It goes to show that she is not interested in community safety; she is interested in political pointscoring.

Ms Uibo: You did not even provide a Bill in your own briefing. You were not even there, by the way.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, cease your interjections, please.

Mr MALEY: After 45 minutes of talking, there was not one mention of any specific part of the Bill. I made notes; at 15 minutes there was no mention, then it was 20, 30 and 45 minutes. I was keeping track of when she would talk about the changes in the Bill, and she did not.

She asked us two questions: if the law is so urgent, why was it not done earlier; and if the law is so good, why was the Bill not shown to anyone? This Bill is urgent because we are about protecting youth justice officers and the community, and we need to act on that. We sit for a limited time—once a month, on average—and we focus on community safety. That is why this Bill is so important.

This Bill was shown to a range of people. It was brought about by requests from youth justice officers and police officers, so we are helping the community to be safer as well as the people who do these jobs. They deserve to come home. A lot of the amendments are about protecting workers and detainees from damage.

When something happens at a youth detention centre, a prison or any large gathering, a small event quickly turns into a large event because people jump on the bandwagon, get together and gee each other up. Someone could be walking around with a small tool or a door handle, then other people break door handles and pick up chairs, so that event quickly goes from low to extreme. That is why this Bill gives youth justice officers more power to step in and protect themselves, their fellow workers and other detainees, who are sitting and watching but who are in a communal space and will be involved in these things quickly. I have seen footage of a fight between young offenders that quickly evolves. Other people became involved, and it escalated quickly. This is an opportunity to protect those detainees.

It is also about protecting the premises, making sure no damage is done. When the detainees moved into the new $135m Holtze facility, within the first day or so there was extreme damage to the premises. The kids

took it as a bit of a challenge to see what damage they could do. They broke door handles, drainpipes and sinks. That was just to test it out, I suppose. The youth justice officers could not go in and stop that, because it needed to be serious damage. It was all open to interpretation. We are making it clear that youth justice officers are to protect themselves, their fellow workers and the property.

The Opposition Leader talked about there being no plan for economic development and how that steps into it. The Attorney-General spoke about the State of the States report. She mentioned that the opposition said to throw it in the bin. I remember reading a press release issued by Michael Gunner when he was in opposition and the CLP was in power. We had slipped a little in one of these reports. His release said how important this information was and the Earth would fall down because the CLP had let the State of the States report drop a bit. When the tide turned and Labor came into power, the report was worth nothing.

These stats speak for themselves. We have had population growth. For dwelling starts the Northern Territory raised the most—up by 14.6%. The Northern Territory was the strongest performer in construction work, up by 5.5%. The Opposition Leader spoke about there being no economic plan, but we have an economic plan that talks about Defence, gas, mining, agriculture and tourism. The evidence speaks for itself in the State for States report. We have spoken about that a lot today, but it shows that the CLP's economic plan is working. We have a plan and have been clear …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35; what does the CommSec State of the States and finances have to do with the *Youth Justice Act*?

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order. You were given as much latitude as anyone else in this Chamber in your speech, Member for Gwoja.

Please continue with your speech, minister.

Mr Paech: But I did not talk rubbish; I spoke the truth. Stop telling lies.

Madam SPEAKER: Remain silent, please.

Mr MALEY: I will go back to why I am talking about this. The Opposition Leader's words were 'no plan for economic development'. That is why I am answering that query. She said that there is no plan. I am saying that we have a plan, and this all relates to it.

Ms Uibo: Stop doing the Treasurer's job.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop your interjections, please.

Mr MALEY: The Opposition Leader said that is the cause of disadvantage because there is no plan and no housing. It all links together. The opposition spoke about the root causes of crime. I am explaining that we have solutions for that, unlike the previous Labor government which could do only one thing at a time. It did not do that well because Holtze alone was two years overdue with a $70m overspend. The CLP government—through the Member for Barkly, the DV prevention minister and the Education minister—has all these steps, one at a time, adding up. The proof is in the pudding with the stats I just read out.

Mr Edgington: Record number.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mr MALEY: The Opposition Leader said that we think everyone is born bad and deserves to be locked away. That is nonsense and could not be further from the truth. We have the Circuit Breaker Program up and running. We have the wraparound support for young people because these young people do not just wake up on a Monday morning and decide to steal a car; they come from a disadvantaged area, have issues with role models and boundaries and maybe their parents or the community have let them down. If they come into the care of Territory Families or Corrections, we wrap around and support them with these services.

She spoke about health and mental health issues that have not been diagnosed. That is because their parents have not taken them to the doctor. Everyone who comes into a youth justice centre is medically assessed and gets treatment and medication.

We are working hard to address the underlying causes and help young offenders break the cycle of offending. The Opposition Leader said that these changes do not address the underlying issues and that we should go

back to what Labor did and use the evidence and the experts. That happened over the last seven years. Labor told us it listened to the experts and it had all these diversion programs. I ask two questions: do you feel safer; and has crime gone up or down? The answer is that you do not feel safer, and crime has gone up.

These young offenders do not just wake up on Monday morning and decide to offend. They come from broken homes and have severe disadvantage. We are working to fix all those things, but we are balancing that with community safety, which is super important for us.

The Member for Mulka said that there was no reason for the Bill to be urgent and that Aboriginal people are political footballs. That is simply not true. We are here to get a balance for all community members, no matter where you live, to make sure that people who go to work are safe, detainees are safe, the community is safe and no-one can cause harm to themselves or taxpayer-owned property.

The Member for Mulka talked about doing things on country. Unfortunately, a lot of these crimes are committed in the urban areas—the CBD and Palmerston—and not on country. Some of these young offenders are living here for whatever reason—they are quite within their rights to live here; I have no problems with that—and they have not been out to community for a while or maybe been removed from the community for who knows what reason. That is what we need to look at. We need to make sure we break the cycle and work across many fronts to support these young offenders.

Some Aboriginal communities are maybe not working as well as they could be. The member said that Aboriginal communities are 'not working'; they are his words. The Member for Barkly is using the Local Government portfolio to break up super shires and give back decision-making to these communities. That was taken away by the former government. We are working hard to break that cycle and win this fight on different fronts.

The Member for Mulka talked about community solutions. These crimes are committed in urban areas. We are trying to work on community solutions for keeping the community safe. They are not on country, so we need to look at that and make sure that we deal with it as much as we can.

Members talked about children being kept in custody. If they do not want to be put in a watch house or wear a spit hood, they should not commit a crime or spit on someone. I cannot see any reason why anyone would spit on someone. It is a vile act. The Member for Karama spoke about his son who is a paramedic. He has been spat on at work while trying to save someone's life. If a person spits on someone it is on purpose; it is not like they are playing a game of football where someone hits you and you spit out of your mouth because you have been turned into a coathanger. That is a different kettle of fish. It is on purpose when someone bites their tongue, gets a bit of blood and phlegm and spits on someone's face. I agree; I would prefer to be punched in the face than spat on. We are working together to make sure we break these cycles of crime. I have been punched in the face and spat on, so I speak from experience.

The Member for Nightcliff went off on some sort of political protest speech. I will not even bother talking about what she had to say because I could not even understand what she was going on about.

The Member for Johnston spoke about the drivers and root issues of crime. I have spoken about that. We are dealing with that on many fronts. We have housing; the Attorney-General is looking at the court system; and Territory Families is doing wraparound support with Circuit Breaker. We continue to work hard and will continue to do what we need to do and make those tough decisions. We will get pushback, but we will focus on making the tough decisions for community safety, getting the balance right and helping these young offenders in custody to break the cycle of reoffending.

We had 600-odd more people put into detention, yet we have already had more people in detention go through training and rehabilitation programs than the previous Labor government did. Our programs are working because we are breaking the cycle. We have done more training and rehabilitation that the previous Labor government did in the previous year, which shows that our policies are working.

It is important that we help these children. The Member for Johnston spoke about undiagnosed medical conditions. Is that a responsibility of the parents and the community? I would say yes. Why would it take coming into the care of government—either Territory Families or the Corrections system—to get medical treatment? We need to look …

Mr Young: It is about providing the services.

Madam SPEAKER: Cease your interjections, please. Member for Daly, that is enough.

Mr MALEY: There are health centres in many communities across the Northern Territory. It is a matter of personal responsibility and parents looking after their kids. It seems to be that it is always someone else's fault, and the first person they blame is the government.

The Member for Johnston spoke about how the children feel and what they should be put through, but what about the victims? What about someone who has been spat on or has gone home to find their undies drawer has been pulled out and ripped open? That is an invasion of personal space. In my previous life I spoke to a lot of people who were involved in that from both sides—victims and offenders—and there is a real feeling of personal invasion when someone comes into your house, goes through your drawers, pulls out your best pair of socks and takes away your things. We need to make sure that we have victims' rights. We make no apologies for focusing on the victim, because we need to ensure that the community is safe.

The Member for Daly spoke about the scrutiny committee and said that we should send the Bill to it. The history lesson is that the previous Labor government had the scrutiny committee and took it away in Labor's last term. When you talk about how important it is and how legislation should go to that committee, I have to ask: why did you disband it? Why did Labor get rid of it? Those opposite did that.

He also said that giving the officers more power will probably end up in abuse by the staff. Is he insinuating that the staff will abuse their power? Does he have no trust in youth justice officers? He is saying that because the officers have the power, they will abuse it and assault young fellas. That is an insult to those officers. They are trained officers. I have met many of them. They have great pride in their work, so to say that they would abuse their powers and do whatever they might do to hurt these young offenders is an insult.

I hope those people are listening. The Member for Daly has no trust in you and said that you will abuse any power you have and that you cannot be trusted. On this side of the House we will give you the powers and the tools to look after yourself, your colleagues, the detainees and the premises that you are working in.

He spoke about facts and data. Under Labor, did people feel safer? No. Did the crime stats go up or down? They went through the roof under Labor. We need to make sure that we work hard together and do more things at once.

The Member for Daly spoke about how good diversion is. I am not sure whether he read this, but we are actually strengthening diversion. We are making it so that people do not have a choice; they will go to diversion. Previously, they had a choice. From my understanding—I saw the figures—no-one went to those diversion programs; there were no volunteers. I am not sure what the member was reading, but this legislation will put more people into diversion programs and force them to do it. We accept the fact that young offenders need help—they need wraparound support—and that is what we are offering them, but we will make it mandatory. Previously, they could choose what they wanted to do—yes or no—and there were no consequences. Going back to what the Member for Goyder said, there needs to be a consequence for your actions, and that is what this legislation does. It is important that we work as a team.

The Member for Gwoja said that these young offenders have a difficult life and a hard upbringing, I accept that, but it is no excuse to punch someone in the face, steal their car or go into their favourite undies drawer; it is about personal safety and community safety. As the Chief Minister said in her contribution, we do not make any apologies. We will do what we can to keep the community safe.

This will take time. The Member for Gwoja spoke about an instant change, but we never claimed that this would have an instant effect on the community. The Chief Minister, many people on this side and I have always said that this is a big ship to turn around. It is turning around, it is going back in right direction, but we cannot stop; there is a lot more work to be done.

In the last 11 months we have made many changes. Opposition members spoke about the four times we have brought in legislation on urgency. That is because we want to make the community safer and that the laws we bring in are done in a fashion that will make a difference. The longer we leave it, the less chance it has. There has been no claim that it would have an instant effect, so I am not sure where the Member for Gwoja got that from; maybe it is some sort of political statement, trying to score political points. He should be ashamed of himself talking about political points on such an important issue regarding the safety of workers, detainees and taxpayers' property.

The Leader of the Opposition also spoke about boot camps not being started. That is incorrect; they have started, and more are happening as we speak. We are getting things happening as quickly as we can. Boot camps are a part of our Corrections system and will give young offenders an opportunity to make a better

decision and come out the other side of their experience in custody as better people with skills to make a life for themselves.

We understand that some of these children have difficult lives, and it goes back to who is responsible. The government is partly responsible, but it is time parents and the community step up and we all work together to help these young offenders break the cycle of offending and move into adult life with some sort of future and purpose. We need to work hard to do this and ensure our steps are in the right direction, and they are.

I am surprised that hardly anyone on the other side spoke about the Bill itself and what it does. They made statements with facts and figures. I am not sure whether they have read the Bill. Clearly, the Member for Daly has not read it. If they had the Bill they would have seen that it strengthens diversion and makes it better.

We talked about the use of restraints, which is for the protection of workers. The opposition members have seen the anti-spit guards because we had one in their briefing. I think the Member for Johnston even put it on, but I am not sure. This is about protecting workers. I have one simple message: if a person does not want a spit guard, do not spit. If you make a purposeful, conscious decision to spit, you will get a spit guard. If you do not want one put on you, do not spit. If a person harms themself or others, they need to be protected, which is what the restraints do.

We are putting victims' rights over those of offenders. We are ensuring that the courts listen to that because we are focused on victims' being heard.

We are removing the principle that imprisonment is the last resort because the courts should have all the tools they need to ensure that the community safe. If that includes putting someone in custody, so be it. Remember that if someone is put in custody, there is a fairly good chance that they will get the wraparound services they have not had from their parents.

We will give tools to prison guards such as the powers to search people, stop detainees from escaping and catch the people who escape instead of watching them walk out or jump the fence. They will be able to take action to ensure that does not happen. If someone tries to escape, the youth justice officers can try to catch these people, to stop it escalating to a point where there is damage to property or harm to a young offender who just got involved and had been geed up. They are the ones who get hurt.

The criminal history provision is to make sure that the community is safe. We have changed the regulations in regard to the prescribed offences to ensure this is about public safety.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 2:

Mr PAECH: Can you confirm the timeframe for commencement of this legislation?

Mr MALEY: We will take this to the Administrator as soon as possible. I understand he is on leave, and once he returns we will take it to him to be assented.

Mr PAECH: You have rushed this through on urgency, but you will be unable to have it gazetted until the Administrator is back from leave; is that correct?

Mr MALEY: Correct.

Mr PAECH: Therefore, it is not urgent because he is on leave.

Mr MALEY: I think he gets back tomorrow.

Mr PAECH: Do you think he gets back tomorrow?

Mr MALEY: Tuesday.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr YOUNG: Why is the government once again using urgency to ram through major changes to youth justice laws without consultation, scrutiny or any sort of process?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause.

Mr YOUNG: It is relevant because this is a formal clause which provides that Division 1 of the amendment Act amends the *Youth Justice Act 2005*. Why has there not been any consultation or scrutiny done with stakeholders? What is the process?

Mr MALEY: That was not the question you asked originally. What is your question?

Mr YOUNG: Why is the government once again using urgency to ram through major changes to the youth justice laws without consultation, scrutiny or any sort of process?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind members that this is not a debate; it is about specific clauses.

Mr MALEY: Yes, that is not relevant to the clause.

Mr YOUNG: Has a statement of compatibility with human rights been sought or provided?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

Mr YOUNG: Of course it is relevant to the clause, but obviously you do not want to provide an answer. As we stated earlier, you got rid of the statements of compatibility in the sessional orders.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr PAECH: Can you provide the rationale as to why the government has chosen to remove the Youth Justice Advisory Committee, which was established to provide advice to the minister on youth justice matters and act as an important oversight mechanism?

Mr MALEY: In practice all the core oversights from the advisory committee have already been delivered through existing mechanisms, such as the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Official Visitors Program and the Ombudsman, so we are cutting red tape.

J DAVIS: Given that the YJAC is being repealed and that its legislative functions included monitoring and evaluating the administration of the Act, advising you on youth justice policy and programs and providing data and analysis, what mechanism is being put in place to ensure that these functions continue? How will you ensure that independent oversight, policy advice and evidence-based monitoring are ongoing in the absence of the YJAC?

Mr MALEY: Through the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Official Visitors Program and the Ombudsman.

J DAVIS: Can you confirm how many official visitors there are?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: You have made it clear that the YJAC has been removed because you think it is about streamlining and red tape. Was the committee consulted about the decision to abolish it?

Mr MALEY: Again, it is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: I assume the committee members were not consulted about that.

Mr MALEY: You can assume all you like.

Mr PAECH: Just to confirm, you do not believe there is a need for the Youth Justice Advisory Committee to provide you with advice, and you are relying on the statutory Office of the Children's Commissioner.

Mr MALEY: That is correct.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mr PAECH: Can you outline what restraints will be allowed under these amendments?

Mr MALEY: That is a question for another clause. This is about changing definitions, so it is not relevant to this clause. You will have to ask that in a clause coming up.

Mr PAECH: Clause 5 omits the definitions of 'approved restraint' and 'committee' from the Act as they are rendered redundant by other amendments. Clause 5(2) inserts a definition of 'permitted restraint'. That is why I am asking you what that is.

Mr MALEY: If you keep reading you will see that it says 'permitted restraint means a restraint device prescribed under section 155(1)', so that is where you should ask that question.

Mr PAECH: Are you prepared for me to ask it later or now?

Mr MALEY: You can ask it in that clause.

Mr PAECH: I have further questions about restraints. Are you prepared for me to ask those now?

Mr MALEY: In the relevant clause.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 7:

Mr PAECH: Why have you given the CEO unilateral power to decide appropriate support persons?

Mr MALEY: The CEO is the head of the department and has oversight of the whole of Corrections. Now we have moved youth justice into Corrections, that is the appropriate person.

Mr PAECH: Why have you removed the requirement to consult with the community and experts?

Mr MALEY: That is the CEO's role. He can consult with whoever he sees fit.

Mr PAECH: Sorry, I missed that. You said that the CEO has the power to determine who he consults, so he may or may not choose to engage.

Mr MALEY: Yes, that is correct.

Mr PAECH: Can you provide who is currently on the register?

Mr MALEY: That is a voluntary register, so you would have to ask the CEO when he is here.

Mr PAECH: Are there people currently on the register who will remain on the register following the commencement?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Is this made available to the Children's Commissioner or any external oversight body?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Has this or will this section be reviewed as part of these changes?

Mr MALEY: I do not understand your question; we are amending the Act.

Mr PAECH: As a result of the amendment, the people who are on the list will stay on the list; they will not be reviewed. Will be people be taken off the list?

Mr MALEY: The RASP is reviewed annually as per normal practice. There is nothing changing in relation to how that works.

Mr PAECH: Is that reviewed at a particular moment each year, such as in a particular month each year?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Can you confirm which month that is?

Mr MALEY: March.

Mr PAECH: Will next year be the first time it will be reviewed following this amendment?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 9:

J DAVIS: Can you clarify that this new section means that young people will be referred to diversionary conferences without their consent?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: Have you had advice from people who are conducting those conferences regarding the impact that will have, in terms of the conferences being effective?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: Can you share that with us?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: It is 100% relevant to the clause; it is about diversion.

Mr MALEY: I have answered the question.

J DAVIS: Who was consulted in relation to this?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: The clause relates to making diversion compulsory. It is 100% relevant to the clause. How is it not relevant?

Mr MALEY: I have answered the question.

J DAVIS: No; you have not answered the question.

Mr YOUNG: You have consulted with no-one.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can ask the question again, but if the minister says he has answered it, we will move on, or you can reframe it.

J DAVIS: Who did you consult with in terms of the impact of making referral to diversionary conferences compulsory?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause, but I will tell you that community youth diversion providers that were consulted.

J DAVIS: Who were they?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: It is relevant to the clause, but I understand that you are refusing to answer.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 158; it is becoming repetitive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I gave the opportunity to reframe. Can we move on to another question?

Mr PAECH: How often do children or young people deny having played a role in an alleged offence?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to this clause.

Mr PAECH: Okay. That is your common word for today.

What offences are eligible for diversion under these changes? Can you answer that, or do you need help?

Mr MALEY: That is in a clause later on, so when you get to that I will answer it then.

Mr PAECH: Can you confirm which clause that is?

Mr MALEY: No. You can ask the question.

Mr PAECH: It is your legislation; you should know what clause it is.

Mr YOUNG: The Deputy Chief Minister has stated that the question is for a further clause. In the goodwill of the parliament, for us to ask questions and ensure that we get answers, the Deputy Chief Minister should be able to provide the clause that the question should be asked in.

When we were in government we had ministers who would provide that information if it was asked in the wrong clause. Therefore, it would be helpful if the Deputy Chief Minister could provide the simple advice of what clause it will be at so that we can ask the questions and do our jobs to scrutinise this Bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, can you advise which clause is relevant?

Mr MALEY: I am not here to help them; they can look through the clauses.

Mr YOUNG: It is at the goodwill of the parliament. I remind you that when we were in government, there were a number of times when you would ask questions and it would not be relevant to that clause, but we would advise you which clause to ask the question at. You are trying to gag us from asking those questions, because you are incapable and incompetent of doing your own job.

Mr MALEY: I will give you a hint—look at 31.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10:

J DAVIS: On what basis have offences such as driving without consent—which I understand includes a child being a passenger in a stolen car—been included alongside serious offences, like terrorism and sexual assault, as grounds for exclusion from diversion?

Mr MALEY: I do not understand your question. It is to do with the regulations.

J DAVIS: What is the basis of that decision?

Mr MALEY: I do not understand the premise of your question.

J DAVIS: The premise of my question is: what is the basis for saying that the act of being a passenger in a stolen car should be treated with the same seriousness and denial of access to diversion as someone who has committed an offence like terrorism?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This is about giving better discretion for our police. If you are a ringleader or travelling in a vehicle, the police can hold you accountable for that. This is about expanding that. There is a broad list, and terrorism is one of them, but equally there is a range of other far more frequent, common and highly dangerous crime types that need to be included.

J DAVIS: Is being a passenger in a stolen car a highly dangerous crime type?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: You can bet your bottom dollar it is.

Mr PAECH: I am happy to see whether this is in clause 31 as well. Outside the prescribed offence, who determines whether a child or a young person is ineligible for diversion, and on what basis?

Mr MALEY: The police do that. When they come into contact with the children, it is up to the police what they do. This gives them more tools and opportunity to divert or not divert; it is really a matter for the police. That is a question for clause 31, but out of good faith, I will answer it now.

Mr PAECH: I said I would wait for clause 31, but thank you.

You said that is for the police to still determine. Have you done any modelling on how many children and young people will be denied diversion under these changes?

Mr MALEY: Approximately 100 per year.

Mr PAECH: How does this compare with the current diversion rate?

Mr MALEY: It would be 100 fewer.

Mr PAECH: That is very mathematical of you, minister; thank you.

J DAVIS: What is the projected impact of this on youth offending rates?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: Which clause would it be relevant to?

Mr MALEY: I am not here to help out; I am here to answer your questions. I am happy to answer any questions at all that are relevant or within the guidelines; ask away.

J DAVIS: To be clear, a question about diversion, the impact of limiting access to it and what impact that will have on offending rates is not relevant to the clause on diversion; is that correct?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to clause 10.

J DAVIS: I know you are not here to help us do our job, but I think you are here to be part of making good law for the Northern Territory. These are questions that people want answered.

Mr MALEY: Ask me the questions, and I will answer them any time you like.

Mr YOUNG: She just has. You are not answering it.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clause 11:

Mr PAECH: Why is the government proposing that a child's full juvenile criminal history can be used when sentencing them as adults? Is this consistent with rehabilitation?

Mr MALEY: This is about making sure that the courts have all the information before them to make a decision that is in the best interests of the community.

Mr PAECH: Can I confirm that when the government reduced the age of criminal responsibility and you left all those previous records expunged remains, that remains the play? We are talking about a young person's criminal history from 2024 to now.

Mr MALEY: That is correct. Those histories were expunged; they are not included. It is just what is the information for the courts, the criminal history, now if they are 17 and turn 18 and go to an adult court, that information. If it has been expunged, we are not changing any of that. What it is now is what moves forward.

Mr PAECH: When your government's lowering of the age of criminal responsibility commenced, from then to now, is that the criminal history that will be used in future court appearances if someone is over the age of 18?

Mr MALEY: That is correct.

Mr PAECH: Why is the government further limiting access to diversion programs when we have heard that the evidence shows it reduces reoffending?

Mr MALEY: We are on clause 11, which is about principles and considerations to be applied to youth offenders.

Mr PAECH: Have you consulted with the judiciary on these changes?

Mr MALEY: No.

J DAVIS: What is the projected increase in the number of young people detained in the next 12 months as a result of this change?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause, but we do not understand that exactly because we do not know who will commit an offence in the future.

Mr PAECH: How does the government justify scrapping detention as a last resort when this is a longstanding principle of youth justice nationally and internationally?

Mr MALEY: We are on clause 11, which is about principles. We are not up to that bit yet.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 13:

Mr PAECH: I am happy if this is for another area. What medical, cognitive and mental health assessments are provided to the court at this point?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to this clause. That is up to the courts. When they ask for assessments they order what assessments need to be done.

Mr PAECH: Does it remain an option for the judiciary to order those reports?

Mr MALEY: Yes, it is at the discretion of the courts what they order.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clause 14:

J DAVIS: How does the Bill ensure that police and Corrections officers exercising expanded powers, particularly in using force on young people during an escape or return to custody, are properly trained and qualified in physical intervention techniques? What safeguards are in place to ensure these interventions are safe, lawful and developmentally appropriate?

Mr MALEY: The prison officers and the youth justice officers are highly trained. They operate within the law and use their experience and the tools available to them to ensure they stay within the law.

J DAVIS: Will prison officers be trained in working in a developmentally appropriate way with young people?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: Can you give details of that training?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: The clause is about applying force with young people. I am asking details about what training will be in place for the people who will be applying force. It is relevant to the clause.

Mr MALEY: We are talking about the power they are given, not what training they have. It is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: Can you define the emergency or risk of an emergency situations whereby police or adult Corrections officers would be called into a detention centre?

Mr MALEY: I understand the intention, but that will be a case-by-case scenario. An emergency could be a fire, but it will be a case-by-case assessment by the commissioner.

Mr PAECH: In terms of defining the circumstances, would that be the same as a CEO being able to put in a request for assistance to police?

Mr MALEY: For example, if there is an escape or loss of control of the facility, but it goes back to what I said about it being case by case. An emergency is based on the experience of the CEO.

It is a hypothetical question. I am acting in good faith to help you out.

Mr PAECH: Are you saying that it would be up to the CEO to determine at what point Corrections would need to come in to assist or police would need to be called into a detention centre to help with a situation, based on the CEO being the commissioner?

Mr MALEY: That is correct. Examples are an escape or loss of control of the facility.

Mr PAECH: Can you provide the circumstances in which dogs could be used?

Mr MALEY: That is a hypothetical question.

Mr PAECH: The legislation is allowing the detention centres to have dogs back in them.

Mr MALEY: The CEO can use the powers necessary to perform the function. Again, it is hypothetical. Whatever power is needed, the commissioner can use.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind members that you are allowed to ask hypotheticals during consideration in detail but not in Question Time. Hypotheticals are permitted.

Mr PAECH: Thank you for the clarification.

For the purposes of this legislation the Corrections Commissioner is the CEO. Is it up to their discretion to delegate potential powers to youth detention workers in regard to when a canine can be used?

Mr MALEY: They cannot delegate power. They make a decision and then they get the staff …

Mr PAECH: Could they set a directive?

Mr MALEY: Yes. For example, if there is an offender who has escaped and is in the bush outside, a dog can be used to find that detainee.

Ms BOOTHBY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Can I clarify the point you made about hypotheticals? I am not sure what the standing order is, but in past parliaments hypotheticals were unable to be asked in either Question Time or consideration in detail. Is this something new?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The advice from the Deputy Clerk is that hypotheticals are allowed in consideration in detail but not during Question Time.

Ms BOOTHBY: Can you point me to the standing order for that?

Mr PAECH: Your minister is answering the question.

I will not ask you hypothetical questions. Will the dogs have a requirement to be muzzled?

Mr MALEY: That is a case-by-case scenario. We will not start here today to limit the powers of the CEO. He has the power to protect the facility if control of the facility is lost or if there is an escapee. He or she will do whatever they deem necessary.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General, we will send you the relevant sections.

Ms BOOTHBY: Thank you.

Mr PAECH: Is there no requirement in regulations that the dogs have to be muzzled? That is a determination for the commissioner.

Mr MALEY: No.

Mr PAECH: Will there have to be required training for the youth justice workers to handle canines re-entering those centres?

Mr MALEY: No.

Mr PAECH: Is there no requirement for training?

Mr MALEY: The youth justice officers will not be using the dogs. It will be the police or the dog squad.

Mr PAECH: You are speaking about the dog squad. I assume that is the dog squad from adult Corrections.

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: What is the reporting process if a dog savages a young person in detention?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause. I have been trying to act in good faith, but we are talking about this. You are talking about hypotheticals now with all sorts of questions. It will be assessed case by case.

Mr PAECH: This legislation allows for the re-entry of dogs into youth justice centres. Are you suggesting that the same process will be applied as it is in adult Corrections when dogs are used?

Mr MALEY: I have answered the question.

Mr PAECH: You have not because I had not finished asking it. Will G4S officers be based or have any role at the youth detention centres?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: You could answer it. Is there anything permitting the use of G4S officers in a youth detention centre?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: You are refusing to answer.

Clause 14 agreed to.

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

Clause 17:

Mr PAECH: Can you define ‘use of force’?

Mr MALEY: To prevent and respond to risk and injury.

Mr PAECH: Who determines that there is a risk of a detainee escaping?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: When they are halfway up a fence.

Mr MALEY: Thank you, Chief Minister.

That is an experienced officer. They have been trained. They understand when they need to use force to prevent or respond to a risk.

Mr PAECH: As the Chief Minister said, you will wait for them to climb the fence.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: You used to let them climb on the roof and then lured them down with McDonald's.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us stick to the clause, please.

Mr PAECH: The Chief Minister said that is how you define 'risk'—climbing on a fence. That is good to know.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: You know what I said.

Mr PAECH: That is exactly what you said. What training on use of force is provided to youth detention staff?

Mr MALEY: Youth justice officers are trained to safely and appropriately identify when use of force is required and how much force to apply.

Mr PAECH: Is that refreshed annually?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Within the Corrections agency, are oversight mechanisms in place in relation to the use of force?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to this clause, but yes.

Mr PAECH: Will OPCAT be able to visit the youth detention centre when it wishes to?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: Can you confirm that OPCAT will be able to visit the youth detention centre?

Mr MALEY: I have already answered it.

Mr PAECH: It is a separate question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister is indicating that it is not relevant to the clause.

J DAVIS: Can the minister confirm whether all uses of force under this Bill will be subject to incident reporting?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: What reporting, transparency and accountability measures will be in place?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to this clause.

J DAVIS: Which clause is it relevant to? Is there not even a hint?

Clause 17 agreed to.

Clause 18:

Mr PAECH: Can you outline the expanded circumstances under which restraints will be able to be used?

Mr MALEY: Inflicting self-harm; harming another person; damaging property; escaping, or attempting to escape, from lawful detention; to prevent a detainee from engaging in conduct that would endanger the safety of any person who is within the precincts of the detention centre, including the detainee, or conduct that would threaten the good order or security of the detention centre or to conduct a search of the detainee under section 161; to arrest a detainee under section 167(1); or to take a detainee to a detention centre or another place under section 167A.

Mr PAECH: Can you confirm whether it is the CEO, being the commissioner, or youth justice officers who make decisions about the use of restraints?

Mr MALEY: It is the superintendent or a person authorised by the superintendent.

Mr PAECH: Are you aware of any oversight mechanisms that are in place for the use of restraints?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Will the use of restraints be recorded and reported or be made public?

Mr MALEY: It will be recorded.

Mr PAECH: Will that feature in any publicly available information or for the Children's Commissioner?

Mr MALEY: It will be to the Children's Commissioner, but it will not be public.

Mr PAECH: Could the Children's Commissioner make it public?

Mr MALEY: That is a matter for her or him.

Mr PAECH: I assume that training will be provided to Corrections officers on the use of restraints.

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: Will that training take into account the significant developmental differences between, for example, a 10-year-old and a 17-year-old?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Are there any timeframes for how long a child can be restrained?

Mr MALEY: No.

Mr PAECH: Will that be based on a consultation with medical providers like a doctor if there are issues about the young person being restrained for an extended period?

Mr MALEY: It will be based on the reasons that person is in restraint, as I read out earlier. For example, if someone is harming another person and they do not stop, the youth justice officer or the officer will use experience to work out yes or no.

Again, to speak outside this—it is not relevant—there might be a step to say, 'If you stop doing that, we will take it off'. If they do, fine; if they do not, they will put it back on.

Mr PAECH: When an individual is solitarily confined, there are processes where people are checking on them at 15-minute intervals. Is there a process in which that occurs while a young person is restrained?

Mr MALEY: They are always under observation if they are restrained.

Mr PAECH: They are always under observation, thank you.

Clause 18 agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 22, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 23:

J DAVIS: Can you clarify the specific requirements regarding the frequency and duration of access to sunlight during behavioural separation? How does the Bill ensure that young people receive adequate opportunity for exercise and recreation throughout periods of separation?

Mr MALEY: Within every two hours.

J DAVIS: Am I right in understanding that the separation period can be up to 72 hours?

Mr MALEY: That is correct.

Clause 23 agreed to.

Clause 24:

Mr PAECH: Can you define what force may be used to carry out a search?

Mr MALEY: It is minimal force, but it goes up, by what is reasonable, if the young person is resisting.

Mr PAECH: How often have children or young people in detention been searched in the last 12 months? Is it already a common practice?

Mr MALEY: That question is not relevant to this clause, but they are searched on admission and when they come back to the premises.

Clause 24 agreed to.

Clauses 25 to 28, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 29:

Mr PAECH: What advice will the CEO receive or seek in relation to the register if the Youth Justice Advisory Committee is being scrapped?

Mr MALEY: The number of support people, the location, contact by police and the number of times they support people.

Mr PAECH: You said earlier that the RASP was voluntary, but I understand that it is run by Anglicare.

Mr MALEY: That is correct.

Mr PAECH: Which one is it—voluntary or run by Anglicare?

Mr MALEY: It is voluntary, but it pays its staff to attend.

Mr PAECH: It pays its staff to attend the RASP? It is voluntary not for them, because they are being paid to be there, but for others?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: What are the reporting mechanisms?

Mr MALEY: It is recorded by the police.

Mr PAECH: It is reported by the police—is that all the reporting mechanism?

Mr MALEY: And the funded provider.

Clause 29 agreed to.

Clause 30, by leave, agreed to.

Clause 31:

Mr PAECH: What modelling has been done in relation to how many more children or young people will receive a custodial sentence under these amendments?

Mr MALEY: It is dependent on the court. We are saying 100 per year, but it is up to the court. The court has discretion to bail if it sees fit, if they meet section 24 of the *Bail Act*, but it is a matter for the court to work out what it will do. Of course, we cannot control what the courts do.

Mr PAECH: I acknowledge that. Has there been modelling or work done to accommodate the additional potential 100? As you said, they might be at the Holtze Youth Detention Centre.

Mr MALEY: Yes, there has been work done.

Clause 31 agreed to.

Clauses 32 and 33, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 34:

Mr PAECH: This is the question the minister said we could ask later. I seek some explanation about personal body shields and how they will be used.

Mr MALEY: They will be used by the experienced guards to protect the property, another detainee or a work colleague.

J DAVIS: Why does the Bill omit explicit monitoring and observational requirements for behavioural separation, relying instead on regulations?

Mr MALEY: Behavioural separation requires monitoring, but health separation requires health advice.

J DAVIS: Why is that not included in the Bill? Why is it in the regulations?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause. The clause is about permitted restraints and what separation is.

Mr PAECH: I originally asked this question in clause 5. Can you outline what restraints will be allowed under these amendments?

Mr MALEY: Handcuffs, ankle cuffs, waist-restraining systems, anti-spit guards and personal body shields.

Mr PAECH: Will these changes also allow spit hoods and personal body shields?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: How many times has each restraint been used since August 2024?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to the clause.

Mr PAECH: Have they been used?

Mr MALEY: Current restraints have been used, but not the new ones.

Mr PAECH: Each time one of the new restraints is used under this amendment, will that be recorded internally so that the Children's Commissioner can have access to how many times a person was restrained and what the restraint was?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Will all youth detention staff be trained in using these new restraints?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Clause 34 agreed to.

Clause 35:

Mr PAECH: What sort of assessments are done before putting a child in isolation?

Mr MALEY: It is called separation. Are you talking about that?

Mr PAECH: Okay. What assessments are done before putting a child in separation?

Mr MALEY: If it is behavioural, it is assessed on the behaviour. If it is a voluntary one, it is assessed on the circumstances. Again, it is case by case. If it is medical, it is assessed on medical advice.

Mr PAECH: This is the clause where there will be three circumstances of separation: medical; voluntary; and behavioural. Voluntary is when someone volunteers to do it. Medical is when a clinician can make a determination or a Corrections or a youth justice officer sees a medical matter that they can put that young person in.

Can a Corrections or youth justice worker say, 'This person is displaying mental health medical conditions; I am separating them'?

Mr MALEY: No.

J DAVIS: I understand that the requirement for monitoring has been changed under the Act when a child is in separation; is that right?

Mr MALEY: That is not relevant to this clause.

J DAVIS: Under subclause (3), the word 'continuously' is omitted from monitoring?

Mr MALEY: It is not relevant. There have been no changes.

J DAVIS: I am reading your explanatory statement where it says that there has been a change.

Mr MALEY: In relation to the CCTV, they can watch it on the video—if that is what you are referring to—whereas before it was in person. That is one change, so I stand corrected. I apologise.

J DAVIS: Will the monitoring still be continuous, but it will not be in person?

Mr MALEY: That is correct; it will be by cameras.

Mr PAECH: When someone is restrained, a person is there 24/7 while the restraints have been enacted. When someone is separated, there is not the need for a youth justice worker to be there the entire time.

Mr MALEY: If they get separated any restraints are removed and they can be monitored by CCTV footage.

Mr PAECH: They are monitored by CCTV footage if there is no restraint and they are just in separation. There is a camera watching so that no-one needs to be with them.

Mr MALEY: That is correct.

Mr PAECH: I note that there are three types of separation under these changes. If it is a behavioural separation, is there a prescribed time that then needs to be reviewed?

Mr MALEY: Yes, every 15 minutes.

Mr PAECH: Is there no limit?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

Mr PAECH: Is that the same across all three categories?

Mr MALEY: Only behavioural, because voluntary separation is voluntary and medical separation is on medical advice.

Mr PAECH: With medical, when they go to youth detention with a cut or bruise, will they stay there until that is treated?

Mr MALEY: We are talking about separation. It is not a cut or bruise. Again, it is hypothetical. If someone had the plague they would be separated.

Mr PAECH: If a young person has conjunctivitis, would they be medically separated until that is beyond its infectious period?

Mr MALEY: Health will give advice whether it is contagious. It would be the same as the flu. I am not a doctor, but I assume that the flu is contagious for a day or so. It is on medical advice.

Mr PAECH: For example, would a person with COVID be separated?

Mr MALEY: Yes.

J DAVIS: I understand that the separation cell—it has now been admitted that any place in the detention cell can be a place of separation.

Mr MALEY: Correct.

J DAVIS: Are there any areas that would not be considered appropriate or not be used as a place of separation?

Mr MALEY: No.

Clause 35 agreed to.

Clauses 36 to 38, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the remainder of the Bill stand as printed.

Mr PAECH: I have a question. Corrections can gazette or approve a place of detention for the purposes of housing prisoners or inmates. Can the commissioner gazette a place of detention for youths within?

Mr MALEY: No, the commissioner cannot.

Mr PAECH: If the youth centre is full the commissioner cannot gazette a watch house for youth …

Mr MALEY: That is correct.

Remainder of the Bill agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have further advice regarding hypotheticals. Standing Orders 151 to 162 relate to consideration in detail. There is no standing order preventing hypotheticals in consideration in detail. A hypothetical need not be answered if it is not helpful, but it is not disorderly to ask a hypothetical. However, hypotheticals are prevented by Standing Order 109, which applies to Question Time and Written Questions.

The question is that the Bill be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16	Noes 7
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Guyula
Mrs Carlson	K McNamara
Mr Charls	Mr Paech
Mr Edgington	Ms Uibo
Mrs Finocchiaro	Mr Young
Mrs Hersey	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	

Mr Maley
Mr O'Gallagher
Mr Patel
Dr Rahman
Mr Yan
Mrs Zio

Bill agreed to.

Mr MALEY (Corrections): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

The Assembly divided:

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

DEFAMATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 13

Continued from 13 February 2025.

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

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, the opposition will support this Bill. This Bill was developed and drafted by us when we were in government, so thank you to the government for acknowledging that we did the hard work.

This is an important area of reform. We have seen across the country all jurisdictions doing the work to make sure that our defamation laws are contemporised and reflective of the world we live in.

Defamation law has always been about striking a balance—on the one hand, protecting individuals from false and damaging statements and, on the other hand, ensuring free speech, particularly in journalism and public debate. It is not unduly restrictive.

This Bill is significant because it implements stage 1 and stage 2 reforms of the model defamation provisions, ensuring that the Northern Territory Government is aligned with the national approach to defamation law reform.

The opposition supports this Bill—it was mainly developed and drafted by us—in principle because harmonising defamation laws across Australia is necessary. We must ensure that our legal framework is up to date, fair, efficient and effective, particularly in an era when digital media and online communication have fundamentally changed the way information is shared and reputations are impacted. Harmonising our defamation laws also stops legal forum shopping when a party chooses a court to hear a case to get a favourable judgement.

Although we support these reforms, we have questions for the government about the practical implications of these changes, especially regarding the serious harm threshold, the impact on individuals seeking redress and the liability of digital platforms.

I will also outline the need for an adequately resourced communications campaign to ensure that people across the Territory understand these changes.

Defamation laws in Australia have long been inconsistent across states and territories. The model defamation provisions were first introduced in 2005 to create a nationally consistent framework. However, over time the rise of digital media, social media platforms and online content sharing have created new challenges.

As politicians, all of us in the place would be aware of the sort of material that is thrown around on the internet, often without repercussion. It can often be an ugly place—something our laws did not account for when first debated.

In response, the Council of Attorneys-General, which I know our Attorney-General fails to attend, initiated a review of defamation laws, leading a two-stage reform process. Stage 1, the 2020 reforms, focused on early dispute resolution, strong defences and limiting trivial claims. Stage 2, the 2023 reforms, addressed digital liability and expanded absolute privilege to protect certain official reports.

These reforms have been gradually adopted across the country, and with this Bill the Northern Territory is set to follow suit. The former Labor government supported these national reforms, and I am pleased to see them finally being implemented.

This Bill introduces several important reforms. These can be divided into two key parts, reflecting the stage 1 and stage 2 reforms.

Stage 1 reforms introduce a serious harm threshold, meaning that plaintiffs must prove significant reputational damage before proceeding with a defamation claim. This aims to filter out any trivial or vexatious claims, ensuring that only genuine cases go before the courts. However, we must consider whether this raises the bar too high for legitimate plaintiffs, particularly for individuals without the financial means to contest such a threshold.

The Bill mandates a concerns notice before legal proceedings can commence, encouraging early resolution and reducing unnecessary litigation. Additionally, it introduces new defences, including a public interest defence and protection for peer-reviewed academic publications.

The single publication rule is another significant change that addresses the publication problem in online defamation. This means that the limitation period will begin from the first publication of defamatory content rather than resetting each time the content is accessed. This prevents endless litigation over historical material but also raises concerns about the redress for those defamed online, where the content can be amplified and persist indefinitely.

Stage 2 reforms focus on the liability of digital intermediaries such as social media platforms and search engines. The Bill exempts digital platforms from liability if their role is merely technical, such as providing caching services, search results or passive hosting. However, to be protected from liability platforms must take responsible steps to remove defamatory comment within seven days of a complaint.

The Bill also expands absolute privilege, granting legal immunity to reports made to police and other official bodies, ensuring that individuals can report misconduct without fear of defamation claims.

The opposition acknowledges the importance of aligning with other jurisdictions, thus we will not oppose this Bill. Instead, we are responsible for scrutinising its details carefully and ensuring that these changes will work fairly and effectively for all Territorians.

Although the opposition supports the Bill, we seek clarification from the government on key areas to ensure that these changes will work fairly and effectively for Territorians.

Will the serious harm threshold make it too difficult for ordinary people to sue for defamation? Have concerns been raised that this threshold favours well-resourced defendants, such as media organisations, at the expense of individuals?

How will victims of online defamation be protected? With a single publication rule, how will victims of defamation, particularly in digital spaces, seek redress when harmful material remains online for years?

Will digital platforms be held accountable? The Bill allows platforms to avoid liability if they act within seven days, but are mechanisms in place to ensure they comply? Will there be consequences for platforms that ignore or delay responses to legitimate defamation claims? Are there safeguards to prevent the misuse of absolute privilege?

Although protecting whistleblowers is crucial, are there protections against malice or false complaints to police? Will these changes impact small media organisations and independent journalists? The public interest defence is intended to support responsible journalism, but what guidelines will courts use to determine reasonable belief in public interest reporting?

During the scrutiny committee briefing on this policy, the need for clear public education was raised, particularly for Aboriginal Territorians and members of multicultural communities who may not be aware of these legal changes.

The legal landscape surrounding defamation law is complex. Even before these amendments, many Territorians were not fully aware of their rights and responsibilities under defamation law. With this Bill introducing new thresholds, new defences and new legal procedures, the government must ensure that all members of the community understand these changes. In particular, we must recognise that many Aboriginal Territorians speak English as a second, third, fourth or even fifth language. Many people in migrant and refugee communities may not be familiar with defamation law or legal terminology. Digital platforms are often the primary source of information in these communities, yet they are also the main arena where defamation issues arise.

The opposition calls on the government to commit to a public education strategy that ensures these reforms are communicated clearly, accessibly and culturally appropriately. This should include:

- multilingual resources explaining how the new defamation laws work, particularly in Aboriginal languages and key community languages such as Greek, Filipino, Mandarin and Vietnamese

- community engagement through local organisations, Legal Aid services and interpreters to ensure that those with limited English are not disadvantaged

- workshops or legal clinics in remote communities, where access to mainstream legal information is often limited

- clear, plain English guidance on how serious harm thresholds work and what steps individuals can take if they believe they have been defamed.

Defamation law should be accessible to all Territorians, not just those with legal expertise or strong English literacy. If the government is committed to ensuring fair access to justice, it must also be committed to ensuring that these laws are adequately understood by the communities most likely to be affected.

This Bill represents a much-needed update to our defamation laws. It brings the Northern Territory legislation in line with national standards, protects public interest reporting and recognises the reality of digital communication in today's world. We must ensure that these reforms do not unfairly disadvantage individuals, that digital platforms act responsibly and that access to justice remains fair for all.

The opposition will monitor how these laws are implemented and seek clarification from the government to ensure they function as intended. We support this Bill for now, but we urge the government to address the legitimate concerns we have raised.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to discuss this Bill, which has been on the Notice Paper for some time.

I am also pleased that the opposition has chosen to support the Bill, but provided some pointed remarks about it. It is true that these are long-overdue reforms. What is astonishing to me is that the opposition would raise this matter now and suggest that the reforms are overdue for any reason other than its inability to implement them. The stage 1 reforms were passed in 2020, and every state and Territory in the country bar WA has them in place. We are the only ones who have not done it, and it is because the former government never saw fit to make it a priority.

We are passing legislation at a rate of knots. Some of it is happening faster than people would like, but on issues like this, which are relatively uncontroversial and generally decided upon by both sides of parliament as a useful thing to do, we have not made any progress at all. We just had some niche critiques of what might be problematic about these defamation model provisions, so it is useful to zoom out and understand the bigger picture of what this is, what it will do and why it is a good thing. Perhaps that will lay the groundwork for how we might proceed with legislative reform in other important areas.

First up, for the uninitiated, defamation is a body of law that aims to protect individuals, groups and entities from the publication of false and damaging statements that can cause harm to reputation or standing in society. What does it take to do that? An action in defamation requires a number of things. First of all, it requires proof of statements that have been communicated by publishing to a third party, whether those things are written, spoken or electronic. It similarly requires that those statements identified will be about a plaintiff and also that they be actually defamatory and have caused or are likely to cause the plaintiff harm because of a negative claim about the plaintiff.

The Northern Territory has defamation law, of course. We have the *Defamation Act 2006* which is the Act that promotes uniform application of defamation in Australia. The objects of the Act that we have at the moment, aside from promoting uniformity, are to:

- ensure that the law of defamation does not place any unreasonable limits on freedom of expression and, in particular, on the publication and discussion of important matters of public interest and importance

- provide effective and fair remedies for persons whose reputations are harmed by the publication of defamatory matter

- promote speedy and non-litigious methods of resolving disputes about the publication of defamatory matter.

It is worth laying that as a foundation because from what we just heard you would think that defamation law was to be remade into something new, whereas in fact the existing *Defamation Act* seeks to ensure that the law does not place unreasonable limits on freedom of expression and fair remedies are provided. Non-litigious conflict resolution options are also built in.

Why are we doing this? Why is this a good thing? Why is it that the rest of the country already thought about this and got on with it a long time ago? It is because of the virtues of building upon model legislation to create uniformity. The idea is that model laws lead to model justice. In other parts of the country, stage 1 reforms were implemented long ago and stage 2 reforms have not been uniformly implemented. If we were to implement both by enacting this Bill then the Northern Territory will become the fourth jurisdiction to implement stage 1 and 2 of the defamation reform.

Let us go back a step. What is all this based on? It is the model defamation provisions. In November 2004 the model defamation provisions were discussed by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General. That is what led to our 2006 Act. More often that not when we do sensible things with law here it is not by being the vanguard and too bolshie; it is by seeing what is happening in other places—where perhaps there is more access to resources to fairly consider what might be done—and once we have the benefit of that wisdom, making things work in our local context. That is exactly what happened with our 2006 provisions. That, of course, does not exonerate the former government from failing to do anything with the stage 1 reforms for the last four years. However, I digress.

The Standing Council of Attorneys-General in 2018 met again to say, 'Perhaps we should review those model defamation provisions'. That led to a two-stage review process which has been alluded to—the stage 1 and stage 2 process. Stage 1 was led by New South Wales predominantly, and it was also involved in part A of stage 2. That was about the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions 2020. Victoria led the part B stage 2 reforms.

The overall benefit of this package is to eliminate forum shopping and to allows the law to better catch up to the challenges of the digital age with regard to social media in particular. This is the part where everybody in this House should pay attention because—for the most part we think, 'Defamation law is not my problem; it will not be an issue for me; I am not really paying attention; we have all agreed, so let us vote on it'—there was an important High Court case called *Voller* in 2021.

Voller is the law that we need to be apprised of in this place because it determines what can and cannot be defamatory in the context of the digital age. Different standards apply on Facebook from Instagram, your website or a Google search engine. What you do in your everyday political lives is up for challenge for

defamation and the rules and standards are incredibly different. If I have one takeaway piece of advice it would be that everybody has a look at the *Voller* High Court case.

Basically, one of the primary objectives of the stage 2 reforms is to limit the effect of the High Court of Australia decision in *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller* [2021] 273 CLR 346, especially with respect to what the reforms describe as digital intermediaries. There is now effectively a new defence for digital intermediaries for online third-party content. In *Voller* third parties left allegedly defamatory content about Mr Voller on posts made on Facebook pages of three media organisations. The High Court found that these media companies could be sued for defamation as publishers of those third-party comments.

What is the benefit of the stage 2 reforms? Under the stage 2 reforms, a person or entity will be a digital intermediary if they provide or administer an online service—for example, a website or a social media platform—where a defamatory digital matter is published, provided they are not the author, originator or poster of the matter.

In response to *Voller*, the reforms create a new digital defence for digital intermediaries who will not be liable for an action in defamation if:

1. they can prove they have an accessible complaints mechanism—which is the defence that the Member for Gwoja should be interested in—to receive written complaints about defamatory content on their online platform, such as an email address or complaint submission webpage

2. assuming the written complaint is in a form that complies with the applicable legislation, they prove that they took reasonable steps to remove, block or disable or prevent access to any such matter within seven days of receiving the complaint.

This defence can still be defeated if the digital intermediary is motivated by malice in providing the online platform by which the defamatory matter came to be published …

Mr Paech: No ministership for you.

Dr RAHMAN: I am sorry, Member for Gwoja, am I interrupting you? No? I was just double-checking.

Separately …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I think he is finished …

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat, Member for Gwoja.

Mr PAECH: I am happy to put Standing Order 44.

Madam SPEAKER: Standing Order …

Mr PAECH: I move that the question be put.

Madam SPEAKER: The motion is that the question be put.

Motion not agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Fong Lim, please continue. Let us pay him some respect.

Dr RAHMAN: I am a little sad about that. I cannot believe that a member would seek to gag debate on important legislative reform …

Mr Paech: Yes, I know; that is why we are supporting the government. Get on with it.

Dr RAHMAN: I am sorry that it is boring you to have to do real legal work that you failed to do in your term as the Attorney-General.

Mr Paech: You will never be a minister. Get over it.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, you are on a warning.

Dr RAHMAN: Separately, a digital intermediary providing caching, conduit or storage services will be exempt from the liability if they publish any defamatory matter in the course of providing those services. Now that exemption will not be available to a digital intermediary that participates in, encourages or promotes the publication of that defamatory matter, unless they are required to do so by law or a court or tribunal order.

These are important changes that bring us into line with the rest of the country. They put us in line with best practice. These are important things to consider, and it is laughable to think that they are not worthy of discussion here because it does not provide an opportunity for the opposition to grandstand.

There are exemptions also for search engine providers for search engine results, which is another thing that is important now, because the exemptions draw on the findings of the majority of the High Court in *Google LLC v Defteros* [2022], where Google was found not to be a publisher of defamatory news articles by reason of a search result, including a hyperlink to that article.

These changes are bringing us to the modern standard in the modern world. You want laws that reflect modern standards and best practice, so pay attention.

The expansion of the absolute privilege defence to defamatory reports matters published to police is also important, especially if you are concerned about people being able to make statements against the police. This reform is intended to provide greater comfort to persons making reports to police, which is important in that they will not be liable for defamation if they make a police report about someone. Practitioners advising clients will know that the subject of a police matter is a serious thing, and they should be mindful of this. This will afford people making the report with a complete defence to any potential defamation claim.

Defamation law frequently falls down in the service of notices. Under the stage 2 reforms, a notice can now be validly served electronically, which is important because you can send it by email, message and other electronic communication to make sure that a recipient has received it, for the purpose of giving or receiving documents on them.

The fact is that defamation laws are not uniform across the country. This is an opportunity for the Northern Territory to enact the stage 1 reforms, which it should have done long ago but failed to do because of the ineptitude of the former government. This is also a chance for us to get ahead of the curve by enacting the stage 2 reforms. We will be only the fourth jurisdiction in the country to catch up to the digital age, which is increasingly important for us to do.

I will not say terribly much more other than to note that the stage 1 reforms benefit us in a number of ways. They address the standard of serious harm, which should have been done long ago. They mandate concerns notices prior to proceedings, which should have been done long ago. They provide defences for public interest and peer-reviewed publications, which should have been done long ago. The stage 2 reform benefits will also include things like the new innocent dissemination defence.

I will not say anything more for fear of imposing on the opposition any further to have a substantive debate. What I will say is that the Attorney-General's second reading speech was comprehensive, as was the explanatory statement. This was one of the better explanatory statements that we have seen recently, as distinct from half of the ones from the previous government. I found typographical errors in them, because of the lazy process the former government ran.

The amendments will likely streamline core processes and will improve the legal test for damage to the plaintiff.

I support working cooperatively in this place and am frustrated by the fact that at the moment most of what we do in here is like playing chess with pigeons—it is ridiculous—people just defecating on the board and kicking the pieces over; act like a goddamn grown-up!

I support the move towards consistency and creating harmonisation of law with other jurisdictions.

I commend the Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 to the Assembly. I hope that you will all take seriously these important legal changes to improve our legal edifice.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank all the members who contributed to this important debate on the Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, as part of our government's legal reform agenda.

Thank you, Member for Fong Lim, for pointing out that—you are right—this legislation has been sitting around. It was finished a long time ago, but it never got over the line. It never got on the agenda, and it was never passed by the former government, which was interesting because two members who are in opposition are former Attorneys-General.

I thank the Member for Gwoja for his contribution about the legislation and for supporting the Bill; it makes for good bipartisanship. We do not always agree on everything, but to agree on this is a good thing.

I thank the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for its careful consideration of the Bill. The committee published a report on 5 March 2025, supporting the passage of this Bill.

The Bill will prevent our legal system from being overburdened by minor matters and protects Territorians from unnecessary legal battles over trivial disputes. It also brings the Northern Territory up to date with best-practice defamation reforms.

I also thank the Attorney-General's Department which previously spent a long time putting this together and briefed us when we came to government. I note that it has prepared a comprehensive set of educational material, including a fact sheet, for the changes in defamation. The opposition asked about that. This will assist with understanding the changes.

I thank all the members in this House.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

PAPER TABLED
Public Accounts Committee Report – Inquiry into the Darwin Waterfront Corporation

Mrs ZIO (Deputy Chair of Public Accounts Committee): Madam Speaker, I table the report on the inquiry into the Darwin Waterfront Corporation, July 2025, and associated minutes of proceedings.

This report details the committee's findings regarding its inquiry into the Darwin Waterfront Corporation, which was referred to the committee by the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Selena Uibo MLA.

Following consideration of the proposed inquiry referral, the committee resolved to inquire into and determine the appropriateness of the use of taxpayer funds and conflict of interest management at the Darwin Waterfront Corporation, with a focus on the four distinct allegations raised by the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly on 21 May 2025.

The committee called for and received four submissions from relevant departments and stakeholders. Representatives from the Darwin Waterfront Corporation were subsequently invited to appear before the committee at a public briefing on 2 June 2025.

Following consideration of the written and oral evidence received, the committee reached the conclusion that none of the allegations, as set out in the inquiry terms of reference, were substantiated. The five committee members unanimously agreed, regardless of political affiliation, that the committee's findings reflect a shared nonpartisan judgement based solely on the facts presented to the committee.

Noting that the inquiry had attracted commentary across various public platforms, the committee further resolved to publish a media statement on its website regarding the findings.

On behalf of the committee, I thank all those who provided submissions or appeared before the committee.

I also extend my sincere thanks to all committee members, including the Chair who cannot be with us tonight, for their professional and principled participation throughout this process.

The committee has discharged its duties faithfully and remains committed to evidence-based oversight in the public interest.

I move that the report be noted.

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

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr MALEY (Nelson): Madam Speaker, I will share some reflections and highlights from my electorate, the rural area and across the Territory since our last sittings.

We all know that the Dry Season is here, and the Territory comes alive in the Dry Season, especially with the lifestyle activities in the rural area. There are community events. Getting outdoors becomes a religion, and our region has a lot to offer. It would not be a Dry Season in the rural area without football, horses and goose hunting.

I give a huge congratulations to the new president of the Litchfield Bears, Em Burkitt, and the vice president, Luke Mahood. I have a soft spot for the Bears because, as you might know, many years ago I used to lace up the boots and play for the Bears. Now, I leave the horse to do the running on the polocrosse field and I just throw the ball around. The spirit of community is there, and the Bears are a mighty team on and off the field.

A couple of weeks ago I took part in the Gran Fondo to raise money for the Howard Springs Scouts. It is a good group and has been there a long time. I was a member of the Howard Springs Scouts when I was growing up and attending Howard Springs Primary School. I learned to tie knots and do all sorts of things whilst involved with the Scouts. I had a great time there.

I rode at Hidden Valley as part of Ride Against Cancer NT and did 66 laps with Clive Baxter. He has been around the Territory for a long time, and he supported me when I was a young fella. I support him and his group. I especially give a big shout-out to Tracey from the Howard Springs Tavern for her generous donation. She is constantly donating to many rural events. She does a lot at the Howard Springs Tavern and has made it into a real family affair. This is another example of her donating to a great cause to someone who lives in the rural area and someone who has been around a long time.

The Freds Pass Rural Show did not disappoint. It was a great show, with many different events. Unfortunately Itchy, the wonder pony, was not at my stall, but maybe he will be back next year. It was a great weekend. I also managed to raise some money for the Scouts where the Chief Minister and I were in the dunking machine and were dunked on many occasions. That was a good cause. A big shout-out goes to the Freds Pass show committee, especially the president, Shirley Preston. She puts in many hours of work to make the show come together. Shirley, I shout out to you. Your work does not go unnoticed. You do a lot for the community, and I really appreciate it.

Tim West took out the Grand Orchid Prize for the second year running. The Member for Goyder told me that he is considering shifting his sponsorship to another next year because Tim is such a good orchid grower.

Mr Mackay: He has won like four of my prizes.

Mr MALEY: He goes pretty good.

The Litchfield Orchid Club also hosted the NT Orchid Spectacular. Tim West again featured, winning the reserve champion, which was sponsored by the Member for Goyder. Tim also won a prize at the Darwin Show. Nicole Hamilton's work in the print classes took out the champion picture. Sarah Henderson walked away with the highest aggregate points. Congratulations to all the prize winners. I thank the club for organising the event. I went along with the Member for Goyder, and we had a look around. Those people know how to grow an orchid.

Congratulations to Darien Pearce who won the champion bantam at the Darwin Show. She is a great poultry person who has been in the rural area a long time.

I always enjoy my time in the rural area and on my horse. As the saying goes, the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man, and I could not agree more. I meet many people who ride horses around the rural

area. Some go out there just to have a relaxing spin around. It is enjoyable to plod along on your horse. You feel it and just relax.

The Member for Goyder and I went to the Noonamah Rodeo; those bull riders are crazies. One thing I have not done in my life is ride at a rodeo. I have jumped on a bull before, but did not last long. That was not at a rodeo. It was a great night, and it was packed. It is a great event. I shout out to the Noonamah Tavern; it does a great job.

I went to the Adelaide River Rodeo and Show. I took my horse along to that one. A memorable occasion was when the Member for Goyder practised to be on the rescue race, where they had to rescue him. That is where someone rides up and he has to jump on the back and then ride off. Unfortunately, he did not make it, and he fell on the ground. He did not make it into the rescue race. He practised and tried. I will be interested to see how he goes next year.

The Douglas Daly Campdraft is another event in the rural area. The NT Polocrosse Association played the campdraft team. I was unable to play as I was working, but I watched on the weekend and supported. The Member for Goyder came along and we checked out the horses and cows, and some of those riders are pretty good.

There has also been a tough fire season in the rural area. It dries out a lot. I give a big shout-out to the volunteer fire brigades in my area, especially the Howard Springs volunteers, along with the others in the rural area. People like Maxine …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Excuse me, Deputy Chief Minister.

Could you please take your conversations outside the Chamber? It is a bit noisy.

Mr MALEY: I go back to the good work that the volunteer fire brigades do in the rural area. There are lots of small and big fires, so without those people taking time out of their day to help out at properties I am sure that there would be some major property loss. They all do a great job. Hamish does a good job. They are both local legends. I think everyone knows what is going on. Over at Koolpinyah, Scott Healey not only brings the annual Christmas run in the area but also volunteers every week. To all those volunteer firefighters in my area and across the Northern Territory, thank you for your service. You make the rural area stronger, safer and prouder.

I have outstanding news about one of our local schools. Good Shepherd Lutheran College in Howard Springs has been ranked 98th in the News Corp national list of top private schools. With 1,057 students, Good Shepherd is known for its strong pastoral care, academic excellence, and is committed to developing the whole child. My children went there when they were young. I thank the principal—he does a great job—Matthew Qualischefski, who came second in the celebrity bake-off at the Darwin Show. The deputy principal, Jason Mustin, and all the staff and teachers there do a wonderful job. It is a wonderful school with lots of students. That is what makes the rural area such a great place.

The Dry Season continues to roll on. We had the show series, and I went to all of them. I thank all the volunteers across the Territory who do the hard work keep those shows up and running. I saw a good sign at the Katherine Show: 'If you have a whinge, are you volunteering?' That is an important message. Do not whinge about it; get out and volunteer and do it yourself, if you have a problem with it, to make it better for next year. It is the same old story of the same people doing the same work. It is time for a change at many events. If you want to whinge about it, volunteer and get into it and fix it yourself.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the call. I appreciate it because I am driving home after this, and I have a long way to go.

I celebrate the incredible dedication and hard work of the 2025 Northern Territory Training Awards finalists. These awards do more than recognise individual achievement; they shine a powerful spotlight on the life-changing impact of vocational education and training in our community.

From apprentices and trainees to the training organisations, employers and devoted trainers who give so much of themselves to help others succeed, each finalist represents a story of perseverance, skill and commitment to excellence. I had the great privilege of presenting the finalists' certificates at a function on

Monday 21 July. What struck me most was not their achievements but their passion. It was a group of truly inspiring individuals all contributing to a stronger and more capable Territory.

Vocational education and training is the beating heart of our workforce. It opens doors and creates opportunities. Whether it is in trades like electrical work, carpentry and hairdressing or in vital service sectors such as early childhood education, allied health, business and accounting, VET continues to play a critical role in helping Territorians to skill up, grow their careers and build better lives.

As someone who has also worn the hat of a business owner for 25 years, I know firsthand how crucial the VET sector is to our Territory. A skilled workforce is not just a nice to have; it is the engine room of our economy, the backbone of our industries and the bridge between potential and opportunity.

I acknowledge our 2025 NT finalists:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year—Kaylisha Mamarika, Jason Ramsamy and Nicholas Yarran

- Austin Asche Apprentice of the Year—Abbe Ayres, Evangelene Rushforth and Madison Hohn. I give a big shout-out to Maddie Hohn. She is a Katherine girl and a friend's daughter. She is also an outstanding apprentice in their work

- Australian School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year—Zeth King, Isabella Savage and Gemma Stevens

- Trainee of the Year—Teagan Hancock, Peter Ilic and Jade McGowan

- VET for Secondary Schools Student of the Year—Jessica Day, Tenzin Finch, Kaiden Maher and Ciara Ransome

- VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year—George Chingwangwe, Andrew Irwin, Lorraine Kerrigan and Tahlia Waters

- VET Student of the Year—Tracey Anderson and Jacqueline Florance

- Industry Collaboration Awards—'The Prelude to the Future Program: sustainable pathways into skilled careers', a collaboration between GTNT Group, Charles Darwin University and Shell Australia; 'A transformative hospitality training initiative for Aboriginal jobseekers in remote communities', a collaboration between Institute of Skills and Training Australia and Nyirrunggulung-RISE; and 'An Education-to-Community Services Pathway for Supporting Children, Youth, and Families in the Northern Territory', a collaboration between Charles Darwin University and the Department of Children and Families

- Large Employer of the Year—Hastings Deering (Aust) Ltd, Kinetic IT and St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc

- Large Training Provider of the Year—Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Charles Darwin University

- Small Employer of the Year—NC Electrical & Airconditioning Pty Ltd and Unique Auto Tech

- Small Training Provider of the Year—Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA), Institute of Skills and Training Australia and National Indigenous Training Australia.

I am delighted to share that the NT Training Awards Gala Dinner will be held on 13 September. I will be there proudly cheering on our incredible finalists. Each one is a shining example of the strength and spirit of vocational education and training in the Territory.

There is more to come in this sector. We have even more reason to be proud as the Northern Territory this year will host the National Training Awards in Darwin. I was in Canberra last year. This year it will be on Friday 5 December in Darwin. It has been almost a decade since we last held this honour in November 2016. I can say with confidence that this recognition is well deserved. To have the eyes of the nation on our vibrant and resilient training sector is something that we can all take pride in. It is a testament to the excellence we have built in the NT. From our passionate trainers and committed organisations to the hardworking

apprentices and trainees who are forging their futures through VET, this is our moment to shine on the national stage. I could not be prouder. I look forward to that.

The other day I started to talk about this, but I ran out of time. The Mother's Day Run Festival was run by the Katherine Multisport Club. The winners in the seven-kilometre male run were Elliott Green, Taylor Bernard and Luke Hong. The female winners were Ali Thompson, Sarah Healy and Genelle Hellier. Winners in the 14-kilometre run were Aaron Moules, Jesse White, Jack McIvor, Naomi de With, Megan Pritchard and Marion Hermitage. Winners in the 21-kilometre run were Andrew Hermitage, Matthew Moir, Nathan Ballard, Cathrine Nielsen, Jacinta McFee and Maryke McDonald. That started at the Pop Rocket Cafe and headed out towards the hospital and back. It is a great track along the river. It was a beautiful morning, albeit it was a long time ago.

This weekend we have the Katherine Ultra Challenge which, back in the day, used to be a 100-kilometre event. It is downscaled these days with all the safety things you have to do. It is an event that takes place in the gorge with the mountain bike tracks. It starts off with a swim in the gorge. It is a trail run, a mountain bike ride, a road bike ride and canoeing—I cannot think of what else; that is basically the ones it has, but I will update everyone after the event. It is a fantastic event …

Ms Uibo: Will you do the run, Member for Katherine?

Mrs HERSEY: No. The Opposition Leader is asking whether I am doing anything. I have never done this whole event. I am into lots of different sports. I have done a bike leg and a couple of run legs, but for the last five years I have volunteered; that is about my capacity these days. I love volunteering. There are lots of people who used to live in Katherine who come back for this event. It is great to see the tourists and the athletes doing their thing. The Katherine Multisport Club does a great job in putting on this fantastic event. It brings many people to Katherine for the last long weekend for the year, and I look forward to it.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, I will speak about the Tiwi Cultural Festival and Tiwi Islands AFL Grand Final. On Sunday 20 July, after a very early morning taking part in the SunBuild Top End Gran Fondo, I travelled to Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island with my colleagues Ministers Edgington and Charls to attend the 2025 Tiwi Islands AFL Grand Final. It was a fantastic afternoon.

We were proud as a government to support the 2025 Tiwi grand final and the second iteration of the Tiwi Cultural Festival through a combined $105,000 in grant funding, thanks to a range of government agencies. These grants demonstrate our commitment to ensuring equitable support for sport and cultural events across the Territory.

I was warmly greeted on arrival at Wurrumiyanga by traditional owners Jennifer Clancy, Richard Tungatalum and Leslie Tungatalum who is the Chair of the Tiwi Land Council and many children and elders who performed a traditional welcome with a smoking ceremony, singing and dancing. It was a true honour. We also had a warm welcome from parish priest Father Niran Veigas and assistant priest Father Quoc Hung Nguyen who kindly assisted us with transport that day.

First, we visited Patakijiyali Museum where we were met by Sister Anne Gardiner and museum manager and guide, Fiona Kerinaiua. Along with Ministers Edgington and Charls we were given a big tour of the museum by Sister Anne and Fiona. Fiona is an accomplished artist and screen printer, with some of her art having been proudly displayed in the Powerhouse Museum. In 2017 Sister Anne was named the Senior Australian of the Year. The museum and the historic church are her passion, and she has dedicated more than 70 years of her life to that community. What an achievement and legacy. Sister Anne has been working on Tiwi since she was 22, and she is now 94. On my visit to the museum, I was generously gifted a book authored by Heide Smith, *Portrait of a People: The Tiwi of Northern Australia*, which I have brought back to my office in Parliament House and treasure.

We then visited the historic St Therese's Church which was built in 1941. Next to the church stands a bronze statue of Matthias Ulungura, the first Aboriginal man to capture a prisoner of war on Australian soil during the Bombing of Darwin in World War II. We received a warm spiritual welcome from Sister Amelia Fatima, Stacey Parker, Melissa, Anthea, Molly Munkara, Marie Carmel, Nina Black, Father Niran and Father Quoc who told us about the enormous efforts they are undertaking to fundraise to restore the beautiful church. We were told a story of how during the cyclone they hid underneath the church.

After this we went and visited Tiwi Design, where we were welcomed by the manager, Michelle Canning, and Alan Kerinaiua, one of the main screen printers and artists who has been painting for over 41 years. He did some painting and showed us his work. It was gorgeous.

Then we made our way to Stanley Tipiloura Oval where we were greeted by Mary Dunn. I had the pleasure of presenting the women's side winning trophy to the Muluwurri Magpies for their dominant win over the Walama Bulldogs in the female grand final. I was entrusted to do the coin toss—I made sure that I got some tips on how to do the coin toss first—for the men's grand final between the Muluwurri Magpies and the Imalu Tigers. It was a great game, and the Tiger brought it home with a 16-point win.

At half-time I presented the Tungatalum family with a plaque on behalf of the Northern Territory Government to acknowledge their father and brother and relative, Hyacinth Gabriel Tungutalum, who was the first Indigenous Australian to be elected to the Northern Territory parliament in 1974. It is a tangible and lasting symbol of appreciation in recognition of his service to his community and to the Northern Territory.

On Saturday 19 July was the second-ever Tiwi Cultural Festival, and it was a real highlight. Everyone told us how incredible it was. I was unfortunately at the Katherine Show, but it sounded like everyone had a wonderful time.

I congratulate Mary Dunn, who did an incredible job of keeping the show on the road, and everyone who organised it. The teams, players and the whole community had a wonderful celebration of sport. It was a high-energy afternoon, and I congratulate them.

We look forward to getting back there soon.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I will speak directly to my constituents, particularly those living in Karama and Malak, about the single biggest issue they continue to raise with me—namely, antisocial and criminal behaviour associated with certain public housing tenancies in my electorate.

In doing so, I seek leave to table my newsletter, which I hand-delivered across the electorate in the last three weeks. I will quote some excerpts from it.

Leave granted.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I reassure those residents who contacted me about their concerns this week—whilst I have had parliamentary commitments—that I will meet with them next week. They include Steven Drummond, Mistletoe Crescent, Karama; Trevor Geier, Leoben Court, Karama; Andrew Duke Goulis, Hawkins Court, Malak; Ian Baker, Whitby Court, Karama; Linda Dempster, Tabletop Place, Malak; and Anita, Sedge Court, Karama.

I acknowledge that although we inherited a dysfunctional public housing system from the previous eight years of a Labor government, it is now the responsibility of our CLP government to fix it. Having been in government for 11 months we have started to make some progress, but we still have a long way to go.

I will quote directly from my newsletter updating on our government's effort to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour, including our public housing reforms. On the first page I said:

> *Dear Residents of Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon*
>
> *…*
>
> *Crime and antisocial behaviour continue to be among the most frequent concerns raised with me. I want to assure you that I continue to strongly advocate on your behalf in Parliament and to Government. While there is still work to be done, we are beginning to see some positive changes, including:*
>
> - *Increased proactive policing in Karama and Malak*
> - *Stronger enforcement measures and real consequences for offenders*
> - *A more focused approach to dealing with irresponsible public housing tenants*

On another page I referred to public housing reform:

> *Dear Residents*
>
> *I continue to advocate on your behalf to address the serious issue of AntiSocial Behaviour associated with some Public Housing Tenancies across our Electorate—and I share the frustrations of those*

Residents who have yet to see much improvement since our Government was elected just 10 months ago! But change is occurring, and we will be bringing in Legislation later this year to make it easier to remove irresponsible Tenants. And we are now in the process of establishing a new stream of Police Public Officer Safety Officers with much stronger powers to deal with such Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Places.

Pleasingly—some residents are already seeing some results from my strong advocacy on their behalf … and I will continue to advocate on your behalf.

I will quote from a letter that I received from a resident:

Hi Brian,

I wanted to update you on Dalwood Crescent. Housing called today and informed me that they have taken the house back! Tenants are out thankfully and housing will now renovate & they have locked the gate to stop squatters going in. My partner and I are so grateful we hope the house gets sold off to good caring people or tenanted to good tenants.

It has been a total nightmare living next to the previous tenants, something we suffered for years, we always felt unsafe. The filth from house spilling into everyone's yards, years of sleepless nights, years of feeling scared in our own house, years of not inviting people into our backyard as we were too embarrassed of expletives being yelled continuously as well as drunken fights.

In their absence we can make sure our grandson does not grow up thinking this is the norm. Thank you for your support and help. Your predecessor always gave us lip service but nothing got done and we continued to live the nightmare for years. Not sure what you did but housing finally did something.

Thank you.

That was from a Malak constituent.

I continue to raise these issues on behalf of residents directly with my government colleagues, including the Minister for Housing, Hon Steve Edgington, and his agency. When possible, I also facilitate opportunities for residents to talk directly to the minister, which he obligingly accepts.

For example, at the Darwin Show last weekend I introduced Kim from Mistletoe Crescent in Karama, Jan from Applegum Drive in Karama and Mark from Tabletop Place in Malak to Minister Edgington, and Doreen from Lippia Court in Karama to the Chief Minister, to discuss their serious concerns with antisocial behaviour in neighbouring public housing tenancies.

Residents of Karama and Malak, apart from the usual antisocial behaviour issues of violence, screaming and drunken behaviour, rubbish littered, vandalised property, overcrowding with visitors and continual disruption to your neighbourhood, I also raised the issue of over-density of public housing in Karama and Malak.

During the recent Estimates meetings held by the Legislative Assembly, I ascertained that the option of selling some of these properties, possibly to first homebuyers, is not current government policy. Having said that, I will continue to advocate for looking at such an option, as will my fellow MLAs the Members for Blain and Drysdale, whose Palmerston electorates have similar issues to those in my electorate of Karama.

I will highlight Mistletoe Crescent and Sedge Court in Karama as a classic example of this over-density with multiple public housing properties managed by Mission Australia. It is fair to say that residents of Mistletoe Crescent, along with many other streets in Karama and Malak, including Squier Court, Sedge Court, Tabletop Place, Fawcett Court, Rickards Court, Paqualin Road and Abbott Crescent, suffer severely from this over-density and have their lives destroyed by multiple public housing tenancies being overcrowded with visitors, continual drunken behaviour and properties in disrepair and filled with rubbish. Residents of neighbouring private houses report that it is like living in a war zone. The value of their properties has dropped significantly, and in some cases they are unable to sell them.

I will list some of the houses that are managed by Mission Australia as a clear example of this over-density which we, as a government, need to address. I go to Mistletoe Court: 11 Mistletoe Court; 13 Mistletoe Court; 16 Mistletoe Court; 17 Mistletoe Court; 21 Mistletoe Court; 23 Mistletoe Court; 25 Mistletoe Court; 27 Mistletoe Court; 31 Mistletoe Court; 33 Mistletoe Court; 39 Mistletoe Court; 41 Mistletoe Court; 42 Mistletoe Court;

43 Mistletoe Court; 47 Mistletoe Court; 5 Mistletoe Court; 69 Mistletoe Court; and 71 Mistletoe Court. If that is not over-density I do not know what is.

There is a small street called Sedge Court, yet it contains 14 Sedge Court, 16 Sedge Court, 2 Sedge Court, 4 Sedge Court, 6 Sedge Court, 7 Sedge Court, 8 Sedge Court …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 1; I ask you to make a ruling. These are people's personal addresses; whether they are public or private housing should be irrelevant. There is a breach of privacy.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I am not saying that every house is a problem house. I am talking about the density of the houses. This is factual.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The point is about the privacy of the people who live in the house. He has come in here and put the address of people's houses …

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I am highlighting …

Mr YOUNG: You do not have the right to state people's addresses. It is a disgrace!

Madam SPEAKER: Members, take your seats. I did not think of the implications of what the member was saying at the time. I agree that there are sensitivities in relation to identifying people who live in public houses. In itself, it is not inadmissible that you talk about these things in parliament, but I urge caution and suggest that you perhaps limit or retract what you have put on the public record.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I will say again that I am all for public housing. I am not saying that every house is a problem house at all.

Mr YOUNG: Madam Speaker …

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat, Member for Daly.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I am saying that the issue is over-density, and I am highlighting that issue.

Mr Young: He needs to retract those comments. He has put on the public record people's personal addresses.

Madam SPEAKER: I heard what you said, and I am taking it seriously.

Take your seat, member. I think the Member for Daly is making a point here, but it is your call. You have to live with what you are putting on the public record. You have to take the risk of what you are doing. These public houses are on the public record anyway. We can all access that information if we choose to, so I will not instruct you to withdraw it, but I urge caution.

The point that the opposition members have made is correct; it is sensitive, and it is rather contentious that you are reading it on the *Hansard* record tonight. You obviously understand what you are doing, so I will leave it with you, but I urge caution.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will not go any further on this …

Mr Young: Retract it.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I said I will not go any further.

Madam SPEAKER: It is the member's decision, and there will be no more debate on it.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I continue to echo that many residents come to me about the over-density issue. We need to tackle it, and maybe selling off the houses is one option.

Mr Young: His time is up, Madam Speaker. We do not need to hear from him further.

Madam SPEAKER: Please, take your seat, Member for Daly. You are instructing me in my job, and I take exception to that. Given that there were interruptions to the member's adjournment speech, I allowed him an extra 30 seconds, and I do not have to explain that to you.

Mr Young: It is not okay!

EXCLUSION OF MEMBER
Member for Daly

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, you can leave for an hour, pursuant to Standing Order 49(1). I have had enough of your interjections.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, for what it is worth, I will also put on the record that it is unacceptable to put people's private addresses on the record.

You could have simply said, seven properties on Mistletoe, or wherever it was, but you chose to name people's private addresses, and that was not acceptable—and you chose not to retract it, which is even worse.

Two weeks ago, the Member for Johnston approached me and said, 'I'm riding the Gran Fondo. Would you like to join me?' I ride my electric cargo bike with my kids on the back and, just like the Member for Braitling, that is how I deliver my newsletters. I think you need a bit more than that to be the most green-credentialled member in this Assembly. I am not a cyclist, so when the Member for Johnston told me that, thanks to Darwin Family Law, any politician who rode the 50-kilometre ride could choose a charity to donate $500 to, I thought, 'How could I say no to that?'

I thought, 'Fantastic. I can try to raise some money for one of the critical organisations that the CLP cut money to.' The list of orgs that the government cut money to had grown so long, how could I possibly choose one? I wanted to support ranger programs, the Katherine women's legal service—in fact, I think every member of the CLP should have ridden the Gran Fondo to try to raise money and make up for everything they slashed—but I could choose only one. As a survivor of domestic violence I chose Dawn House because, unlike the CLP, I put my money where my mouth is. I will try my hardest to support women who have to save other women and children from domestic violence. The Member for Johnston joined me to choose Dawn House. We thought we would not just stop with the money from Darwin Family Law, but we would match it with $500 each and create a public fundraiser.

I am pleased to let the CLP know that it has to make up only $6,494,900 of the money it took from Dawn House, because so far we have raised just over $5,000. I am proud of that and of us for riding further than we have ever ridden in our lives. I had one week to prep; it was not super fun, but I did it.

I thank everyone who has donated so far. The fundraiser is still open, so, if any members on the other side have any tugs at their conscience and maybe want to put their money where their mouths are and are serious about protecting women from DV, they can head to givenow.com.au and look for our fundraiser, 'Kat & Justine ride for Dawn House'.

I will speak a bit further on domestic violence in my adjournment. I missed the debate about the Coroner's report yesterday as I was unwell, so I want to share some of my response to that.

As the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence rightly identified on Monday, this is a crisis that is overwhelmingly affecting Aboriginal women. Approximately 89% of domestic, family and sexual violence victims are Aboriginal women. They are 35 to 40 times more likely to be hospitalised because of family violence and, most tragically, are eight times more likely to lose their lives to domestic, family and sexual violence. I should say that is men's violence; I find that is often missing. We use the term 'domestic, family and sexual violence', and the core of this is violence from men; it is not just an invisible force.

It is important to note that this is not an Aboriginal problem or just a cultural problem, as the minister not-so-subtly alluded to two days ago; this is a problem for every one of us. In the findings we saw evidence from Dr Chay Brown who found:

> *… that these racist attitudes and stereotypes also meant that violence against Indigenous women in the NT was 'minimised or dismissed', because of the attitude that violence against women is 'an Aboriginal problem'.*

Alongside this, Coroner Armitage said the following when she handed down her findings:

> *That the deaths of Aboriginal women in the NT does not evoke the same reaction [as non-Aboriginal women interstate] is indicative of systemic racism in the way their voices go unheard; the belief that these women are somehow less deserving of our grief, outrage and our collective response …*

The CLP government's failure to take this coronial inquest seriously and genuinely engage with the recommendations is just another example of its anti-intellectual, anti-evidence approach to policy. More importantly, it is incredibly telling of how little the CLP cares about the lives of Aboriginal women. If I have this wrong and the CLP government genuinely cares about the lives of Aboriginal women, then it can show it cares and commit to enacting change through implementing the Coroner's recommendations.

This crisis is not new; Aboriginal women have been sounding the alarm for decades. Frontline workers, legal services, shelters and victim–survivors have cried out for change. The Coroner has laid it bare in painstaking detail in her inquest into the deaths of Kumarn Rubuntja, Kumanjayi Haywood, Miss Yunupingu and Ngeygo Ragurrk. The violence faced by Aboriginal women in the Territory is not just a crisis; it is a systemic failure.

I am so sorry that we failed those four women, and not just them; we have failed more than 80 First Nations women who have been killed in domestic violence incidents since 2000 and many others who continue to experience violence at the hands of a partner.

We cannot honour these women with silence or a continuance of the status quo, nor can we honour them with the disrespectful response to the Coroner's finding that we heard from the minister on Tuesday, but through taking these recommendations seriously and committing to enact them. The Coroner spent a lengthy period engaging in genuine consultation and working in communities affected by this crisis, as well as with experts, yet this government had the audacity to claim that all these recommendations were poorly thought out or already enacted. It was a misleading claim.

It is true that the Coroner did not reinvent the wheel; in fact, she said herself that there is nothing radical about these recommendations. Instead, they are what the sector has been calling for, for years, and what experts and community members alike say will work. I truly do not understand how this government can look at expert advice from a judge, who spent a year doing genuine consultation with frontline services and communities, and still ignore it—not only ignore it but also condescend it.

Territorians expect and deserve to have legislation and policies that are driven by evidence and to have some level of proof that they will be effective at solving the issues they are aimed at.

I will not go through every recommendation and outline how misleading the CLP representations were yesterday, but let us be clear that the government's response to the recommendations is deceptive. The government said that it supports most recommendations, but when you look at the detail you see that it is supporting these through existing programs or funding, which the sector has already found are not sufficient or appropriate. The government supports 10 in principle, but it has no clear response on how those recommendations will be met.

In fact, the rhetoric we have already heard from the minister and the Chief Minister is abysmal. It is insulting to every domestic, family and sexual violence survivor, advocate and organisation that contributed to the Coroner's report. Since Monday a number of frontline organisations have criticised the minister's response to the coronial inquest. To name a few, they include the Australian Medical Association NT, NTCOSS, Galiwinku Women's Space, Dawn House, WoSSCA, Her Story, NAAFLS, YWCA and Tangentyere Council.

We are hearing this constant almost gaslighting from the minister and other members who say that they are consulting and doing what was asked, but time and again these organisations are putting out media releases saying that they are being overlooked. Who are we expected to believe? I know who I am believing, and it ain't those on that side.

Alongside fully implementing the Coroner's recommendations, I urge the government to commit to providing a report to this Assembly on an update on the implementation progress of the recommendations after six, 12 and 18 months, as was included in the Member for Johnston's motion yesterday. The CLP government has claimed to be fully committed to accountability, transparency and strong fiscal management and following through with these claims.

We stand here to acknowledge the violence and commit to ending it. That requires humility, honesty and hard work. Let us fully resource and implement the Coroner's recommendations. Let us centre Aboriginal voices and lived experience. Let us work in partnership with communities, not in control of them.

That was part of my response for yesterday.

In the last minute there is one more thing that I will finish with. It is unrelated, but it came up in Question Time today and yesterday. It is about the F-35 fighter jets. I think the quote was, 'The sound of freedom and the sound of peace'. I almost do not quite know how to react to this, particularly because of the images that I tabled yesterday. Those exact jets are the ones that are dropping bombs and mutilating children, families and civilians in Gaza. I do know how someone can say with a straight face that those jets are the sound of peace. It is beyond revolting. Those people must live in such an ignorant bubble of privilege to believe that it sounds like freedom and peace.

I want the Chief Minister and anyone else who cheered that on to look at the picture of this beautiful infant—a newborn baby who was taken dead from her dead mother's room—who was killed by one of those jets. For many people in this country and across the world, those jets do not symbolise peace and the sound of freedom. It is, quite frankly, revolting to suggest so. In fact, I will put it on her table.

Ms BOOTHBY (Brennan): Madam Speaker, today is World Ranger Day.

In the Territory rangers work across our regions, including places like Berry Springs, Cobourg Peninsula, Watarrka National Park and Judbarra National Park. We have Silkwood next to Litchfield National Park, and I am sure our rangers are checking it out. That is exciting news.

Recently I had the chance to meet …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Can you pause, please. What is going on here?

K McNAMARA: I am leaving this here for the Chief Minister.

Mr Paech: You cannot; it is not your desk. It is against the standing orders.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please! Member for Nightcliff, please return to your seat.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! A member cannot touch the property of another member. You do not have permission to remove that.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, you do not give instructions in this Chamber; that is my job.

Take your seat, all of you. It is the end of a tough three days. I do not think people are behaving or thinking clearly at this point, including me. Let us maintain some decorum for the next hour until we can conclude tonight's proceedings.

Attorney-General, continue with your adjournment speech. You will be heard in silence.

Ms BOOTHBY: I am talking about a good topic, so hopefully I can change the tone for this last part of the evening.

Recently, I had the chance to meet with some of our great rangers, including the Director of Northern Australian Parks, Dean McAdam; ranger Matt Stiles; senior district ranger Sam Croft; Wildlife Operations Director, Kristen Hay; District Manager, Darwin Urban Parks, Louise Kean; ranger Mitch Flyn; and senior district ranger Mark Durand. They are a great group of people. We went to Casuarina Coastal Reserve to hang out and have a chat.

I give a special shout-out to Kristen Hay, who will retire tomorrow after more than 40 years as a ranger. She was one of the first female rangers in the Territory, serving as an example for future generations.

Kristen told me of how she became a ranger. She said her mum saw an ad for a ranger trainee in the paper in Tennant Creek. Upon meeting with a ranger about the role, he said, 'But you're a girl'. Kristen responded, 'That's true; I am.' He went on to tell her that being a ranger was man's work. He said, 'You have to get dirty and empty the bins. How will you manage all that?' She said, 'I think I'm made for this job. I'm going to do it. If that's how it is, let's see what we can do about that.'

She is an inspiration. I have met her a couple of times. She has worked across the Territory in various parks and reserves. Well done, Kristen. Congratulations on your retirement. I am sure you will find plenty of awesome things to do. You will probably still go out and enjoy the parks, I think.

Rangers share their knowledge with locals and visitors, including educating our young ones through the junior ranger programs for kids and the Parks Alive program for people of all ages to learn more about rangers.

Rangers also play an important role in keeping people safe through crocodile management, showing ranger groups and governments around the world how to protect wildlife while ensuring people can safely enjoy our unique environment and waterways, which are a huge tourism drawcard. They are always there when people need them, first on the scene at incidents and assisting with search and rescue operations. Thank you to our amazing rangers across the Territory.

A couple of weeks ago, I attended the Darwin Chorale 40th Jubilee. It was a fabulous night at the Doubletree Hilton on the Esplanade. There was fabulous food and service. It was an overall fantastic night. I shout out to some of the key organisers of the event: Annette Gore, Chair of the Darwin Chorale Board; Debbie Barnett, the secretary; and Martin Gore, a board member.

It was Debbie Barnett of Enchanted Moments who decorated the room. It was stunning, aglow with chandeliers everywhere.

Ms Uibo: She was my wedding planner.

Ms BOOTHBY: Yes, she did the Leader of the Opposition's wedding. I remember her telling me about that a few years ago.

Ms Uibo: She is amazing—a very talented lady.

Ms BOOTHBY: Yes. She and Allan did such a fabulous job. The room was spectacular, so well done to her—not to mention all the other jobs she has on the board.

Other members of the board are Kylie Banner, the Treasurer; Kate Bedard, the performance manager; Paolo Fabris; Christian Kundig; and Aruna Severenatne. A lot of hard work was done.

The evening was fantastic. We had a special surprise performance by the people of the Chorale. I do not think others in the room knew they were doing that; they were supposed to take the night off to have the dinner, but they entertained us. They were sitting at tables, then all of a sudden they were all walking towards the dance floor, singing. I thought, 'What the hell's happening here?' It was fabulous.

Mrs Zio: A flash mob.

Ms BOOTHBY: Yes, that is what it is. It was fantastic.

We also heard from Dr Dean Patterson, who is the Conductor Emeritus. He was the first conductor and founder of the Darwin Chorale. He was there with his wife, Meredith. We heard his story of how it all began. He took us on a bit of a journey. At the same time, we saw a compilation, like a highlights reel, of all the productions over the last 40 years from not only the Darwin Chorale but also Superstar Productions, including *Mary Poppins* and *Les Miserables*. There were so many I cannot remember, but it was fascinating to see all the old photos and videos put together.

Dr Nora Lewis AM is still conducting, but I believe she is stepping down to only one concert per year these days. She welcomed Mr Peter Sampson as the new conductor. There were other conductors present as well. I mentioned Paolo Fabris before, and Michael Loughlin was also there.

There was a room full of people who had travelled near and far to celebrate. It was a fantastic night. Congratulations to the Darwin Chorale. It was an interesting night because many people had not seen each other for a while because they may not live here anymore. They had a fantastic time catching up on the old times. You could tell that it is a great group to be a part of.

I will touch on the NT Irish Music Festival that the NT Irish Association put together at the Darwin Ski Club recently. It had quite the turnout; there were thousands of people during the afternoon and into the night. There were performances from the Tara Irish Dance Academy, Rince na hEireann Irish Dance Association

and Keltikka Performance Dance Academy. There was music by Craic N' On, Aslan, A Bunch of Celts, The Bloody Marys, Enbarr and McCarthy's Lore.

The organisers were: Paul Gurr and Danielle Jones from Darwin Ski Club who are committee members; SRO Events; Ronan Mackey; Breda Davis; Shane Mackey; Martin Reilly; Podge Fitzsimons; Tracey O'Driscoll; Ceire Doherty; Nichola Bradley; Leanne Loughnane; Tish Sheridan; Carol McElwee; Treasa O'Kane; Lisa Woodruffe; Mel Thompson; and Micheal McCarthy. That is a massive committee. I had some photos with them and a big chat. They were all happy people, and they do a fantastic job.

I poured myself a Guinness. I believe the Chief Minister rocked up just before me and she also poured a Guinness. I think she probably did a better job than I did, because mine was looking terrible. However, I had a little taste and I quite enjoyed it. It was not as dark and thick as I thought it would be; it was very nice.

Well done to the NT Irish Festival organisers. That event is supported by the Northern Territory Government. I look forward to it becoming better and better every year. It was an amazing festival to be a part of.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I thank the hardworking Bushfires NT employees and volunteer bushfire brigade volunteers who have had a busy fire season protecting the rural area and the Territory.

My electorate is home to eight volunteer bushfire brigades, and the rest of the rural area is home to another six. Each of these brigades is full of everyday Territorians who volunteer their time, effort and energy to make the world a better place and keep the rural area safe. These are the people who show up, no matter what time of day, to keep our homes, families and bushland safe. I would like to thank each of these volunteers for what they do, but unfortunately there are too many to name.

I will, however, commend Dianne (Di) Tynan of the Elizabeth Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade on achieving 40 years as a volunteer. Di was an accidental trailblazer, being one of the first women to put up her hand to be a volunteer, but those who know Di know that she is not one to let anything get in her way. In 1985, a year after helping establish the volunteer brigade, Ms Tynan, a truck driver, wife and mother of two, stepped up as captain. She has worked tirelessly, volunteering for the rural area ever since. I acknowledge her today. Thank you, Di, here is to another 40 years. When I recently met with Di, I let her know that in roughly 12 years time I will have been breathing for 40 years, and I look forward to seeing what it is like.

It has been a busy few months, as it always is in the Dry Season. There have been many wonderful events that I will quickly acknowledge. Behind every event is a committee or person driving the event and a community supporting it. I apologise in advance to any I might have forgotten; it has been a busy time.

I start with the highlight of the rural calendar, the Freds Pass Rural Show—the best show in the Territory. Thank you to Shirley Preston and the committee for all the work that went into another great event. This year's show was a great success.

I thank my colleagues for coming along. We had members from the northern tip of the Territory, with the Members for Port Darwin, Casuarina and Wanguri all in attendance—although I am told they had to bring a packed lunch for the drive—and members all the way from the southern border, with the Member for Namatjira; and members in between.

I had an extremely hard time judging the Noonamah Horse & Pony Club dress-up competition and ended up doubling the prize to allow for two winners. I will never judge a kids' contest again.

Tim West won the Grand Orchid Prize, which I have sponsored for two years in a row. He has won it two years in a row; he is an absolute fiend of an orchid grower. Well done, Tim, but next year I will sponsor the bromeliads.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for attending. Hopefully next year, Madam Speaker, you will make the time to come and enjoy the best show in the Territory. Perhaps next year the Member for Daly might attend as well.

Mr Paech: I am coming.

J Davis: I came; I was there.

Mr MACKAY: I appreciate the Members for Gwoja and Johnston. Hopefully, you are all coming again next year. I saw you there, Member for Johnston.

The same weekend as the Freds Pass show, I attended the celebration of Visak Bochea at the Khemara Uttararangsi Temple in the rural area. Visak Bochea celebrates the Buddha's birth, death and enlightenment. It was also the temple's 20th anniversary, having been established in 2005. The temple welcomed monks from across the Territory and interstate. The following morning I participated in a cannonball tree planting ceremony. Thank you to Muy and Va Horng for hosting me and Mel; we had a fantastic time.

As a thank you to the Member for Arnhem for her attendance at the greatest show in the Territory, I made the trek down to the Barunga Festival to see what her electorate had on offer. I camped out and joined the Members for Barkly and Katherine. We had a great time enjoying the footy, arts, culture and community. Thank you to the organisers for putting together a wonderful festival. I am pretty good at maths, and I noted that the Territory CLP members outnumbered the Territory Labor members in attendance. Perhaps we care more about supporting community events out bush.

The Adelaide River Rodeo and Show was great fun. I recommend to all members in the Chamber to give it a go next year. I even had a practice run of the rescue race, which the Member for Nelson talked about. I was lucky that when I gave it a go and practised that one that I had Ricky Davidge on the horse. He is one of the most talented horsemen I have ever seen. When he came around, I leapt on the horse and proceeded not to quite make it. Before the horse took off Ricky grabbed me by the belt and manhandled me. We did not die, which was good; however, I ripped Ricky's shirt in the process. I need to buy him a new one before I see him again at a polocrosse game. Ricky went on to win the main event, with a time breaking the seven-second barrier, with Henry Andrews. Well done to them.

Tim West won another prize at the Litchfield Orchid Club's Orchid Spectacular. Nicole Hamilton's work in the print class took out the champion picture and Sarah Henderson walked away with the highest aggregate points. Well done to all the competitors and prize winners. Thank you to the orchid committee members for volunteering their time and putting together a great event.

I attended the Douglas Daly Campdraft with the Member for Nelson, which was another great event all round.

I had a great time at the Berry Springs Recreation Reserve for Territory Day, celebrating 40-something years of self-government in the Northern Territory. This year's event was a bit different and more family focused with no personal fireworks, but with jumping castles and activities for the kids and, of course, the CLP barbecue. Thank you to Tau, Danny, Bev and the team who kept us all fed. Well done also to the committee for hosting a family fun night. I have heard lots of positive feedback from other spectators. I look forward to celebrating our anniversary of self-government there for many years to come.

Then we had the Alice Springs Show. It is a great show with a long history. Madam Speaker, I had to invest in thermals to attend. I am not sure whether I will find an opportunity to wear them again until next year.

Whilst in Alice Springs and after enjoying the show I stopped by Alice Springs Desert Park with the Member for Casuarina. We both enjoyed our time at the park. The Nature Theatre bird show and the nocturnal house were highlights. It was great to see so many tourists visiting the park and gaining an insight into our unique Territory flora and fauna. The staff throughout the park were knowledgeable, friendly and proud of where they worked and are a credit to the NT Government and the Territory.

I also stopped by the Alice Springs Reptile Centre and caught up with Rex Neindorf. Thank you for your hospitality, Rex, you have a truly unique facility. The Member for Casuarina and I saw Terry the Salty, 1,500 kilometres south of where he started, and a host of snakes and lizards. It is a great place to visit for anyone travelling through the Red Centre.

Next we had the Tennant Creek Show in the land of opportunity, the Barkly. This show was well attended in the one-day blitz that it is. Well done to the committee for another great show; I enjoyed my time there. While we were in Tennant Creek we also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Tennant Creek Power Station. The station is staffed by dedicated and proud staff. Well done to all of them for keeping the lights on in the land of opportunity.

We also had the Katherine Show, and I give a special shout-out to Humpty Doo Bakery for keeping the good folk of Katherine fed. I love the Humpty Doo Bakery. Madam Speaker, if you are ever heading down the Stuart or down the Arnhem you should definitely pop by and grab a pie; you will not regret it. Thank you to Elliot Wilson, his team and family for their generosity.

We also had the Royal Darwin Show, which in the interests of time I will not touch on tonight, but I shout out to Charlotte for winning the Administrator's Junior Steward of the Year Award. Well done, Charlotte; I know your mum and grandmother are extremely proud.

Just quickly, it has been a time of fun events hosted by schools at the end of semester. I was lucky enough to attend the We Are One concert performance of Jukebox Time Machine at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School. The whole school was involved, and Principal Chris McAloon rocked the guitar and a mullet. It was a fantastic event and wonderful to see the whole school faculty get involved. It shows they genuinely care about their community. Well done.

The Taminmin musical was also great with an adaptation of *The Greatest Showman*. Well done to all the staff and students who were involved. I give a special shout-out to Sarah for making it all happen. I love Taminmin as I know the Members for Nelson and Wanguri do, our alma mater.

The other night I braved the Darwin Entertainment Centre to watch the performance of *The Wedding Singer*. I am not normally a fan of plays or musicals, but this one was fantastic. I give a special shout-out to Swanny for lighting up the stage. Well done.

To round things out, I give a very happy first birthday shout-out to little Harper, with proud parents Jessie and Nick.

Finally, on a more personal note, on 17 July I asked the love of my life, Melissa Brown, if she would like to take my last name and marry me. Thankfully, she said yes. I love you, Mel, and will continue to do so for the rest of my life.

Ms CAHILL (Port Darwin): Madam Speaker, congratulations to the Member for Gwoja—sorry, Goyder. That is very exciting.

Members interjecting.

Ms CAHILL: It is very late; you did get married just recently. That is true. Weddings all around.

Madam SPEAKER: Congratulations all round.

Ms CAHILL: It has been a busy few weeks in the electorate of Port Darwin during what is without doubt one of the best starts to the Dry Season that I can remember for quite some time. It kicked off on the June long weekend by the iconic Greek GleNTi where I was delighted to help out the team from the Greek Orthodox School of Darwin at its food stall. The weeks have since then been jam-packed with multicultural, sporting and community events.

A little later in the month I attended the Kindness Shake's 2025 Kindness Festival which was a joyous celebration of all our multicultural communities. The event was held at the Darwin Waterfront with more than 5,000 people in attendance throughout the evening.

A big congratulations to Sushan Khatiwada, the chairman of Kindness Shake, and his team and all the volunteers that made the event possible. It was an especially momentous evening for Sushan as his parents travelled all the way from Nepal to be here to celebrate the Kindness Festival with their son and got to see firsthand the amazing job he does.

For those of us who do not know, Kindness Shake was established during COVID to support international students who found themselves cut off from their families when Australia's borders closed. This incredible organisation now supports 5,600 international students from more than 70 countries, representing over 100 multicultural communities who call the Territory home.

The fun did not stop there. On 19 July the inaugural Viva Colombia Fest celebrating Colombia's Independence Day was also held at the Darwin Waterfront. This event was staged by President of the Colombian–Australian Association of the Northern Territory, Ben Poveda–Alfonso, and the COLANT team.

Although it was not in the electorate of Port Darwin, it would be remiss of me not to mention the amazing Tejan Festival of the Indian Association of the Northern Territory where I was pleased to represent the Chief Minister. This beautiful festival marks the occasion of the arrival of the monsoon season—the wrong time of year for us, but perfect nonetheless—bringing with it much-needed rains to rejuvenate our lands and

fill our lives with hope and prosperity. Well done to President Rubina Bhardwaj and the committee members for the event.

I make special mention of the Super Mini Teej winner for 2025, Miral Sharma. Miral is only five years old, and she stole the hearts of everybody at the event. The Mini Teej winner 2025, Ajooni Challana, also did an exceptional job of representing her beautiful culture. As they said, crowned with absolute grace, was Ms Teej 2025 Sharanprett Kaur Pannu. Congratulations. I have to say that watching those young women demonstrate the culture and the dance of their communities was truly wonderful. I was jealous because there was no way I would ever be that graceful, but there you go.

I will speak about something dear to my heart and recognise the recipients of my Larrakeyah Primary School citizenship awards. A big congratulations goes to Christos Hatzivalsamis for excelling in STEAM day and using the four Cs; Nameerah Jahan for consistently displaying the school values of respect, responsibility and achievement; and Digby Preece for outstanding problem-solving during the school's sleepover and in the classroom. I am not sure what the problems were that he solved in the sleepover, but I might need to find out.

I also recognise the recipients of my St Mary's Catholic Primary School citizenship awards: Eulalie Wenzel, for always demonstrating kindness by being a welcoming and inclusive friend, especially to new students joining the school; Vehaan Rakhra, for his care and consideration of members of the school community; Sunday McAloon, for showing care and compassion to her fellow students; and Chloe Munday, for her welcoming and kind attitude to her fellow students.

A big congratulations to a member of our Port Darwin community, young Joshua Harrington, who received the Chief Minister's Youth Volunteer of the Year Award. It is presented in celebration of an individual aged 14 to 27 years who has made an outstanding voluntary commitment and who, through their volunteering, has positively impacted on the lives of others. Joshua received this recognition for his exceptional volunteer leadership skills within St John NT, particularly as the Secretary of the St John NT Youth Round Table since its inception in early 2024.

I have previously acknowledged the amazing achievements of local boxer Stacee Barnes who represented the Northern Territory in a boxing tournament in Sydney earlier in the year. Stacee continues to excel in her boxing career. Following her win in Sydney she won her division at the Club Championships in Adelaide in May. She has reached super legend status as she goes from strength to strength in not only her boxing career but also her ongoing efforts as a cancer survivor to raise awareness of ovarian cancer.

Finally, I give a big shout-out to Julian Barry from Darwin Family Law, who is responsible for me getting on my pushbike for the first time in a very long time to undertake what, quite frankly, I thought might be the death of me—the 49-kilometre Sunbuild Gran Fondo Pollie Pedal. Julian sponsors this event, which is part of the larger Sunbuild Gran Fondo event, by generously donating $500 to the charity of choice of any politician who manages to complete the event.

My chosen charity was Total Recreation, a fabulous charity that works to ensure people living with a disability get to enjoy activities like the Gran Fondo that most of us take for granted—so maybe not the Gran Fondo; I am not sure that the team members at Total Recreation would want to cycle for 49 kilometres. I could be wrong; they might want to do it. I will have to ask them. Julian, a big thank you for the $500 donated to Total Recreation and your words of encouragement.

Thanks to my colleagues who encouraged me along the way: Hon Lia Finocchiaro; Hon Gerard Maley; Hon Josh Burgoyne; Hon Jinson Charls; Matt Kerle MLA and Khoda Patel MLA; as well as the members of the crossbench, Justine Davis MLA and Kat McNamara MLA, who gave me a bit of a hoo-ha as they whizzed past me on their way back the other way. I made it in the end, and I am pleased.

I think I committed to do it again next year; I am not sure, because I was too exhausted to recall the conversation at the end of that momentous event. No, I have not got on my bike since I put it back in the shed after the end of the race.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, last Saturday Rt Hon John Winston Howard AC turned 86. He was the 25th Prime Minister of Australia from 1996 to 2007. His 11-year tenure as PM was the second longest in Australian history. His birthday was noted by people across the political spectrum, and for good reason.

It is really only with the passage of time that people are starting to appreciate the totality of his contribution to Australian society, and that includes me. His Prime Ministership corresponded with my time as a student

at the University of Sydney. I was not particularly fond of him then, I must confess, while I was busy being a student politician.

Tonight I pay tribute to and reflect on his legacy, most unusually with a focus on his time in opposition and his early Prime Ministership. I do so because his leadership teaches us that enduring reforms come from establishing bipartisan consensus. The hard work that happens behind the scenes is what makes things stick. I have limited time to make these reflections, so I will confine my remarks to just two examples. I could have chosen from many.

The first is in relation to economic reform. Much is made of the Hawke–Keating government's economic reforms of the 1980s—the floating of the dollar, the dismantling of protectionist tariffs, compulsory superannuation and so forth. Less widely remembered is the role of John Howard as Treasurer in the period preceding that. Over the course of the 1980s the Liberal Party came to accept those free-market policies in spite of itself. John Howard's advocacy as Treasurer, against the wishes of then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, are what led to fundamentally decentralisation of wage fixation, financial deregulation, a broad-based indirect tax and the rejection of counter-cyclical fiscal policy. The modern Australian economy owes an enormous debt of gratitude to John Howard, as much as to Hawke and Keating for their willingness to cooperate with government behind the scenes. Arguably this was to his huge initial political detriment. That takes real political courage.

The second case study I draw on is in relation to public safety reform. Many people in this House will not have the memory of April 1996 when 35 people were killed by a gunman at Port Arthur Historic Site in Tasmania. It remains the worst mass shooting that was ever committed by one person in Australia's history. The massacre received significant media attention around the world at the time.

In the aftermath of it there was great focus on access to firearms. Less than two weeks after the Port Arthur shooting, the newly elected conservative Howard government had secured agreement for a nationwide bipartisan consensus on gun law reform. That reform would require all states and territories, which had responsibility under the Constitution for licensing and possession of firearms, to pass uniform legislation to restrict and control the sale and ownership of certain types of firearms. The Commonwealth similarly had responsibility for trade and would restrict the import of those firearms.

It is worth going back to the context of this because people forget the background. In 1987 there were killings in Melbourne and then Prime Minister Bob Hawke tried, through the National Committee on Violence, in 1988 to do something about this, but fundamentally conceded in 1991 on television that he did not have the constitutional power to pass the laws necessary to keep people safe. Paul Keating assumed the Prime Ministership in 1991. Whatever appetite there was for change was not seen through after the Hawke years. Another shooting in 1993 in Sydney resulted in the Safer Australia policy. Most commentators will fairly admit that also led to little substantive change.

In that political context it is remarkable to think that the conservative Coalition government, led by John Howard, which was elected in March 1996 and won a landslide victory, securing 94 of 148 seats in the House of Reps, ending 13 years of Labor government, chose then to stop Australia from replicating what John Howard regarded as American gun culture. In a prominent speech delivered in June 1995 he said:

> *Whilst making proper allowance for legitimate sporting and recreational activities and the proper needs of our rural community, every effort should be made to limit the carrying of guns in Australia.*

John Howard was put to the test and called upon by the Coalition for Gun Control to show leadership, and he did. He was also urged on by the Liberal government in Tasmania at the time, which was a coalition Liberal–Greens government. Can you imagine that such a things might exist in this day and age?

The Australian Parliament sat for the first time two days after the Port Arthur shooting. In his first speech to parliament as Prime Minister, John Howard moved a condolence motion and committed to pursuing gun reform for the betterment of Australia. His response was:

> *I will do all that I humanly can as leader of the government to bring about a significant improvement (to gun laws) and to address some of the great deficiencies that exist.*

Those proposed reforms could not happen overnight, but for the fact that the Howard government was willing to work with people like Daryl Smeaton, the senior private secretary to several Labor ministers in the Hawke–Keating government, who knew how to tackle gun reform. Bipartisan cooperation is what resulted in those changes being made.

On 6 May, under the auspices of the Australasian Police Ministers Council, the federal Cabinet endorsed a draft policy for effective nationwide gun and firearms control. That included ruling, under that policy, all gun owners would require a licence; firearms would need to be registered; and gun owners would need a genuine reason for owning their firearms such as sport, farming or hunting—and a genuine reason did not include self-defence. Lots of people opposed that and did not want to pay a political price and so, as a consequence, did not want to be involved, but ultimately, Premier Bob Carr, Tasmanian Premier Tony Rundle and everybody fell into line in the national interest.

What is the legacy of these reforms? In the 15 years preceding gun reform, Australia saw 14 mass shootings in which a total of 117 people died. In the 20 years that followed, no mass public shootings occurred in Australia. In the years after Port Arthur, there was also a significant reduction in fatal shootings of fewer than five people, as well as a decline in suicide by firearm.

Implementation of the gun reforms enhanced John Howard's reputation and played a role in establishing him in the popular imagination as a strong and decisive leader with empathy and determination. It is prudent to mention that Rob Borbidge, who was the Queensland Premier at the time, paid the ultimate price in supporting the right thing to do. Howard said of Borbidge:

> *He never wavered. He was defeated at the next election and the strength of the One Nation vote in the 1998 Queensland election was the main reason why he lost. He paid the heaviest price of all and I've always acknowledged his courage.*

Today is a significant anniversary for me. Two years ago I left the UK to return to Darwin to try, in my own small way, to make a contribution towards turning around the fortunes of the Northern Territory.

In March 2022 when I visited the Territory, I found the place topsy-turvy, with a lack of viable political opposition, an upside-down civil service with more generals than soldiers and oppressive economic conditions which were making it impossible for people to succeed and have opportunity in the Northern Territory. I am pleased to note that there are small signs of improvement across a range of metrics in the Northern Territory, but much remains to be done. Little will be achieved unless we can work together.

I was no great fan of John Howard when I was a university student. With the passage of time, I have come to understand that people like John Howard have done things that I looked over in the background. They laid the foundations for modern Australia in many ways. On their 86th birthdays, I would love to reflect equally on the contributions of other great political leaders across Australia who have set up our country by having respect for the game and our institutions and by protecting our parliaments and their conventions.

It is incumbent on all of us in this place to do the same so that we might also improve the prospects for Territorians and afford them all opportunity. We could all stand to learn from the example of John Howard, a great Liberal statesman and a great Australian leader.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, I deliver a message from the Member for Drysdale. He says:

'Dear Chamber,

'Oh, how I've missed you this week. First and foremost, I've missed you, Madam Speaker. The void simply cannot be filled through a screen. I've watched where I could and pass on some notable mentions.

'To the Member for Arafura, your Bert and Ernie had me genuinely laughing. The Member for Blain and I will be squabbling over who's who, but I certainly enjoyed it.

'To the Member for Karama, fine form on your CLP award set-up. I look forward to hosting the Member for Gwoja as a special guest at our CLP AGM should the vote pass.

'Yes, my cinematic edit on Facebook seems to have caused a bit of turbulence. The Greens are losing altitude, Labor has opened fire and somehow, despite lying in my sick bed, I managed to earn a gentle rebuke from the Speaker. I hope even my political opponents can appreciate that kind of skill. Perhaps I am the most mischievous Ernie after all.

'To the Member for Johnston, if all is fair in love and war, just remember there is always more love than war in this heart for you, my friend.

'Until next sittings, au revoir, my peers. I look forward to returning more than you can imagine.'

Now to my contribution. I will try to be brief. I was not going to contribute tonight, but I felt I had to correct the record. Previously, we had a minor altercation with the Member for Nightcliff. She was tabling some documents on members' tables. In all the years I have been watching parliament I have not seen that happen; that is a new thing.

I remind everyone in this Chamber that we have a position of privilege, and it is important that we check our sources and make sure we do not fall victim to viral media and incendiary memes.

I am not an expert on Gaza; I am an expert on Blain. I will do everything I can all day, every day, to know as much as I can about Blain and be an expert and advocate for the people of Blain.

I point out that one of the photos depicts a malnourished child with their spine poking out of their back. It is very sad, and as a father it is triggering. As a parent, it is the sort of thing that gets an emotive response, but that is the point. Activists put out these images to generate these emotional responses.

For the record, that image is part of a clarified post from the *New York Times*. It was originally published by the *New York Times*, which has since added an editor's note to the story that originally appeared about a child in Gaza who was diagnosed with severe malnutrition. After publication the *Times* learned that he also had pre-existing health problems. The *New York Times* said:

> *We recently ran a story about Gaza's most vulnerable civilians, including Mohammed Zakariya Arnhem Land-Mutawaq, who is about 18 months old and suffers from severe malnutrition. We have since learned new information, including from the hospital that treated him and his medical records, and have updated our story to add context about his pre-existing health problems. This additional detail gives readers a greater understanding of his situation.*

I urge the Member for Nightcliff and any other members in this House to double-check your facts and figures. Yes, the situation going on in another country is sad, but we should be experts in the Northern Territory and our electorates. We are not suitably informed on another country, and if we bring that into this House, we need to be clear that our information is correct and the material accurate. As has been said many times, what we say here goes onto *Hansard*, and remains for perpetuity.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, I will start with our schools.

This term I had the honour of presenting my all-rounder awards to some incredible young students who go above and beyond, with not just their schoolwork but also their kindness, respect, leadership and involvement at school. Congratulations to Iyla Anderson and Carolyn Manfred-Thampy from Holy Spirit Primary School; Dylan Wiezel and Ethan Rahman from Nakara Primary School; Alexis Mohr and Jack Francis from Dripstone Middle School; and Jade Obajdin and Deklain Cross from Henbury School. You are all setting a great example for your classmates and future leaders from your school. Well done, all of you.

I will now talk about sport. Casuarina's young athletes are making us proud on the national stage. At the Casuarina Football Club, Ameliah Howard and Michelle Chen have been picked for the NT under-15 girls squad. This is a big step toward to the Emerging Matildas. They are already playing in the women's premier league at just 13 and 14 years old. This is an amazing effort. Congratulations, Ameliah and Michelle.

Michael Kortesis, a Year 9 student at Dripstone, has also been selected for the NT under-15 emerging Socceroos team. That is a huge achievement and shows real dedication. Congratulations, Michael, and I wish you all the best.

In the pool, Stella from the Casuarina Storm Swimming Club has been making waves—literally. She is competing at the School Sport Australia Aquatic Games in Brisbane and has already smashed three personal bests on day one. She is the only NT swimmer to make it into the 100-metre breaststroke final. What a champion.

Casuarina also continues to foster creativity and compassion. At the Royal Darwin Show, Dripstone Middle School art students did not just show up; they shone. I give a big shout-out to Halle, champion in portrait and second in sculpture; Khadim, first in printmaking; Sara, first in manga art; and Tye, second in portrait. Well done, all of you. Well done also to Alice, John and Ursula for top-three finishes in their categories.

Dripstone Middle School students are not just creative and talented; they are community-minded too. At our Christmas in July Seniors Morning Tea last week, students from Dripstone's Community Ambassador and Duke programs helped set up, baked scones, served tea and played in the concert band. It was a beautiful day. All seniors enjoyed morning tea and had great fun with young students. We were honoured to have Michael Foley OAM, the 2025 NT Senior Australian of the Year, there with us. I give a special heartfelt thank you to Dripstone Ambassador teachers Ms Shanae and Mr Webb for their hard work, making our children so talented and such good leaders.

At Henbury School we are cheering for Briseis Brittain who has been selected to represent Australia at the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships in New Delhi, India. Briseis is a national-level sprinter and an inspiration to so many, balancing life in a remote community, the Henbury campus and classes at Casuarina Senior College. She is competing in the 200 metres and the 400 metres. We will all be watching and cheering her on.

Henbury students are also showing their heart. They dressed as animals for World Giraffe Day, raised funds for conservation and, as a school, will soon adopt their choice of a giraffe. It is a fun way to learn and care about the world beyond the classroom.

Closer to home, I want to recognise Sean Kennedy, a local constituent, who turned personal heartbreak into action. Sean started Kiki's Justice after the tragic loss of more than 40 dogs to abuse and neglect. His second annual Kiki's Justice Walk is coming up on Sunday 10 August at the Botanic Gardens, raising awareness and bringing people together in memory of the animals we have lost. Sean's work is heartfelt and important for our community. I thank Sean for his caring work for our community.

Congratulations to the Holy Spirit Parish on hosting Cultural Fusion, which was a brilliant event. It was a night of music, food, dancing and community fun from Australia, India, Africa, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Philippines, Indonesia and all other participants to raise funds for a new multipurpose hall. I thank everyone for their hard work. Minister Charls, the Member for Wanguri and I very much enjoyed the event. Events like this bring our community closer and celebrate the rich cultural mix that makes Casuarina so special.

I wish all rangers a happy World Ranger Day, especially those who work in my electorate. Thank you, rangers, for working hard for Territorians.

I also had the privilege of taking part in the Gran Fondo Pollie Pedal, which is a challenging but incredibly rewarding 49-kilometre ride, in support of Amber NT, an organisation doing vital work for Territory families enduring the heartbreaking loss of a child. Despite my bike being stuck in high gear, I pushed through the hills and was proud to finish the ride, knowing that every kilometre helped raise both awareness and funds—$500—for a cause that touches so many lives.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to Darwin Family Law for its generous support and to my parliamentary colleagues Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro, Deputy Chief Minister Gerard Maley, Minister Joshua Burgoyne, Minister Charls, the Member for Blain and Minister Robyn Cahill who also took part and showed just how strong our commitment is to community causes. I also thank the Members for Johnston and Nightcliff, who cheered me with, 'Go Khoda!' I ended up, I think, coming one from the bottom.

Events like this show the best of the Territory, with people coming together, pushing themselves and giving back. I was proud to ride for not only Amber NT but also every Territory family who has faced unimaginable loss in their lives.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I have several things I will speak about, but I will address what the Member for Blain just raised.

Member for Blain, I appreciate that you have done some research into this issue, and you have obviously spent time on it, but the issue is that, as we know—it is not clickbait; every major organisation, including the United Nations has said it—17,000 children have been killed in Gaza, and more than half a million people are at risk of starvation. It may be your view that it does not belong in this Chamber, but it is an issue for people in my community, and it is something they have asked me to raise. I will continue to do that.

I agree that we need to be careful about the information we bring to the Chamber, but I think the issue you raised there undermines the importance of that issue for many people. I have messages from people who are listening tonight, saying that they felt incredibly hurt by what you said because they felt like it was disregarding the harm being done to people. I wanted to say that first.

Tomorrow is Principals' Day, and I give a great shout-out to six amazing schools in my electorate. They are all incredible and have incredible principals. I am grateful to them, as is my whole community, for the leadership they show. The schools are all different and work with different cohorts of children in a way that is wonderful for the children, their families and the community. To Sandy at Alawa Primary School, Noella at Millner Primary School, Erin at Moil Primary School, Mark at Jingili Primary School, Glenn at Casuarina Senior College and Virg at Nemarluk School, thank you so much for everything that you do every day above and beyond. You are greatly appreciated.

One of the things I have been doing this year is going to schools and talking to young people about speeches they might want read out in parliament. I have a few of them. They are all brief. I will read out some snippets. I told them that I will be doing this.

I will read out the ones from Nemarluk School. For people who do not know, Nemarluk School is for children with special needs. It is a wonderful school. It does an incredible job. It is my favourite assembly to go to; it is always wonderful fun. The school also sent this to me on video. If anyone wants to see the video of the students making their speeches, let me know. I cannot show it in the Chamber. Their starting point was:

'We are students at Nemarluk School. We have been learning about the social and cultural factors that shape our identity and what is important to us. We understand that the Chief Minister is the leader of the Northern Territory and has the power to make rules and laws. We are excited to share what we would do if we could be the Chief Minister, and we cannot wait to visit the Parliament House soon.

'My name is Miller. I love planes and travelling. If I were the Chief Minister, I would give free plane trips to kids and cheap flights for adults. Travelling to different countries to learn about other cultures is important, and it is what our family loves to do. We have been to Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. We are an Indigenous family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, as well Scottish and Russian.

'My name is Jackson. I do not like seeing bad things like people being mean, stealing and pushing. If I was the Chief Minister, I would make a rule to send people who make bad choices to a quiet place and think about their actions.

'My name is Cecilia. I live in Millner with my family. Sometimes there are too many people in my house and I do not like it. If I were the Chief Minister, I would help people earn more money by giving them jobs so they can have bigger houses so kids like me can be happy.

'My name is Matthias, and I am a huge footy fan and a Blues supporter. If I were the Chief Minister, I would have no work for anyone. Everyone goes to arcade and make the arcade bigger.

'My name is Sheree, and I belong to Tiwi Islands. I like walking around there because I feel safe there. People do not do bad things like fighting in Darwin. If I were the Chief Minister, I would make Darwin a safe place for everyone by stopping people fight.

'My name is Faith. I enjoy swimming. If I were the Chief Minister, I would make water parks bigger. I dream of becoming a musician and a painter.'

One other short letter is from Finn who is 10 years old from Jingili Primary School. Finn sent me this speech:

'I think the NT should change the rules about cracker night for these reasons:

'1. It scares pets. When we got home from watching fireworks at our friends' apartment, our cats were so terrified that one of them was shivering and would not come out from under my mum's car.

'2. It is dangerous because it starts fires. We saw four fires at Nightcliff, and that made me feel sad and scared.

'3. People get hurt by fireworks.

'I think some good ideas are:

'1. A certain amount of crackers per person—for example, one to six per person.

'2. They should only be set off on the beach.

'3. People have to clean up their litter after.

‘Thank you to everyone for listening to my ideas about fireworks.’

It is World Ranger Day. As other people in the Chamber have done, I shout out to all the rangers. I will read out a bit of a letter that someone sent me about rangers and education:

‘I am a teacher in the Indigenous Education Unit at Haileybury Rendall School. I teach senior students who are only a couple of years away from returning to their communities as young adults looking for meaningful employment.

‘Their education comes at considerable cost to the students and their families in terms of time spent away from home and their loved ones. It also comes at a considerable cost to taxpayers who pay for flights, boarding and tuition while they are in town getting their education.

‘When I ask students what they would like to do when they finish school, few of them are interested in staying in Darwin after they graduate. They want to go back to their communities. One of the most common things they aspire to become when they return home is a ranger. Many of them are proud to tell you that they have a parent who is a ranger at home.

‘It will be disappointing for the CLP government not to recognise that keeping a $12m commitment to a successful program has major benefits for young people in remote communities. Ranger positions in those communities are proof to our students that hard work can result in meaningful employment in the places they live.

‘There are also so many environmental benefits to having people trained to remove invasive weeds such as gamba grass and protecting native animals by culling feral animals, but in my opinion the real value is in providing people with the agency to manage issues that are relevant to their own community.

‘From the perspective of someone who works with young remote Indigenous people every day, removing funding from a successful program that has excellent social and environmental outcomes for all Territorians makes no sense. If the CLP government is serious about diverting young people from crime and instilling a sense of purpose in remote communities, funding for practical successes like the ranger program should ideally be increased and certainly not reduced.’

I have learned from other people who have put a lot of different things in their adjournment speeches—I thought you could talk about only one thing—so in my last couple of minutes, I will share one of the projects that I am super excited about that we are doing in Johnston. It is based on food and community. I am a great fan of food bringing people together.

Our project is creating a community recipe book with people from across the electorate sharing recipes based on food that grows in Darwin. We are also doing a calendar, which will have what is in season this month and what you can cook with it. We kicked it off with a series of drawing classes. Some people may know Tisha Tejaya who is an amazing Darwin woman. She is from an Indonesian family, grew up in Darwin, used to be a lawyer, then became a botanist and now is an artist. She has murals all around town. She has been teaching people how to draw every Sunday morning at the incredible Rapid Creek Markets. We are starting to collect recipes, and we are bringing people together around shared meals. It is a wonderful affirming project, and it is building community. People who may not have connected with each other otherwise are now connecting with each other. I am excited about that.

Because I am lucky enough to have Rapid Creek Markets in my electorate, I get to spend every Sunday there. As people have heard me say, it is my favourite day of the week. I have been going there every Sunday for 30 years. Muy, who the Member for Goyder talked about earlier, is across the aisle from me at the markets, and every week she shares produce with me and beautiful stories.

I finish by giving a huge shout-out to all the wonderful people from across Darwin who all come together in my electorate every Sunday. I am grateful to them, and I love them.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I mourn the passing of Sister Pat Kemp, a much-loved, deeply respected nursing sister who served many years across Pitjantjatjara country, particularly Kaltukatjara, and throughout Central Australia.

Sister Pat was a devoted and compassionate health worker who responded selflessly to emergencies and supported families in some of the most remote corners of the country. Her care, strength and quiet

determination earned her the deep respect of communities she served, especially those in Docker River where she will be fondly remembered.

A strong and independent woman, Sister Pat chose to remain in her own home on Lackman Terrace during her retirement in Alice Springs. Despite her English family urging her to return overseas, she stood firmly on the red dirt she had come to love. She was proudly recognised for her service with a Public Service Medal in the 1998 Australia Day Awards.

Sister Pat passed away peacefully on Sunday night. Her legacy of care, commitment and community spirit lives on in the hearts of many across Central Australia. She will be deeply missed.

Vale, Sister Pat Kemp.

It is Australian Principals' Day tomorrow. It is an amazing day to recognise and pay respects to our hardworking principals across the Northern Territory in their role to support students, teachers and parents; lead school communities; create safe, inclusive learning environments; and guide schools through challenges like natural disasters, pandemics and community trauma.

I acknowledge all the amazing school principals throughout the Northern Territory. I am lucky enough to have nearly 30 schools in the electorate of Gwoja. I place on the *Parliamentary Record* my sincere thanks to every principal in a remote school. They are often not just principals but also in the classrooms doing all the hard work.

While we are talking about wonderful education, it is almost the first anniversary of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement that was signed by the former government. I seek leave to place the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement on the *Parliamentary Record*.

This is the legacy of Hon Eva Lawler, a committed Territorian who has spent her life dedicated to ensuring that Territory kids have access to a quality education. This agreement secured an additional billion dollars for Territory kids and schools for a bigger, brighter, better future. We should all be proud of this. I am incredibly proud of this; it demonstrates what governments can do when governments work together. This is a legacy that everyone in this Chamber should be proud of, regardless of where they sit on the political spectrum. This investment will change lives in the Northern Territory. This is the legacy of the former Chief Minister and former Member for Drysdale, Eva Lawler.

Leave granted.

Mr PAECH: Local government elections are on 23 August. I place on the *Parliamentary Record* my sincere thanks to all the amazing councillors, mayors and presidents across the Northern Territory. Thank you for the last four years of your tireless advocacy and doing all that work, being strong and building communities. In every corner of the Northern Territory, local government continues each day to do an outstanding job.

I acknowledge three amazing Territorians in the electorate of Gwoja who are the mayors and presidents of my councils: Adrian Dixon, President of Central Desert Regional Council; Roxanne Kenny, President of MacDonnell Regional Council; and my *bunji* Brian Pedwell of Victoria Daly Regional Council. They have all done an amazing job with their councillors over the last four years, making sure that we have looked after our communities and advocated for investment in our remote communities. Thank you from the bottom of my heart; you have done a great job. Good luck with the elections.

I acknowledge every person who is brave enough to put up their hand for the local government elections. Nominations close today, and we will see who is running throughout the Territory tomorrow. Good luck; enjoy it.

Local government is the first tier of government. It is the people's government. It is the government that has the most interaction with people. Whether it is putting out the bin, chopping a tree or a community event, local government is always there for you.

I congratulate everyone who is finishing their term. To those who are not recontesting, thank you for being strong and for being leaders in your community. It has been great to work alongside you all.

I acknowledge the new Groote Archipelago Regional Council, which was established by the former Labor government. I congratulate all those members. It is not having an election this year, as the Barkly Regional Council is not. I acknowledge all those hardworking councillors, presidents and mayors.

I have had the privilege to get back out into the great electorate of Gwoja. This time I left Katherine and headed out. I acknowledge the community trips to Amanbidji, Bulla, Timber Creek, Yarralin, and Nitjpurru, which for many is known as Pigeon Hole. It was great to get out there and talk to all the great people of Gwoja. I look forward to getting back out before the Wet kicks off.

We heard all members talking about shows; it has been show time. I give a big thanks to all the show committees at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin. Of course, how could I forget Freds Pass? I acknowledge all the work the committees did to pull together these amazing events. More importantly, I acknowledge all the Territorians who keep the shows going. To all the volunteers, thank you for the work you do. It is a delight to see your hard work that keeps our shows going. To all the Territorians who keep the pavilions full of arts, craft and cooking, thank you.

I reckon members of this parliament should all commit to next year entering the fruitcake competition. There might be a few good bakers and there might not, but this place can become a bit fruity sometimes, so we should try our skills at baking a fruitcake.

I thank all the organisations and businesses that make the effort to come to the shows every year. I know it is a public holiday, but they make the effort to be available for the community and showcase their work.

Importantly, I acknowledge all the people doing the work to get the animals ready. A huge shout-out goes to the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association. Its members work across all the shows to make sure that the cattle are ready to go. The department of Agriculture also does that work.

A shout-out goes to the people close to my heart, all the horse people. We might not always agree, but one thing the Deputy Chief Minister and I agree on is that horse people, although they might be special people, are our people and they do an amazing job. Getting out across the shows and seeing Territory talent in those arenas is something to be proud of. Whether it is in showjumping, barrel racing, gymkhanas, dressage or polocrosse, there is amazing talent in the Territory and it is important to recognise that. Congratulations to all the winners of the equestrian categories and to everyone who put in an application to ride and participate in the shows to showcase their talent.

The shows are amazing events that we all need to get behind and continue to support. A big milestone, as we heard, was the 60th anniversary of the Katherine Show. It was wonderful to be in Katherine.

I had the honour to do all four shows. I could get out and talk to Territorians, go on a ride or two, have a dagwood dog or four and have a great time. That is what it is about—getting out, being available to people, having those conversations, hearing from Territorians and, most importantly, seeing people enjoy themselves and share in the magic that is our shows.

This is the final night of this sittings, so I thought it was important to speak about this. Congratulations and a big thanks to all the show societies. To any Territorian who is thinking about volunteering, join your local show society. You can help make the shows even bigger and better.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I will not be too long; I know we all want to go home.

On a not-so-happy note, I send my condolences to the family, friends and relatives of one of the most beautiful little ladies I have ever met, Delma Swan. Delma passed away not too long ago while she was on a holiday in America after a fall. It was unexpected.

Delma was the current President and Secretary of the Darwin–Casuarina Lions Club. She dedicated her life to volunteering and doing work for the community. A lot of people remember her infectious laugh and her smile. The way she got in under your armpit for a photo was cool. The work she did was amazing.

My mum used to travel with Delma a lot and she shared a room with her on many trips. It was interesting to hear some of the stories my mum had to say about Delma.

If you look through the Darwin–Casuarina Lions Club Facebook page you will see that page littered with photos of Delma because she did so many events and contributed so much to the community.

I did not want to say too much about it tonight, but I wanted to pay my respects to her family. She is a mother, a wife and a grandmother. She did so much for her family and her community, and she will be missed. A lot of people in the community are extremely shocked that she is no longer with us.

On a more lighthearted note, I send out my best wishes and congratulations to Manuel Kotis and his wife, Nitsa, from the Fannie Bay Supermarket. They owned that supermarket for almost 40 years and recently retired. I hope that they have a long and happy retirement and get to spend that time travelling and being with their grandkids and their kids, which is something that Manuel, I know, has missed out on for a long time because he has dedicated a lot of his time to work. We will all miss the rice pudding that Nitsa makes for the Fannie Bay Supermarket. I go in there and it is not there anymore, and I am devastated. I hope they have a great retirement.

A couple of weeks ago, on 16 July, I held a sausage sizzle out the front of his shop to bring people together. I reckon about 250 people turned up for a sausage sandwich and to say goodbye to the family. It was a great night, so congratulations to them both.

While most of our members were competing in the Gran Fondo, I had a community day at the Fannie Bay Equestrian Club, so I could not compete in that event. The community day was amazing. I thank Just Coffee for providing caffeine for all the parents and the Fannie Bay Equestrian Club for providing pony rides and hay bale rides. The Royal Flying Doctor simulator plane and the Police, Fire and Emergency Services were there. There were police dogs and police horses. The Army trucks came. There was a jumping castle. We had sand art, so the kids were all making cards with sand art. The Waratah Football Club did little clinics with the kids, and it was really good. I did a sausage sizzle. There were horses galore. Deadly Hair Dude gave free haircuts and sprayed colours in hair. It was great.

I think about 500 people came through the gate. It was a good day. I have plans to make it bigger and better next year. If I had more time to think about this year, I probably would have done some sort of fundraising as well, so next year will be bigger and better. We ran out of sausages twice, so we needed to top up.

As some of our members said, it is Principals' Day tomorrow.

I say a massive thank you to Carol Putica who is the principal of Ludmilla Primary School. Tomorrow is her last day of teaching in the Territory, so she finishes up. I think she has been at Ludmilla Primary School for about seven years. She has made an amazing contribution to that school, bringing together that community which was unable to be brought together before. The school will miss Carol in that role. I thank her very much for the work she has done.

I also thank Bianca Hyke, the principal at Parap Primary School; Annette Pedersen, the new principal at Darwin Middle School, and the outgoing principal, Ben McCasker; Joe Hewett at Darwin High School; Cameron Hughes at St John's; and Anne White at the Northern Territory School of Distance Education. I know that sometimes the School of Distance Education gets forgotten, but it does so much work for the kids who cannot attend face-to-face schooling.

Thank you to all those principals. I will see you all tomorrow with my little deliveries.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, hopefully I will be the last speaker this evening because it looks like some people are dropping like flies.

I will share a letter from young Keshayla Wunungmurra from Gapuwiyak community. She is a Year 12 student in my electorate and Keshayla did some work experience at my Parliament House office a few months ago in May. Keshayla did that work experience as part of her Year 12 certificate, and it was organised by the Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA). I thank Eddy from ALPA and Keshayla for travelling all the way into Darwin to experience work and life in the Northern Territory parliament.

This is a letter from Keshayla which she asked me to read out if I had the opportunity. Keshayla Wunungmurra from Gapuwiyak community writes:

> *My name is Keshayla, and I am a year 12 student at Gapuwiyak school. Thank you to the Members of Government for letting Selena read my letter to you all.*
>
> *I would like to talk about things that are needed in my community to make it better for my families and my communities.*
>
> *Gapuwiyak needs to have a swimming pool, instead we have to ask sports and rec people to take us to the closest pool which is out of the community.*

We need more activities to do after school, because sports and other activities keeps us fit, busy and not bored.

Like fishing and hunting on country because that is what us young people and kids want to do.

Our football oval is at the centre of Gapuwiyak and yet no one plays football because we have no goal post and no money for local teams.

Football is important to my community because it is a place where we can all come together and support one another and that's important for making strong communities.

Gapuwiyak also needs more houses. In my community more than 10 people can live in a small house.

We need more houses built because too many people in a small house causes too much sickness, and I am tired of seeing my family and community always getting sick because of living in small spaces.

Gapuwiyak also needs better internet for schools so students can get more engaged with what our teachers are teaching us. We also need more nurses and doctors in our communities and bush rangers to look after our country and animals. And we need more programs where we can learn how to do our nails and hair so we can feel good about ourselves too.

But one of the most important things Gapuwiyak community needs, maybe all communities need, are jobs.

More jobs are needed in our shops, clinics, schools and after school care and daycare, and also to look after the grandparents too. If there are no jobs in our communities, it causes families and communities to not feel good about themselves and that can cause trouble. If people have jobs, and kids had more after-school activities Gapuwiyak would be a stronger and healthier community.

Thank you for listening to my words. I hope it gave you all something to think about when making decisions about people living in communities.

I thank Keshayla, the Year 12 student from Gapuwiyak, who did a great job in writing to me and asking me to express her words.

I have had the honour of representing Gapuwiyak for the last nine years. The former Labor government was proud to give a grant to the East Arnhem Regional Council to put in some amazing football lights for the community.

I am going to Gapuwiyak in the next two weeks. I look forward to double-checking about the goalposts because the goalposts have definitely been there for the footy, as there have been comps in the past, but perhaps they have been removed if there are some works on the oval. I will double-check that and work with Keshayla and, hopefully, the East Arnhem Regional Council.

With the housing request, Gapuwiyak was one of the first communities in 2017 to start the Room to Breathe program when Labor was in government. Two communities—I was not the Housing minister at the time—in the Arnhem electorate, Wugularr and Gapuwiyak, were the first in the Northern Territory to start the Room to Breathe program, a new concept that the former Labor government developed.

A new subdivision has been recently completed. I will write to the Member for Barkly for an update. Member for Barkly, expect a letter soon, probably next week, because I will be hassling you at Garma tomorrow. I will give you a couple of days' break from me. The Member for Barkly is the minister responsible for remote housing, so I will double-check how many houses will be built on that new subdivision. Last year it was nearly completed, so I look forward to updating Keshayla on that.

Another request that I will look into is the swimming pool. In the past there have been many debates about swimming pools and the hugely expensive cost in communities. The ongoing running cost for local government is often expensive because there is not always the ratepayer base to help cover some of that cost.

I will talk with Keshayla about a water park. One of the best examples I have seen in the Northern Territory is in the Member for Gwoja's electorate in the community of Lajamanu. It is fantastic. It is almost like a remote version of the Leanyer water park without the big bucket. There is a beautiful picnic area. It looks really green

because there is artificial grass. It is a great space. Lajamanu is a hot community, so half the park is covered with a big shade cloth and the other half is open.

That sort of thing I think would work in Gapuwiyak, so I will work with the East Arnhem Regional Council regarding what is viable and I will write to the Northern Territory Government to see whether there are plans for a water park. It would be a great for Gapuwiyak.

I thank Keshayla for her letter to me, and I thank the parliament for indulging me.

I will share another good story from the Arnhem electorate—that is, the Numburindi Arts story from Numbulwar community. Two artists from the community recently travelled internationally to showcase the amazing pandanus weaving skill and the art that Numbulwar is well known for.

Two of my constituents—I must declare they are also my family members—Janette Murrungun and Shania Wurramara, who was one of my students when I was a teacher at Numbulwar, travelled to Switzerland, the Netherlands and France a few weeks ago. To give you an understanding of the size and scale of logistical travel, they went from Numbulwar community, which is 800 kilometres from Darwin, to Darwin and travelled via Singapore to Basel, Lucerne, Lens and Zurich in Switzerland, then to Amsterdam and Leiden in the Netherlands and Paris in France. They then made their way back to Darwin and out to Numbulwar, and have just returned.

When I was at Numbulwar a few weeks ago they were already on this trip, which is super exciting. I have seen a few photos already of both Janette and Shania on their trip.

What is special about this story is not only the remote travel to showcase amazing talent from the Northern Territory on the international stage, but Janette and Shania are generation two and three of weavers. Generation one was Mawungumain Nundhirribala. There are three living generations of weavers at Numbulwar, and that is special. Mawungumain is a cousin sister from my mum with the Nunggayinbala clan. Her daughter Janette Murrugun I would call sister, even though she is a cousin sister. Shania has become a mother in the last two years. We have four generations, and three of the women are weavers. I am hoping Shania's little one also becomes a weaver.

I thought that was a great story to share for the last sitting day of parliament. If you are interested in buying great birthday and anniversary presents—perhaps engagements presents for the Member for Goyder—you can go online and look at the Numburindi Arts website. It has a great Facebook page showcasing the beautiful artworks the artists are exhibiting.

However, you do not have to go that far. For anyone who is in Darwin or Palmerston, the artists will be displaying and selling their beautiful artwork at the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair next week. It is a renowned, and now national, event on the Territory calendar every year. It is hard and overwhelming to pick your favourite artwork, but you will get an amazing piece of art whether it is textile, weaving, sculpture, jewellery, artwork, canvas, print or multimedia. Please support our amazing First Nations artists, particularly our Territory artists. Look for Numburindi Arts and you may get to meet Shania and Janette.

I place on the record that my son turns two on Monday. I am excited. Happy birthday to little Phoenix. Unfortunately, he was sick today and in the emergency department. That was pretty upsetting. He is better now and home. I look forward to seeing them on Saturday. It will be the anniversary of my mother's death on the same day as my son's birthday. I acknowledge that for my family.

Mr EDGINGTON (Barkly): Madam Speaker, I will speak about one of the biggest weeks of the year in the Tennant Creek diary. That was NAIDOC Week and the Tennant Creek Show. They are always held in the same week in Tennant Creek. We saw plenty of events, visitors and a fantastic week in Tennant Creek.

There were many NAIDOC events. I specifically acknowledge the Tennant Creek NAIDOC committee which spent many hours organising events in Tennant Creek. The contribution by organisations and volunteers throughout the week was amazing. I thank all those who stepped up to assist with NAIDOC Week.

On the Wednesday was one of the most popular events during NAIDOC Week, the annual elders' lunch. It was fantastic to celebrate and acknowledge the terrific contribution of all the elders in our community in Tennant Creek. The effort that went into the elders' lunch was amazing. I put on the record my thanks to David and Italia and the team from CatholicCare NT who went out of their way, with a number of volunteers, to ensure that everybody at the elders' lunch had a fantastic and enjoyable time.

On the Thursday there was the street march, but we also held a family fun day at Kargaru oval. There were many stallholders and a number of visitors to Kargaru oval. I think I saw the Member for Gwoja there. It was another fantastic event held by the Tennant Creek NAIDOC committee. I thank all the organisations that came along and participated, set up their stalls and had plenty of giveaways for all the visitors.

I acknowledge NT Health as Tennant Creek Hospital held a special and powerful afternoon tea during NAIDOC week. Tennant Creek Hospital is a place where culture and care really come together, where health professionals, clinicians, Aboriginal liaison officers and families work side by side to provide not only clinical treatment but also cultural safety and support, respect and a sense of belonging. I thank all the NT Health staff who contributed to the NAIDOC event; it was fantastic. I must say the NAIDOC cake was delicious.

On the Saturday we had the NAIDOC Community Awards at the NAIDOC Ball. That was another event where we saw a huge turnout and well catered for by the Bay Leaf Cafe. The food and beverages were outstanding.

At the same time, it is important to recognise all the recipients of the awards at the NAIDOC event. I congratulate all the award recipients:

- Female Sportsperson Award—Kayla Costello
- Male Sportsperson Award—Lachlan Dunemann
- Creative Talent Award—Aileen Long
- Education Provider Award—Keara-ann Baker Storey; Keara-ann is one of our great people in Tennant Creek, and she accepted that award on behalf of Indi Kindi
- Caring for Country & Culture Award—Jacqueline Hingston
- NAIDOC Female Elder of the Year—Patricia Frank
- NAIDOC Male Elder of the Year—everybody knows this person—Ross Jakamarra Williams
- NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement Award—Pat Brahim.

Although it was not part of the official NAIDOC Week, we also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Tennant Creek Power Station on 11 July. During its five decades of operation the Tennant Creek Power Station has done more than keep the lights on; it has powered opportunity, enabling growth of the local economy, created jobs and apprenticeships and has improved the quality of life for people in our region. I thank all the staff who have worked at the power station over those 50 years. It was great to see some former power station managers at the event. I thank all the staff at Territory Generation for not only holding the event but also the work they do to keep the lights on every day.

It was a fantastic week with the Tennant Creek Show held on the Friday, and it was great to see so many people across the Barkly region enjoying the food, stalls, entertainment and rides. I thank all my CLP colleagues who travelled to the land of opportunity, as I like to say. As part of my duties as the local MLA I was pleased to award two MLA choice awards: one was given to Elly Newbold for her castle cake; and the other for Narron Morten from Alpurrurulam for his artwork.

I put on the record my congratulations to the Tennant Creek and District Show Society, the Showmen's Guild of Australasia and all the volunteers who helped make this year's show a huge success.

I give a special shout-out to the CWA in Tennant Creek which has had one of the most-attended stalls in Tennant Creek year-in and year-out for many years. To all the CWA ladies in Tennant Creek, thank you once again for the work you do. It is not only the cups of tea and coffee, the great soup, fresh sandwiches and the scones; everything they do helps to make the Tennant Creek Show a real success. Thank you to all at the CWA.

The following morning, on Saturday after the show, I attended my second parkrun. I did not run, but I walked the event. You do not have to run; you can walk. I saw Jo Hersey, the Member for Katherine, running fast past me. The Member for Blain was with me in the morning. We enjoyed the walk.

I put on the record the volunteers who are making parkrun a fantastic event in Tennant Creek. As I said, it is the second event. In particular, Zoe Bolton and Mary Kingham-Bradley have done all the work behind the

scenes with other volunteers to bring parkrun to Tennant Creek. That is held each Saturday now at Lake Mary Ann. Thank you to everybody involved in that.

In closing, thank you to everybody involved in NAIDOC Week, those holding the event at the power station and the show committee and volunteers for a great week in Tennant Creek.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.