

Legislative Assembly
of the Northern Territory

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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 84

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Deputy Chief Minister, I present a Bill titled Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 84, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The Bill is to amend the *Bail Act*, *Youth Justice Act 2005*, *Correctional Services Act 2014* and the Youth Justice Regulations 2006. The purpose of the Bill is to strengthen the youth justice system, address identified operational legislative issues, improve community safety and strengthen safeguards for vulnerable young people. The Bill delivers the final tranche of the Northern Territory government's youth justice reform agenda and supports the government's commitment to reducing reoffending, delivering effective justice and reforming the justice system.

The reforms contained in this Bill have been informed by operational experience, implementation of previous reforms and consultation across government. A significant component of the Bill strengthens the youth diversion framework. Diversion is a critical mechanism for holding young people accountable while addressing the causes of offending and reducing unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system. The Bill establishes a clearer statutory framework for diversion programs by providing for ministerial approval of diversion programs, strengthening reporting and information-sharing arrangements, expanding diversion pathways available to police and the courts and supporting greater consistency in diversion outcomes.

The Bill also completes the transfer of responsibility for the administration of diversion programs and youth justice conferences to the Department of Corrections. These reforms will strengthen accountability, improve coordination and support more effective rehabilitation outcomes for young people.

The Bill also introduces a temporary repatriation order framework. This reform addresses a longstanding operational gap that can arise when a young person is ordered to be released from detention and there is no responsible adult immediately available to assume care for that young person. The existing legislative framework does not provide a clear mechanism to safely manage these circumstances.

The Bill establishes a court-supervised framework allowing the Chief Executive Officer responsible for youth justice to temporarily assume daily care and control of the young person while reasonable steps are taken to reunify the young person with a responsible adult. Importantly, a temporary repatriation order may only be made where the court is satisfied the order is in the young person's best interests.

The framework includes clear safeguards, oversight and statutory limits. If reunification cannot be achieved within seven days, responsibility for the young person transitions to the child protection system in accordance with the legislation. The aim of this framework is to return a youth to a responsible adult for the youth unless it becomes apparent that the youth is in need of care and protection.

These reforms provide a clear legislative pathway that supports the safety and wellbeing of young people during a period of transition from detention into the community. The Bill also strengthens Youth Justice court processes. The amendments clarify the circumstances in which a detained young person may be required to physically attend court and support greater use of audiovisual appearances for procedural matters. These reforms are intended to reduce unnecessary transportation of detainees, improve operational efficiency and maintain appropriate judicial discretion where physical attendance is required in the interests of justice.

The Bill also modernises the psychiatric assessment framework. The amendments recognise cognitive impairment and contemporary understandings of mental health and ensure courts have access to appropriate psychiatric advice where questions arise regarding criminal responsibility or a young person's ability to effectively participate in proceedings.

A further group of amendments strengthens the management and operation of youth detention centres. The Bill establishes a legislative framework for modified management plans for detainees whose conduct or circumstances present ongoing risks to their own safety, the safety of others or the security of a detention centre. The framework provides clear safeguards, review requirements and accountability mechanisms while supporting the management of complex detainees.

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The Bill also strengthens emergency response arrangements within youth detention centres. The amendments provide greater clarity regarding the circumstances in which police officers, correctional officers and correctional service dog handlers may assist youth detention centres during emergencies and escape situations.

These reforms address legal and operational issues identified through experience and ensure appropriate powers exist to maintain safety, security and good order within youth detention centres. The Bill modernises provisions relating to escape offences and clarifies aspects of the use-of-force framework where external assistance is provided.

The Bill further amends the *Bail Act 1982* to clarify the operation of electronic monitoring conditions The amendments make clear that police-administered electronic monitoring operates as an interim measure pending the completion of a suitable assessment, after which the court must review the bail decision and determine whether—if bail is to be granted or varied—ongoing non-police administered electronic monitoring remains appropriate. These reforms provide greater consistency and clarity for courts, police and supervising agencies.

Taken together, the reforms contained in this Bill strengthen community safety, improve operational effectiveness, support rehabilitation and provide stronger safeguards for young people interacting with the youth justice system.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr EDGINGTON (on behalf of Minister for Corrections): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 23 December 2026.

Motion agreed to.

SENTENCING AND SEXUAL OFFENCES (EVIDENCE AND PROCEDURE) AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 85

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Sentencing and Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 85, and table the explanatory statement.

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

For too long in the Territory, victims of sexual violence have watched as the justice system afforded sex offenders legal entitlements that are not available anywhere else. Through automatic suppression orders, accused sex offenders have been able to hide behind the law. Through good character references, convicted sex offenders have been able to reduce their sentences.

For far too long, the rights of sex offenders have been elevated above the rights of victims. It is timely that the reforms we introduce today come as we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, because it is almost always women and children who pay the price.

The reforms we introduce today are about balancing the basic principles of our justice system with the rights and needs of our victims of crime and are about strengthening public confidence in our legal process. Ultimately, though, they are about putting victims back at the heart of our justice system.

I will start with suppression orders. Currently, if you are accused of a sexual offence in the Northern Territory, your identity is automatically suppressed until you are committed for trial or sentence. Months can pass between when you first appear in court and when you are finally committed for trial. In some cases, it may be years. We are the last jurisdiction in the country with such a strict suppression order regime, and it is time to fix that.

The Bill introduced today amends clause 7 to end automatic suppression orders earlier in the court process. Instead of continuing until committal for trial or a plea of guilt, the automatic suppression can end after the defendant's first court appearance. What this means is that an accused sex offender can be named after their first appearance before the Local Court, a matter of days or weeks after their charges are laid, rather than remaining automatically protected for months or years.

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This brings the Territory's laws in line with other jurisdictions, including South Australia. However, just as in other jurisdictions there are a number of safeguards which exist to protect natural justice and, most importantly, the safety and interests of the victim.

Section 6 of the *Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Act* will continue to operate making it a criminal offence to publish the identity of a complainant or any information that could identify them unless the complainant is an adult, has the capacity to consent, provides written consent and all proceedings in relation to the sexual offence are finalised.

Section 9 of the Act will also continue to apply to reinforce these protections requiring the court to consider the wishes of the complainant when someone applies to the court to publish information that identifies the complainant of a sexual offence. To be clear, an adult complainant may only be identified where they voluntarily provide written consent to do so. In addition, the new section at 12A also makes sure that a person can still apply for a suppression order under the *Evidence Act*. These broad powers allow the court to impose a non-publication order in the interests of both the victim and the administration of justice.

We have struck a balance between competing principles which go to the basis of our legal system. That includes the presumption of innocence: you are innocent until you are proven guilty and no trial by media should rob you of that fundamental right. That is why an accused sex offender cannot be named until there is enough evidence for a matter to be brought to the court for a first appearance. We also have to balance the fundamental right to a fair trial.

Court matters must be free from prejudice and contempt especially for the victim. Victims often have to relive their trauma, retell their story, be cross-examined and, at times, be brought face to face with their abuser. A victim should be entitled to justice and their offender should face consequences, but they can only do that if a fair trial takes place.

We also have to balance those protections with transparency. The principle of open justice is essential if we want to continue to rebuild public confidence in the legal system. Without confidence in the system, victims may not come forward and offenders may not face justice and communities may not feel safe. The balance we have struck unmasks offender while protecting victims; it puts the rights of community safety at the centre. In doing that we are creating a scenario where more victims and more witnesses feel confident enough to speak up and seek justice themselves.

This is the right balance. Victims are the focus; justice is the outcome; and offender's entitlements are at the bottom of the pecking order. That is exactly what Territorians expect.

When it comes to convicted sex offenders, there is an outdated mechanism that it is time we addressed. Right now, in the Northern Territory, most convicted sex offenders can lean on their previous good character to try to bargain for a weaker sentence. Currently section 5(2)(e) of the *Sentencing Act* requires a court to consider an offender's character when sentencing. People convicted of the most disgusting kinds of sexual violence are able to tap their mates on the shoulder and ask for a character reference for a judge to consider when they are deciding on a sentence—a rapist asking his drinking buddy to talk about how he is a good bloke; an abuser asking her work mates to talk up how she is a model citizen. Victims are forced to sit through glowing references about the person who sexually abused, assaulted or raped them all because a convicted sex offender is trying to get a discount on their sentence.

Territorians have rightly had enough of this kind of thing. That is why we are changing the law. We are extending the removal of good character references to all sexual offences in the criminal code with strict and limited exceptions. Our new laws require to completely disregard an offender's good character when sentencing for any sexual offence, regardless of the victim's age or whether their reputation helped to facilitate the offending, with very few exceptions.

Victims will no longer have to relive their trauma while others sing their offender's praises during the abuser's sentencing. That is what putting victims first looks like. Serious offenders deserve serious consequences, no discounts, no excuses, no special treatment.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 23 December 2026.

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Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 83

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Private Security Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 83, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the *Private Security Act 1995* in order to modernise the regulatory framework for the private security industry to enable it to remain contemporary and responsive to the expectations of industry and the community.

The Act commenced more than 30 years ago. Since then, the private security industry has grown considerably in size and in the range of services it provides. Security officers now work across licensed venues, major events, retail, public transport and critical infrastructure. The current framework needs to be amended to reflect the broader range of functions across a variety of settings that the sector now operates in.

The Bill introduces several key amendments. Firstly, the Bill would consolidate the existing categories of security officer and crowd controller into a single category of security officer. In practice, individuals undertaking general security duties are frequently required to hold both licences in order to perform the full range of functions expected of them. This reflects the significant overlap between the two roles. The consolidation will enable a person licensed as a security officer to perform all functions previously divided between the two categories, reducing inefficiency, duplication and licensing costs.

Secondly, the amendments will permit the director under the Act to issue a provisional licence to an applicant who is waiting for fingerprint clearances but meets all other eligibility requirements. This amendment is in direct response to feedback received from the sector during consultation which indicated that applicants frequently experience significant delays in obtaining mandatory clearances.

The granting of a provisional licence remains at the discretion of the director, who must be satisfied that it is appropriate in the circumstances. This will include considering any matters disclosed in a name check conducted through police, which will reveal any relevant criminal history and, in addition, provisional licence may be subject to conditions including supervision requirements.

The Bill clarifies the definition of 'public place' under the Act to capture the broader range of locations where private security personnel now operate. The definition now relates to any place to which the public have or are permitted to have access, regardless of whether or not they have to pay to enter. This includes places such as public parks and shopping centres.

The amendments in the Bill seek to strengthen competence and compliance standards across the industry. In particular, the director will be able to prescribe mandatory refresher training requirements for licensees to undertake at prescribed intervals with a view to maintain consistent competency levels across the industry.

The Bill also provides the regulator with practical and proportionate tools to address misconduct and compliance breaches under the Act. At present, the regulator's options are limited to suspending, cancelling or refusing to renew a licence where grounds for disciplinary action are established. The Bill introduces a graduated range of disciplinary actions including a reprimand, a requirement to undertake training, issuing fines, as well as imposition of conditions on a licence. This allows the regulator to respond to compliance issues proportionately.

The director will also have the discretion to publish complaint outcomes, which promotes transparency and accountability across the industry.

These reforms deliver a more modern and efficient regulatory framework that reduces red tape for industry, supports workforce participation and strengthens regulatory safeguards. In doing so, they support economic activity while ensuring appropriate standards of conduct, compliance and accountability are maintained for the benefit of all Territorians.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

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Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 23 December 2026.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Northern Territory Economy – The Fast Growing in the Nation

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I deliver the ministerial report on the Northern Territory economy, the fastest growing in the nation, notified on 24 November 2026.

I take great delight to speak about the Territory economy, its growth and our responsible budget management.

On 6 May the Leader of the Opposition in her reply to the 2026–27 budget stood in this Chamber and said:

The CLP inherited strong conditions but failed to deliver growth.

I will deal with growth first. The ABS has now published the results for 2025–26. Guess what? Australia's economy grew by 2.3%; Queensland grew by 3.1%; and the Northern Territory grew by 3.2%, the highest in the nation. That is what growth is.

Perhaps the Member for Arnhem could tell the Assembly which state or territory she thinks we should have beaten. I do not think there was anybody else; I checked the table and there is not one. That is what growth is. As for the strong conditions we inherited, as the Member for Arnhem claimed, I will come back to them because I have the accounts too.

Ms Uibo: I would hope so; you are the Treasurer.

Mr YAN: I pick up on the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. I wonder whether she agrees that our economy should be growing. Do you not agree that the economy should be growing? Do you not agree that Territorians should have a strong economy and that strong economy is good for Territorians, or do you think we should go back to what was happening under Labor with our economy going backwards? I wonder what the Leader of the Opposition expects of the economy.

In March this year I told the Assembly that Territorians were entitled to judge this government on three things: did we deliver growth, certainty and security? Today we have the figures to do that, so let us put them against those tests. Are more Territorians finding work? Can a Territory business see enough work ahead to employ the next person? Can we pay for the services those workers and their families depend upon?

First, I go to growth. In the May budget Treasury expected employment to grow by 1.1% in 2025–26. The midyear report shows that grew by 2.1%, and that difference matters. Across the Territory there were more people going to work than we expected when I stood and delivered the budget this year. For a young apprentice in Alice Springs, that first full week on the tools means wages in the bank and experience that can carry them through a working life.

In May the Leader of the Opposition wanted to know about state final demand. That is what households, businesses and governments spend and invest in the Territory. She said that I should give the Assembly the figures. I am happy to oblige. We know that spending fell last year. In the May budget Treasury expected it to fall again this year by 0.7%. Treasury now expects that to grow by 2.8%. That is a turnaround of 3.5 percentage points in the outlook for spending at home in the Territory.

Those numbers matter. The Member for Arnhem was keen to discuss that measure when it had a minus sign in front of it, so I look forward to her contribution today now that there is a plus sign in front of it.

Across the whole economy Treasury has lifted its growth forecast for this year from 5.8% to 7.1%.

I go to my second point: certainty. Anyone who has had to put a price on a job knows the difference between a customer saying that there might be work next year and a customer asking, 'When can you start?'

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At Nolans, 135 kilometres north of Alice Springs, construction has begun. KGL has made the final investment decision on its Jervois Copper Project. I met with the proponents of Jervois last week. In the Beetaloo, exploration appraisal work is increasing. Those decisions are among the reasons that Treasury expects business investment to grow by 12.8% this financial year.

I want members to think about what having Nolans and Jervois move ahead means for the people in Central Australia. If you run a workshop in Alice Springs, a single order might keep your crew busy for a fortnight. A chance to supply two projects gives you a reason to price another hoist, talk to the bank or put on someone who can learn the trade. You can have all the confidence in the world, but the bank will still want to see who your customers are.

Let us talk about the Beetaloo. Tamboran reported spending $19.1m with Territory businesses in 2023–24. The following year it spent $36.1m. That is $17m more with Territory suppliers in one year from just one company in the Beetaloo. members can argue about the gas industry for as long as they like, but the firms that did the work know what those invoices are worth.

There is a reason I have argued for Territory firms to get a look at the next round of work. An interstate crew can fly home when the job is finished, but an Aboriginal business in the Barkly and its employees are still there. If you give that business a chance to build up its equipment and skills on one contract, it can compete for the next one on better or equal terms. That is how more of the benefits stay in the Territory.

Of course, the government has a job to do as well. A business needs an answer to its development applications. Every month it waits can mean another month of paying to hold the land, another quote that expire and another contractor that has taken work elsewhere by the time the phone rings.

The Business Council of Australia compared decision times across the country. For development applications worth more than $30m, the Territory had the fastest average decision time of anywhere in the country. Standard application assessment times improved by 19% on the previous year. That second result matters to the local operator that will never lodge a $30m application because they are entitled to a timely decision on their shed extension as well.

Let us talk about payroll tax. Under Labor, the threshold was $1.5m. After eight years and three Chief Ministers, when Labor handed over the keys it was still $1.5m. We took the threshold to $2.5m and took payroll tax off the wages of apprentices and eligible trainees. What does that actually mean in dollar terms? Take an independent Territory business with $2m in taxable wages, all paid here. Under the rules Labor left behind, the annual payroll tax bill was $34,375. What is it under our threshold? Zero. The owner can tell you what that money will do in their business, and I can tell you exactly which decision in this parliament put it back in their hands.

That brings me to security. For most families, it starts with steady work, enough money coming in to meet the bills and some confidence that the kids can grow up and find a future here. The evidence is mounting that more families are choosing to make a future in the Territory. We expect this trend to continue. While southern state economies are feeling miserable at the moment, the Territory is the standout growth economy, and the proof is in the numbers.

The Territory's population grew by an estimated 1.5% last financial year. Treasury expects growth of 1.4% in each of the next two years. That means more customers for local businesses, more patients at clinics and more kids turning up at schools. This is where the strength of the economy and the state of the budget meet. Those families need services every year. A government has to be able to pay for them every year, which brings me back to those strong conditions the Opposition Leader says that she left us.

Let us have a look at that a bit more closely. In Labor's last full financial year, general government operating expenses exceeded revenue by $638m. At 30 June 2024 net debt was just over $9bn. The previous Labor government was putting more than $1bn in debt on the Territory every year that it was in government. What exactly was the strength in that position? Which of those two numbers would the Member for Arnhem put on a Labor how-to-vote card?

Consider the Health budget. As I reported in March, Labor left $120m in base funding for health pressures with an end date of the 30 June 2025. We found, when we come to government, a $1.4bn black hole of cliff funding. The previous Labor government was hiding funding commitments to make its outer years look good. That is what we found when we came to government. Did anyone opposite expect the patients to stop coming on 1 July when they did not include base funding for health pressures past June? Of course they did not.

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The need continued, but we put the funding back. It is easy to make the forward estimates look healthier if you give the money an expiry date and leave the next government to explain it to a hospital or a patient.

Labor understood there was a problem. In 2019 its Chief Minister announced a budget repair plan. The Territory was to get back to a fiscal surplus in 2027–28. By the pre-election outlook in August 2024, the projected return moved to 2031. They spent five years repairing the budget and managed to push the finish line date back three years. That takes some explaining, particularly from the party now offering the rest of us advice on budget management. I can tell you now that I will not take financial advice from those opposite.

I will apply the same test to our figures in this year's Mid-Year Report. Revenue this financial year is forecast to be $155m higher than in May. Net debt this year is forecast at $12.453bn. That is $102m less than we expected in May. Debt growth is the lowest of all states and territories at 2.1% over the forward estimates. This is the lowest of states and territories and after billion-dollar deficits year after year under Labor, this is an extraordinary result and one we should be proud of.

Treasury now expects the cost of running government to exceed revenue by $152m this year. In May the forecast of that was $42m. Two things help explain that change. Hospitals and clinics were revalued, which increased the depreciation expenses recorded in our budget. That accounting change has no cash cost this year. Some work budgeted for last year has also carried over, so the spending now falls in this financial year.

Treasury expects revenue to cover operating costs again next year, with a forecast operating surplus of $126m. By 2029–30 that surplus is forecast to reach $370m. That means revenue is expected to cover the day-to-day cost of services with money left over to help pay for infrastructure.

On the broader measure, which includes our government businesses and net capital investment, the fiscal deficit narrows from just over $1bn this year to $9m in 2029–30. That is through hard work and discipline.

I started with the Opposition Leader's assessment that this government has failed to deliver growth. I leave her with a question she can explain in her contribution. When she gets up next to reply, which part of the record does she want to defend—the eight years Labor left the payroll tax threshold untouched, the budget repair plan that finished further away from surplus than when it started or her assessment in May of the economy that went on to now lead Australia in growth at 3.2%?

For our part, the job from here is clear: get more Territory business into work at Nolans, Jervois, Mount Bundy and, of course, the Beetaloo; give a young Territorian a chance to learn a trade on one of those many projects and then use it here after construction finishes.

We need to keep the budget under control so the services a family counts on are there when they need them. That is what a Finocchiaro CLP government means by growth, certainty and security—more Territorians in work, more Territory businesses with a reason to hire and a government prepared to front this Assembly and account for every dollar that it spends. That is what is about; every dollar that we spend is not our dollars. It is public dollars, taxpayers' dollars. We need to make sure that every dollar that we spend, every dollar that goes out of our door, is spent wisely for the benefit of Territorians.

I listened at length last week to Michele Bullock, the Governor of the Reserve Bank. She spoke at length about government spending and what it means when governments overspend. She spoke about supply and demand. It was a clear message that came from the governor; that is, if governments spend money, it has to provide an economic benefit to the state or territory where it is spent. It has to improve productivity, because then productivity improves the bottom line. We know that a strong economy means a strong Territory and a strong Territory means a better place for Territorians. That is what it is all about.

We are working hard to make sure that our economy grows. Through our red tape reduction we are getting out of the way of business. That shows up in the records we have received from the Business Council. We need to create that path of least resistance for investment to flow, and that is what we are doing. We are getting out of the way of business. We are making sure the regulatory environment is appropriate to make sure that businesses and investors are doing the right thing. We re seeing in our numbers now that investors are coming to the Territory. They are willing to spend here because they can see the benefits of the Territory longer term.

Again, that is shown by our numbers: 7.1% in growth over 5.8% in our May budget and 2.1% employment growth, which means more Territorians in work with employment growing, well below the expected average of 1.1%. Business investment is forecast to grow by 12.8% this financial year, creating opportunities for our local contractors, tradies and suppliers. Major projects are moving ahead, and I have spoken at length about

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Nolans and Jervois but there is also Mount Bundy and the investment taking place in Tennant Creek with the gold mines.

We have had population growth at 1.4% above a 1.2% forecast. We have seen $155m in higher revenue which is strengthening out ability to meet our bills—that horrendous debt left to us by the previous government—and we are slowing that ship down. I use the analogy of the gas ships coming into our harbour; they are big vessels moving fast, and they take time to slow down to pull up at the wharf. We are doing that work, because we are seeing our debt slowly reducing. Under Labor they would have kept that gas ship full tilt at the wharf until it hit and exploded and God knows what would happen then.

I table the 2026–2027 Mid-Year Report, and I will provide an electronic copy to the Table Office.

I move that the report be noted.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I think it took about 40 seconds before the Treasurer started talking about me and Labor, rather than just doing his job and providing the report which he tabled at the last moment, so I do not get a chance to look at it. I will do that once I have an opportunity after my contribution to the report this morning.

The Treasurer was quoting me from May 2026. I am glad that my words stuck in his brain; it is quite comforting to know—quotes from my May budget reply, which was six months ago; that is great. I am glad that the Treasurer and whatever research his staff are doing by going back to earlier this year and using my response is so profound by the CLP government to quote me. I am happy that they listen to my words or that they go back and research my words and put it in the minister's statement and the report he is providing. It is great that I have that high standing in the Treasurer's office as the shadow Treasurer.

We were talking about the Territory economy, so making sure we can reflect what Territorians are experiencing on the ground. What we are hearing sounds different to the glowing report that the Treasurer is providing. A very dry and unpersonal report from the Treasurer in terms of addressing the needs and concerns for Territorians regarding the cost of living. The Treasurer did some media this morning; I saw him at the front steps of parliament. I am guessing it was related to the ministerial report today on the Territory's economy.

I was waiting for an exciting announcement stating, 'Hey we've done the mid-year financial report. Guess what? We will make sure that Territorians who are struggling with the cost of living get relief, and the CLP government will give you X, Y and Z because we know it is a tough time for many Territorians in businesses in the lead-up to Christmas.' He spoke about cricket. We saw no announcement from the Treasurer in the lead-up to this ministerial report on the Territory economy. There was no acknowledgment of Territorians doing it tough or of businesses struggling and anticipating big challenges in the next few months. It is all hunky-dory in the eyes of the CLP and the Treasurer.

They are out of touch, and it is disappointing to see no cost-of-living relief measures by the CLP government announced today or even alluded to in the Treasurer's ministerial report. He talked about how great the Territory's economy is, but there are no Territorians benefiting from that in our electorates and businesses. Stakeholders and organisations have raised this with us and, I assume, with the CLP government many times in the last few months. It is disappointing to see no announcement in the lead-up to Christmas regarding much-needed relief and no ideas on how Territorians can have some relief in their pockets at a time when many people are doing it tough.

Listening to the CLP members opposite congratulate themselves on the performance of the Territory economy, we would be forgiven for thinking that Territory businesses, which have been calling for more work and certainty and security for jobs and contracts, are thriving; every Territorian has more money in their pocket; and opportunities are abundant across the Northern Territory. Everyone should just be quiet and thankful is pretty much the message we are getting from the Treasurer.

I strongly encourage CLP government members to spend less time reading their media releases and more time reading the reports published by the Department of Treasury and Finance because those reports tell a different story. There is a fundamental difference between growing the Territory economy and growing the prosperity of Territorians.

Mrs Hersey: Do you not believe the ABS statistics? That is what it sounds like.

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Ms UIBO: I am sure the Member for Katherine hears it in her electorate but is too frightened to stand up and say what her constituents and the businesses are telling her. I go out and listen. Even though I do not represent Katherine, I listen to those constituents when they talk to me in the shopping centre when I am home—the few times I get to go home.

The value of gas we export overseas means little to families in the Territory struggling to put food on the table, small businesses struggling to meet their operating expenses and a construction company wondering where its next contract will come from. That has been one of the most eye-opening conversations I have had across the length and breadth of the Territory. Unfortunately, it is not isolated to one part of the Territory or one type of region; it is in the Top End, Central Australia and urban, regional, remote and very remote areas.

We hear unfortunate stories from contractors and businesses which are worried about the lack of certainty and the lack of a visible pipeline of works for the construction industry to sustain employment and opportunities for workers in the Territory and grow their businesses; rather, they are thinking about how they will compete when the Brisbane Olympics infrastructure ramps up even more in Queensland.

The CLP government beating its chest about the performance of the Territory economy at a time when many Territorians are struggling to make ends meet demonstrates how out of touch the CLP has become in just over two years. Before members opposite start to get a bit excited or dislocate their shoulders patting themselves on the back, perhaps they should examine where the economic growth they are claiming credit for came from.

Almost 70% of the Territory's headline economic growth in the last financial year came from a single industry supported significantly by increased gas and gold production. The Territory Treasury identifies the resumption of production at Darwin LNG and increased output from Ichthys as key drivers from our export performance. The final investment decision for the Barossa Gas project was made in March 2021 under the former Territory Labor government. The associated investment in extending the life of Darwin LNG was initiated at that same time.

In August 2024 the former Labor government signed a long-term gas supply agreement with Tamboran Resources, helping to establish the commercial foundations for development of the Beetaloo Sub-basin. The foundations of the Arafura Nolans rare-earths project were laid over many years, with mineral leases granted under the former Territory Labor government and a Commonwealth funding package worth $840m which was announced in March 2024.

These projects did not just suddenly materialise because the CLP won the election in August 2024; they are the culmination of years of work by businesses, investors, traditional owners, public servants and previous governments. The CLP inherited a significant pipeline of economic development opportunities and is now attempting to rewrite history by presenting all the work as the economic competence of its own measures. That is not the truth. Turning up to cut the ribbon on a project that was many years in the making does not constitute an economic strategy. Sacking a responsible CEO and not telling people where he went does not mean that the minister did any of the work and should gain the credit for it.

If members opposite genuinely want to understand the economic conditions facing Territorians, they should look beyond gross state product and examine what is happening within our domestic economy. State final demand, pressures, consumption and investment provide an important indication of the level of economic activity occurring in the Territory.

In 2025–26 Territory state final demand contracted by 1.8%. Total investment in the Northern Territory contracted by 16%. The government's own Treasury report for the June quarter reveals that business investment declined by 6.6% compared with the same quarter of the previous year. Public investment declined by 24.8%. General government investment declined by an extraordinary 32.3%. These are not figures produced by our Labor opposition; they are figures published by the CLP government's own Treasury department.

They expose a government that has failed to manage a foreseeable transition for the Territory economy. We knew that the construction phase of the Barossa project was coming to an end. We knew that the transition from the construction-intensive phase to the production-intensive phase would have consequences for employment, local contractors and the demand for services. Any government with a basic understanding of the Territory economy should have recognised the importance of having a pipeline of public infrastructure projects ready to absorb that capacity. Instead, at precisely the time when the government investment was needed to support economic activity, the CLP allowed it to fall dramatically.

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The consequences of that failure are becoming increasingly apparent in employment figures in the NT. According to the October Labour Force report, trend employment in the Northern Territory declined by 0.8% over the past year. Nationally employment increased by 1.1%. The Territory recorded the second-weakest employment performance of any Australian jurisdiction. Our trend unemployment rate has increased by 5%, while workforce participation has declined by 1.5 percentage points over the past year.

The October Internet Job Vacancy Report revealed that online job advertisements have declined by 7.1% over the past year, which is the largest decline of any Australian jurisdiction. Advertisements for sales workers have declined by 13.6%, while advertisements for community and personal services workers have declined by 15.7%.

These figures represent diminishing opportunities for young Territorians entering the workforce, people seeking employment to support their families and workers looking for a better-paying job to meet the rising cost of living. What comfort are those Territorians supposed to take from the Chief Minister telling them that they live in the fastest-growing economy in the country, particularly when the cost of living in the Northern Territory is becoming increasingly unaffordable?

In September Darwin's inflation rate reached 5.2%, the second highest of any capital city in Australia. Housing costs increased by 7.6% and transport costs increased by 10.6%, yet Territory wages increased by just 3.3%. Private sector wages increased by only 3%. Territorians are effectively taking a pay cut in real terms while the government is congratulating itself on the economy's performance.

Nobody expects the Chief Minister to end the war in the Middle East—we are not being silly about that—nor do we expect her to resolve the global tariff disputes to bring international oil pressures under control. However, Territorians are entitled to expect that their government will take responsibility for the things that are within its control.

The CLP government made the decision in June this year i to increase power, water and sewerage tariffs by 5.3% for Territorians. It was the CLP government that established a public sector wages policy that entered a 3% annual bargaining cost limit. It is the CLP government that has allowed important cost-of-living assistance measures, including Sport Vouchers, Learn to Swim vouchers, back-to-school vouchers and Seniors Recognition Scheme payments to remain frozen while the cost of living is virtually skyrocketing.

Everything around us is increasing. The cost of essential service utilities above inflation does nothing to alleviate the economic pressures Territorians face. It does nothing for a restaurant that has to run refrigerators, freezers and air conditioning throughout the year, or a number of smaller manufacturers already struggling with the freight and insurance costs that they either have to absorb or eventually pass on to their customers. It does nothing for a pensioner living on a fixed income or a family trying to keep up with their mortgage repayments. Every additional dollar that a Territorian has to spend on an unavoidable household expense is a dollar they cannot spend at a local cafe, restaurant, retailer or supporting another Territory business.

The cost-of-living policy is economic policy. Making the Northern Territory a more affordable place is fundamental to attracting and retaining workers, supporting our businesses and the population growth of the Northern Territory. The CLP government's decision is making that task considerably more difficult and what is the CLP saving for

If they are saving for a rainy day guess what, it is raining now. They should be supporting Territorians at the time that they need it the most. We know what they are saving for, and it is not those cost-of-living measures for release. It is for a private prison and the CLP government has put all their eggs in one basket and that is the key priority that they want to save for.

Rather than helping our seniors and families, giving measures that will reduce costs for our businesses for their overhead, helping young people with their sports and school and being able to provide families with a little bit of extra cash in their hip pocket, the priority is a private prison. They are not saving for a rainy day, but a private prison and Territorians are starting to see and feel that at home, the bowser, grocery store and in their businesses.

Nowhere is the failure of the CLP government's economic management more apparent than its treatment of the Territory construction industry. Over the past year, Territory businesses have had to contend with cyclones, floods, disruption of freight networks, escalating insurance costs, international conflict, volatile fuel prices and global tariff war that they did not start. They demonstrated extraordinary resilience in circumstances well beyond our Territory construction control. These are people who put their own money on

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the line, employ Territorians, train apprentices, sponsor sporting clubs and contribute enormously to our Territory community fabric. Unlike the government, Territorians do not have the luxury of blaming someone else for their bills when they arrive. They cannot issue a media release when their payroll is due or blame the previous government when the supplier needs to be paid.

Territorians and businesses have to get on with the job. They should expect from their government a degree of certainty about the pipeline of public infrastructure works. Instead, in the year to the June quarter, construction activity in the Northern Territory declines by a whopping 25.7% in trend terms, and that is the worst result of any jurisdiction in the whole of Australia.

Nationally, construction activity increased by 4.5%. Public sector non-residential building activity in the Territory declined by 24%, and residential building approvals in September were down by 14.1% compared with the same last year in trend terms, raising further concerns about the future of pipeline of construction work. Against the backdrop, we have the CLP government that has failed to deliver almost half a billion dollars in promised infrastructure expenditure. Territorians who are missing out because of the decisions that the CLP is actively making.

In its original Budget 2025–26, the CLP committed to infrastructure expenditure of $2.737bn. By May this year, the commitment had been revised by $341m. Even after significantly lowering its own target, the government still managed to underspend by another $152m. The result is staggering, with $493m shortfall against its original budget, including $234m in Territory-funded capital works alone. That is almost half a billion dollars supposed to support economic activity, provide opportunities for local contractors, keep our Territory businesses thriving, keep Territorians employed and deliver infrastructure that all of our Territory communities so desperately need.

The Treasurer might see an underspend as a convenient improvement to his fiscal bottom line, but the Territory construction businesses can be the difference between retaining its workforce and making people redundant.

What members opposite need to understand is that the consequences of failing to deliver infrastructure extends well beyond a simple financial year. Preparing tenders is an expensive exercise and businesses commit considerable time and resources competing for government work, developing proposals, negotiating with subcontractors and ensuring that they have a workforce and equipment available to deliver projects.

Territorians are watching their purchasing power diminish, construction businesses are facing uncertainty about their future, employment is going backwards and the CLP government has failed to deliver hundreds of millions of dollars in promised infrastructure across the Northern Territory.

The CLP inherited a pipeline of major resource projects that benefited from extraordinary resilience of Territory businesses and received additional revenue from sources largely beyond its control, yet in areas where decisions could make a meaningful difference to the lives of Territorians, it has repeatedly fallen short under the CLP leadership.

Territorians deserve a government that is concerned about the size of their electricity bill as the size of the gas reports. Again, electricity, sewerage and water tariffs were raised by 5.3%, an active decision of the CLP government.

The Treasury has shown how out-of-touch he is with the financial pressures and struggles of everyday Territorians. Rather than announce some cost-of-living measures and relief today, he has gone on to show how blind he is to the challenges that everyday Territorians and our Territory businesses are facing without offering a hand up.

VISITORS
Malak Primary School

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am pleased to advise of the presence in the gallery this morning of students from Malak Primary School accompanies by their teachers. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your time here.

Members: Hear, hear!

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Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I welcome the Malak Primary School students.

Goodness, my ears are just about bleeding. I could not believe what was coming out of the Opposition Leader's mouth—gloom and doom. She cannot miss a trick on anything that she does not want to celebrate anything. There is a clear reason why they are on the opposite side. Their government froze wages for the public service and gave Territorians a sky-high debt, Opposition Leader. Short memories.

I speak to the ministerial report on the fastest growing economy in the country, contrary to what people just heard from the Opposition Leader's mouth. Last week, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' state accounts confirmed that in the 2025–26 financial year the Northern Territory economy grew by 3.2% to $36.5bn, the fastest growing of any state or territory and a far cry from under the previous government where we were last.

We came to government with a commitment to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. These were not slogans. These statistics confirm the work our CLP government has been doing is starting to move things in the right direction. We knew that to rebuild the economy we had to do everything we could to back Territory business. If you listen to the Opposition Leader, anyone would think it was so difficult and there was doom and gloom across the Territory.

That meant cutting red and green tape, reducing our payroll tax and taking payroll tax off apprentice and trainee wages allowing businesses to employ more tradies. This also allows business to speed up planning decisions so businesses can invest and grow.

As a previous business owner, I know all about that, which those on the other side have a long way to go before they even understand what running a business is all about.

We lifted the payroll tax threshold from 1.5 …

Ms Uibo: Who are you talking to? They are all doing fine, are they? What about Katherine?

Mrs HERSEY: You had your turn, Opposition Leader …

Ms Uibo: I know, but you are talking rubbish.

Mrs HERSEY: … pipe down or leave.

We lifted the payroll tax threshold from $1.5m to $2.5m.

The Business Council of Australia found the Territory had the fastest average assessment times in the country for developments worth more than $30m. Quicker decisions give business the confidence to invest and hire. Territory businesses are selling more to the world with goods exports rising by 17.8%.

Cruise tourism is bringing more business to local operators and the economic output has increased by nearly 33% over two years while every other state and Territory has recorded double digit declines. It is great to see the cruise ships coming into the harbour and enjoying our warmth and landscapes, spending money in the Territory and adding to our economy.

We have kept a firm grip on the budget as the economy has grown by covering $131m in unexpected disaster costs. Last year saw unprecedented weather events right across the Territory. We have had increased spending on health, education and community safety while delivering a $234m operating surplus. That is good fiscal management by the Treasurer, unlike what you believe from the Opposition Leader.

Rebuilding our economy is about backing Territory businesses to back themselves when a local contractor is weighing up whether to buy a second truck, take on an apprentice or bid for a bigger job. The decisions we make in government matter. I will give a recent example of a vote of confidence in our growing economy. I was honoured last week to attend and officially open Glen Gold Pastoral Company and Greenham's New Napier Valley Roads just south of Katherine actually in the Opposition Leader's electorate. I did not see the Opposition Leader there, and I never see her talk about the great things happening out in the Venn blocks or along Napier Road.

The partnership between Glen Gold and Greenham has invested $12m in building the yards which is a significant and serious investment in our region, let alone the price they have paid for the property. The Napier Valley Yards can hold 5,000 head of cattle hosting undercover feeding capacity, a registered road

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train, weighbridge, dipping facilities and the ability to produce high-quality fodder on-site, including sorghum, cavalcade and jarrah hay. Tim Edmonds and Peter Greenham describe it best, 'It's a cow hotel.'

I thank the partnership for investing in Katherine and I look forward to seeing the opportunities this new facility brings.

Major projects are moving ahead under our CLP government. Nolan's Rare Earths project is under construction in Central Australia. Jervois and Mount Bundy have reached final investment decisions, and exploration and gas is flowing, as we have seen recently from the Beetaloo. As we rebuild the economy in our year of growth, certainty and security we will continue to be optimistic and we will keep backing Territory business to back themselves.

The Territory is open for business and on this side of the Chamber we will continue to be fiscally responsible and get on with a growth certainty and security mindset. Territorians deserve it. After all, we are spending taxpayers' money and I thank the Treasurer for bringing on this ministerial statement.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, the CLP talks about the economy in smoke-and-mirror terms for two reasons. First, the economic growth that they are boasting about is largely outside their control and second, the vast majority of the so-called growth will never reach the pockets of ordinary Territorians.

When the Treasurer talks about the economy, he deliberately conflates overall economic activity with the economic benefits that Territorians share in. When the Treasurer says the Territory is the fastest growing economy in the country, what does he actually mean?

He does not mean we are the wealthiest population. He does not mean our wages are increasing the fastest. He does not mean we have created the most jobs or that we have the fastest growing employment. He does not mean the government has collected the most revenue to spend on services. And he certainly does not mean that Territorians are better off than they were last year or better off than people in other parts of Australia. What he means is that economic activity has increased and, in technical terms, that is a measure of the growth in value of all the goods and services produced in the Northern Territory over a given period.

You can think of it as how much money changing hands in the Territory and whether it was more than last year, but critically that is not a measure of how much money Territorians have in their pockets. It is not a measure of how much money the government has available to spend.

For example, when INPEX makes money selling gas that is liquefied at the Darwin LNG plant, that money is counted towards the Territory economy even if the profits flow straight to Japan. If 1,000 cattle are transported from Singleton Station to Darwin, the value added by transporting those cattle is counted in our economy. If the value of gold or other minerals mined in the Territory and sold overseas increases, our economy grows. If those commodity prices fall, our economy can fall.

Importantly, an increase in economic activity is not necessarily a good thing. Imagine an oil tanker crashed off the coast of the Territory, requiring a massive cleanup operation involving hundreds of workers. The value of that cleanup activity will contribute to the Territory's economic growth because money will be changing hands between the government and the cleanup contractors and workers being paid. That would be the case even if every worker flew in from interstate and not one Territorian was employed. A lot of the money counted in the Territory's economy never goes anywhere near a Territorian's hip pocket.

The other important thing to talk about is that economic growth is largely outside the government's control. The CLP is not making the Territory's economy grow simply by being in government. Economic activity rises and falls for all sorts of reasons, many of them unrelated to government policy, including international commodity prices and the value of minerals being exported. That distinction matters because it helps us understand what the Treasurer is telling us when he makes these big claims about the economy.

On 19 November the Treasurer issued a media release saying:

The Territory economy grew 3.2% to $36.5 billion in 2025–26, the fastest growth of any state or territory.

He is only talking about overall economic activity, which tells us little on its own what that means for Territorians. It does not mean they have more money in their pocket or that the cost of living has gone down; in fact, strong economic activity can coincide with increasing living costs. What is in the government's control, however, is government spending and the budget.

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Unlike economic activity, government spending has a direct impact on every Territorian and on the quality of our lives. It affects the care we receive in our hospitals, the condition of the roads we drive on, the wait times for an ambulance or police, the opportunities our kids have in schools and the government's capacity to recruit and, importantly, retain public servants. That is what Territorians should look at when the government talks about the state of the economy.

In that same media release, the Treasurer also said:

> *… the 2025–26 Treasurer's Annual Financial Report … recorded a $234 million general government operating surplus, a $1.12 billion turnaround from the previous year's operating deficit.*

I will talk about what that means because it sounds pretty good. A $234m surplus sounds like a government getting its finances in order and doing the right thing, but the government is actually telling us that it received $1.377bn more in revenue than it did in the previous year. Where did that money come from? An additional $710m in GST revenue—a little windfall there—which is supposed to help Territorians have access to the same services all Australians have across the country. There was another $260m in Commonwealth grants, which is funding tied to specific outcomes from the federal government, as well as $243m in mining royalties due to the increased price of minerals globally this year. None of this money represents an extraordinary achievement by the CLP government or its policies.

Although the government received $1.377bn in additional revenue, it increased its spending by only $257m, barely more than the mining royalties it received. What did Territorians get for that additional revenue? This question is especially important for the more than $700m in additional GST funding that is supposed to be spent on ensuring Territorians have access to similar services as all other Australians, regardless of where they live. With all that extra money, what additional services were funded? How much more was invested in our hospitals, schools, roads and essential services?

A $234m general government operating surplus is not the same thing as having solved the Territory's financial problems. It certainly does not tell us whether Territorians are better off. The government can point to economic growth figures and celebrate a return to operating surplus, but these figures only tell a sliver of the story.

The real test of an economy is not how much economic growth it generates; it is whether that activity translates into better lives for the people who live here. Whether people can afford to live here, whether our hospitals can provide the care people need, whether our children get the education and opportunities they deserve, and whether Territorians can see the benefit of the wealth that is being generated in their backyard—that is the economic performance that the government should be held accountable for, not just the headline growth figures.

There is another important measure that tells us something about how people are experiencing life in the Territory—migration. We just heard about population growth, but according to the ABS, in the year leading up to March 2026, more people left the Territory to live interstate. That is 15,879 people who left the Territory to live in interstate, while just 14,290 people moved here from other parts of Australia. That is a net loss of 1,589 people. They are people who chose not to stay here, to leave the Territory. They are the people that show we need to make the Territory a place where people want to stay and where they can thrive.

While the Treasury is celebrating the fastest growing economy in the country, more people are choosing to leave than are choosing to move here from elsewhere in the country. The Territory's overall population is still growing, largely because of overseas migration and natural population growth. But we are continuing to lose people to other places in Australia.

That that should worry all of us because economic growth is one thing, but creating a Territory where people want to stay, build a life, raise a family and see a future for themselves is another.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I am glad that I do not live in the pessimistic world that the Member for Johnston and the Leader of the Opposition occupy. They continue to persist in talking down on the Territory and the extraordinary times that we find ourselves living in. I find it truly baffling.

Let me set the record straight. I am here to contribute to the Treasurer's ministerial report and acknowledge this significant economic milestone for the Northern Territory. We are the fastest growing economy in the country. After years of languishing in the toilet, this is a moment of celebration. We are the smallest

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jurisdiction, and we are delivering the strongest rate of economic growth in the nation. It is an achievement worth celebrating. More importantly, it is an achievement we can build on.

As the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, I particularly welcome this result because it strengthens the economic proposition I have been taking directly to international investors, governments, industry leaders and trading partners. It reinforces the message that the Northern Territory is open for business, serious about investment and ambitious about the economic future.

The Finocchiaro CLP government's decision to restore a dedicated Asian Relations portfolio recognised a fundamental reality—our economic ambitions cannot be constrained by the size of our population. A geographical location, natural resources, agricultural capability, strategic infrastructure and entrepreneurial business community provides us with significant competitive advantages. But possessing these advantages and capitalising on them are two different things.

We must actively pursue opportunities, cultivate relationships, attract investment and ensure Territory businesses are positioned to participate in the economic activity that follows. That is precisely what I and my team have been working to achieve; since August, I have led delegations to Vietnam, Texas, Timor-Leste, and most recently, Jakarta. Each delegation has addressed different but complementary elements of our economic development agenda.

Our international engagement has two fundamental objectives: bringing investment into the Territory and taking Territory businesses to the world. Both are essential to sustaining the economic momentum outlined by the Treasurer today. In August, I led a delegation to Vietnam, accompanied by representatives of our international education sector and the NT Chamber of Commerce. International education was a central focus alongside opportunities to strengthen our agricultural, trade and investment relationships.

Our engagement in Ho Chi Minh City explored broader commercial partnerships across energy, critical mineral, agriculture and logistics. Strengthening our relationship with Vietnam forms part of our broader objective of diversifying our export markets.

In September I had the privilege of leading a delegation of 20 Territory businesses and four peak industry bodies to Texas in the United States. The delegation had a deliberate purpose; to ensure Territory businesses are positioned to capture the maximum economic benefit from the development of the Beetaloo Subbasin, a project that the Member for Johnston would have shut down.

I have spoken previously about what I refer to as the business of the Beetaloo, which is about considerably more than the extraction and sale of gas. It is about the entire economic ecosystem that can develop around that resource—engineering, construction, transport, logistics, manufacturing, maintenance, technology, professional services and, most critically, workforce development.

The questions for the Territory is how much of that economic activity we retain here; what can be awarded to Territory businesses; how many jobs will be filled by Territorians; how many new businesses it will enable; and how much of the wealth generated through the development of this resource will flow through to our economy.

These were the questions that underpinned our delegation to Texas. We took Territory businesses directly to one of the world's most established onshore energy markets to understand how its supply chains operate and how local enterprises have positioned themselves to participate. The delegation engaged with internationally recognised energy and service companies such as Baker Hughes, Halliburton, Liberty Energy and SLB.

Territory businesses gained firsthand exposure to established industry operations, service and supply yards, infrastructure and emerging technologies. Importantly, they were given opportunities to showcase their capabilities directly to international industry representatives. They were not simply observers, they were prospective suppliers, contractors and commercial partners.

One of the most significant observations from Texas was that the economic success of its energy industry extends well beyond the gas fields. Houston has become an international centre of technical expertise and energy services, while Midland and Odessa have developed substantial logistics and service capabilities.

These are important lessons in that experience for Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and the broader Northern Territory. We have an opportunity to develop our own centres of industry expertise and operational support, creating opportunities for the Territory, particularly our regional communities.

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At our Friends of the Territory reception in Houston we also announced the progression of a memorandum of understanding between our respective Chambers of Commerce, establishing a pathway for continued commercial engagement.

We travelled as Team Territory, demonstrating the depth of commercial capability that already exists within our jurisdiction.

As minister for Business, I do not want Territory enterprises to be spectators in the development of one of our most significant economic opportunities. I want them to be participants, contractors, suppliers, commercial partners and employers. The ultimate measures of the economic success of the Beetaloo will not simply be the volume of gas produced, it will be the businesses we build, the industries we establish, the jobs we create and the wealth we retain within the Northern Territory. That is true economic growth and reform.

In October I travelled to Timor-Leste to participate in the inaugural Darwin Dili Business and Investment Summit and Invest Timor-Leste 2026. Over 70 Territory businesses came with us. There is real interest in what the opportunities are within an economy that is growing at a speed unseen before in this Territory. It is something again that we should be celebrating, not talking down.

As Timor-Leste develops its infrastructure, agricultural industries, tourism sector and workforce capability, there are opportunities for Territory businesses to export their expertise. The cooperation agreement between our Chamber of Commerce and the Timor-Leste Australia Business Council demonstrated the practical industry led outcomes that our international engagement should facilitate.

Most recently I travelled to Jakarta to progress investment discussions across energy resources, enabling infrastructure and downstream industrial development. While our longstanding live cattle trade remains a cornerstone of our relationship with Indonesia, there is enormous potential to broaden our economic engagement. The work undertaken in Jakarta directly complements the work we undertook in Texas. In Texas we were building Territory business capability and establishing commercial relationships across the energy supply chain. In Jakarta, we were taking the Territory's investment proposition directly to prospective international investors. Those two objectives must go hand in hand. Attracting international capital is important, but building enduring local business capability is equally important. Indonesia possesses significant industrial and mineral processing expertise and the Northern Territory possesses substantial natural resources. We cannot limit our economic aspirations to the extraction and export of our raw commodities; we must be looking to downstream within the Northern Territory itself.

All these delegations were not isolated activities. We are showing that we are diversifying our markets and that we are growing the opportunity into the Territory.

As Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, I will continue to take the Northern Territory to the world and bring the opportunities of the world to the Northern Territory. Because of the work that we are doing, our economic future will not be determined simply by what is beneath our feet, but by what we have the ambition, determination and commercial foresight to build. Our responsibility is now to translate that momentum.

I commend the Treasurer on his ministerial report because that demonstrates exactly what we can expect as a return on the investment that we make.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, we promised Territorians a year of growth, certainty and security, and that is what we are delivering. For the first time in a long time, the Territory is making headlines around the world for all the right reasons. I am talking about more than the nonstop spotlight on our tourism appeal; it is about our remarkable economic recovery story.

After years of decline under Labor, things are finally turning around. In fact, last week the Australian Bureau of Statistics confirmed that the Territory is Australia's fastest-growing economy, growing by 3.2% to $36.5bn. We have hit record high employment numbers at just over 150,000 people in work and we are at the top of the country for construction, housing, red-tape approvals, household spending, mining and more. We know that a growing economy benefits all Territorians.

At the same time, we are repairing the eye-watering debt burden that Labor left Territorians two years ago. Eight years ago Labor inherited less than $2bn in net debt; it left Territorians with a $9bn debt which is a blowout of 450%. We are undoing that damage now. Despite record spending on health, education and

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community safety and the $130m in unexpected disaster costs, the latest results show a $234m surplus and a $1.12bn turnaround in our operating budget. Things are finally getting back on track.

As a proud Tourism minister, in my opinion it is our visitor economy that tells the best story. Our Visitor Economy Strategy aims to grow our visitor economy to $3bn and 1.7 million visits a year by 2032. We are powering towards those ambitious targets. The most recent data from Tourism Research Australia shows the Territory is surging ahead and leading the country in interstate visitor growth, which is up by 7.1%. We are also leading the country in international visitors, up by 9%, after four years of consecutive growth. We have reached a record $2.36bn in visitor spending, which is up by 24% in just one year.

The Australian Cruise Association revealed that once again we are bucking the national trend. We are the only place in Australia to record growth in cruise tourism. In two years the value of cruise tourism grew by 30% to $235m. That is double-digit growth two years in a row, despite double-digit declines in every other state and territory. I can tell you that retailers and hospitality businesses in the CBD and throughout Darwin know exactly how much those cruise ship passengers mean to them.

We have seen a similar story with our major events, including MXGP, Finke, Parrtjima, Barunga, Darwin Supercars, the NRL and the cricket. Many major events have broken records over the last two years. From Supercars to Finke, Parrtjima and GleNTi, all are record breaking, which is fantastic.

While music festivals are declining all over the country, BASSINTHEGRASS continues to grow, with more music festivals coming thanks to our event funding program.

At the same time, we have secured $100m in international conferences through to 2032. These events generate $28 for every $1 invested through NT Business Events. Next year will be our most jam-packed calendar of events ever.

People are coming to the Territory for these events and, of course, Territorians love them.

Hotel occupancy is also up across the Territory and it is even up in Alice Springs by 3% compared with last year. The stats show that our Visitor Economy Strategy is delivering results, despite all the global headwinds and rising costs. Many local businesses are reporting an exceptional peak season, despite all of that, so it is a fantastic achievement by them. As a government we are setting the environment to let them flourish.

As an example, the team at Threeways Roadhouse, in describing their supplies and needing more for visitors to purchase, said:

> *In all the years I have been here I think once I have ordered a full road train—this year I have done it five times …*

It is fantastic to hear that from Threeways.

None of these achievements happened by accident; they are the product of responsible fiscal management. They are the result of targeted investment in enabling infrastructure, fast-tracked approvals, red-tape reduction and a clear strategy to rebuild the Territory economy.

Compare that with Labor's track record: the economy was in free fall, there was a crime crisis, our lifestyle was decimated and billions of dollars were spent with nothing to show for it. The team opposite is divided. Those opposite continue to try to divide Territorians as well. They have not learnt anything from their election wipeout two years ago. They are out of touch with what Territorians want and expect. Their priorities are out of whack and out of order and the Labor leader is out of her depth.

Territorians will remember now and probably forever that the biggest threat to the Territory economy is Labor. The Leader of the Opposition was a teacher in her past life, so I will use an analogy that she will understand all too well. If I was grading Labor's economic report card, I would give Labor a big fat F for failure.

There was its failure to stand up to the federal Labor government on working holidaymaker changes. Even with its concessions, Labor's caps will cost the Territory economy. There was Labor's failure to stand up to Parks Australia and demand certainty for operators in Kakadu and its failure to stand up to its leader, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and fight for our cruise ship industry under the Coastal Trading Act. For those failures. Labor would get an F.

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Labor would also get an F for flipflops. Labor flipflopped on Lee Point to try to win a by-election in the middle of a housing shortage that it created. Labor flipflopped on fracking. It is divided on gas, energy security and mining. Labor flipflopped on data centres, trying to rob Territorians of a ripe economic opportunity. Labor also flipflopped on our wagering industry, our local bookmakers, the local jobs, trying to appease activists in Canberra while sacrificing the thousands of jobs, businesses and community groups that are supported by the industry. Failure and flipflops—that is their record. The truth is that Labor does not give an F about the Territory economy.

Meanwhile, we are focused on the only F that Territorians care about—that is, the future. The Territory's economic future is bright. Why? It is because we are creating the right settings, reducing red tape, investing in infrastructure, working with industry and ending government waste. Everybody hates waste.

We are delivering on our commitment to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle. Two years in we are just getting started.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I thank the Attorney-General and I am pleased to be the assistant Attorney-General because she obviously borrows my speech.

We are all a bit tired. Before I start, we have to limber up because, after CID last night, we are a bit tight. Here is a little exercise for everyone to release the tension: put the hands out; slowly raise the palms up; slowly lower the palms down. Do that; it will release all the tension. That is great.

I am conscious that members are a bit tired, so I will frame my comments on the Treasurer's report by taking a leaf out of that wonderful children's program, *Sesame Street*. Today's letter for the Attorney-General is the letter F.

Treasurer, the assessment made by the ABS that the NT economy is the fastest-growing economy at 3.2% is fantastic. There is an F letter. To deliver that result has required our Finocchiaro CLP government—there is another F letter—to be focused on the Territory's future. We need to be firm and act with fortitude in making the hard decisions. This is something Labor does not understand. We have delivered budgets that are fully funded. There is a double F—fully funded.

For those who do not know, we had a plan for the Territory's future which had rebuilding our economy as a key focus. We made it clear when we came into government what we would do. We have made a great start, but we are the first to acknowledge that we have a lot more to do. We need to keep our focus on that and not be distracted by Labor trying to push us in all different directions. Let us stay focused on rebuilding our economy, reducing crime and restoring our lifestyle.

That is where the Treasurer's ministerial statement really brings confidence to Territorians. Let us contrast this with the failure—as the Attorney-General said—of the Labor Party to grow our economy. In eight years in government it forgot about and ignored the future of Territorians. There we have more F words Labor might want to listen to.

What is really depressing in some ways is that this policy failure is being continued by the current leadership team of this rabble Labor opposition. The Member for Nightcliff continues his disastrous flip on housing policy. The Member for Gwoja has flopped on any ongoing support for our onshore gas industry. The current Leader of the Opposition—the emphasis is on 'current'; I do not know how long that will be because they are starting to go—continues to flap about her fragile and fragmented party and what it will do for the Territory.

There is a little editorial in today's *NT News*. I do not know whether people saw that. I quote the last part of that editorial:

> *It has not been a good year for Territory Labor. It says it wants to build more homes but its deputy Ed Smelt opposes an 800 home development at Lee Point not even in his electorate. It once backed gas but the majority of the team now opposes fracking, ignoring that this is an industry that will deliver thousands of jobs and economic wealth to the Territory. Its law and order policies that appear to care more about the rights of criminals than the victims are still the same …*
>
> *Enough said.*

That is a clear summary in today's *NT News.* The Labor Party needs to take a clear look at this.

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What does that mean? What does the electorate have? They have a clear choice going forward. They would stay with a unified Finocchiaro-led team focused on growing the Territory's future versus the flip, flop, flap of the rebel opposition. I have said before that one of the difficulties—I want to have a good opposition—is they just do not seem to hear from the community. They go off on their own little direction without hearing. I did offered free hearing tests; people know that too.

Going back to how can we convey this—I want our members over there and the Member for Barkly, the land of opportunity, to all watch this now because sometimes we have to talk to him in sign language. We have to teach them that they have to go to the mirror and think about their own actions. Here it is again, the flip, the flop and the flap. Do not interject, just quietly look over and try to give them a bit of encouragement. They will understand that they are failing and that they need to do a lot better. When we take this back to the F words—there are just so many F words that come here. We look at our policy approach; it is based on fact. It is factual, reality. We have to do the hard stuff.

Unfortunately, for the opposition there is more fiction. It is fictitious. I go back to the Treasurer's comments and his budgets. We do fully funded commitments. It is not easy; you have to make the hard decisions. You cannot do everything, but you do not make false promises—there is another word, false; this always comes up—versus the unfunded fanciful promises of the opposition.

They have now embarked on doing discussion paper after discussion paper coming out of their proverbial. Honestly? Come on, really. There is a word for that. A bit of flatulence comes out of there, I think. Having said that, they just do not understand the realities of this.

I go back to the Member for Nightcliff. I hear him so often in Consideration and Detail. He asks, 'Where is the risk assessment? We are at a plans, the targets?' I tell him that in all your discussion paper false promises you have been reading, I have not heard any of these and I certainly have not heard anything about the funding.

The one thing we can be totally certain of is the false promises of Labor. There will be no business case attached to it. They have form—bad form. There is another F word, bad form.

If we embark on their promises, it will be a repeat of the ship lift. It will be money going out the window, 'Do not worry about it, just let taxpayers fund it. Do not worry about the economy, just throw it this way.'

Was the Member for Nightcliff involved in the Tiger Brennan debacle? Could well be. 'There is another blowout. Do not worry about it. We do not need business cases. We will just find money.' Taxpayers' money; local peaceful money. That is just bad form.

Madam Speaker, you may be aware, but the Member for Araluen listened to one of the policy statements from the health discussion about the new Royal Darwin Hospital. They forgot the regions where they came from. There was no mention of Alice Springs. They do not care about their own electorates. They just come up with this fantasy fiction and it is a disgrace.

Let us get back to reality. You have got a firm choice. You can stick with a unified Finocchiaro-led government versus the rabble of a flip, flop, flap Labor opposition. I know which one I would choose, thank you very much.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I have some advice for the Member for Karama and the government. Get out of your cushy offices, stop flying business class across the world and living your designer lives. Get out and listen to everyday Territorians, because if you want to talk about the economy, they are the ones who are hurting under your government.

Government members come in here and talk tough and big about growing the economy. Let us be clear that the economy is going the way it is because this government has an astronomical amount of money in windfall GST revenue that has made its books look better. The economy is looking better in the Territory because this government has abandoned the bush. Its members are not spending money in investing in the bush. Where is the record investment they promised for roads, houses, infrastructure?

They talk big, but they do not deliver. When they come in here and talk about the economy, let us be clear, at least eight of the Territory's most major projects that are happening across the Territory in the regions did not magically just happen under the CLP government. Work was in place: environmental impact statements had been done. Studies and negotiations with traditional owners and pastoral groups had been done to get those projects up and running. They did not magically happen because the CLP came to government. Do

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not be fooled by the rubbish that the CLP tells you—that suddenly they got these projects up and running. There were long. processes in place

We back all parts of the Territory but we do not jump on a plane and run away in a business class flight—like the Member for Port Darwin living a high life and designer shopping while away or saying: 'Oh my God I was so busy I did not even get to do my designer shopping. Poor bugger me.'

Everyday Territorians do not get that luxury. They are not on over $250,000 a year, flying business class and trying to deliver flights. What major long-term investment have you delivered for the Territory? Nothing but short-term sugar hit fixes that make you look good on a press release and you look deadly when you take your selfie in business class, with people serving you from a trolley. That is what you get under this CLP. It is all rubbish and hysteria.

We care about the economy, but what are you doing? Where is the actual structural reform and work? This government talks big. All those major projects were already in the pipeline and happening. Regardless of who was in government at the last election, those projects were going be delivered in the Northern Territory.

The GST windfall, extra money, untied, that the Territory government gets from the Commonwealth Grants Commission and this government chooses to spend it in other areas. That money is for disadvantage and not supposed to pay for the shiny things that you all want. It is supposed to help people ease the cost of living and address disadvantage in the bush. But no, this government does not like investing in the bush.

The Member for Barclay cannot even honour his own election commitments in the bush. We cannot get commitments funded in the bush, as this CLP government promised to do. Under Labor, we will get a hospital, not a brand-new prison, because we believe that everyone should have access. We know that there is work to be done across the Territory's health network but, to everyone in the Northern Territory, particularly the northern suburbs, the Member for Karama thinks that we should not get new things. He thinks that there is nothing wrong with the Darwin hospital. Today he said that it is fine. It is not fine, it is falling apart and we need to do that work and need that investment as it is essential.

What this government forgets to do is acknowledge Indigenous participation in the economy. The Territory will never move forward under this government continually shutting out Aboriginal people in the economic opportunity space. The Territory does not work if you do not work with black people. You need to work with Aboriginal people, you need to work with us.

Over 50% of the Territory's landmass is proudly Aboriginal land; it always was and always will be. We need to work with traditional owners and grow the economy in their regions, not shut them out or continually demonise them about royalties, as this government does every opportunity it gets. What are the opportunities in their regions; is it mining, horticulture, agriculture or renewable energy?

So many Aboriginal people I know want to be involved in these conversations, but they continually get shut out or, if you are the environment minister, you change laws that take away from Aboriginal people. They take away water from Aboriginal people and change sacred sites laws, making it harder for Aboriginal people to protect their country and have economic development. But wait for it—Joshua Burgoyne, the king coloniser who says that he knows what is best for Aboriginal people and that he will change the Sacred Sites laws because he knows better than Aboriginal people. That is what you get under this government.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause, please.

Mr PAECH: I withdraw that. I know that the Member for Karama finds that offensive. I withdraw that I called the Member for Braitling a coloniser, but let us be absolutely clear ...

Madam SPEAKER: No, please pause, Member for Gwoja. You referred to the member by his name. Please refer to him by his title.

Mr PAECH: The Member for Braitling is the person I am referring to. He is the minister for Environment and the minister who is supposed to work with Aboriginal people, but every opportunity he gets, he comes in here and changes the laws to make it harder to work with them. Let us be clear when we talk about that.

You do not sell your house to pay off your mortgage, because then you have nowhere to live. We know the CLP loves making more people homeless; they shut down YiSSA. They have a 'three strikes to nowhere' policy, because that is what they do, but we need more people to come to the Territory. I have said that. The Territory has structural issues before it.

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We need to grow our population, grow our own source revenue and consider how we can do those things. But this government comes in and tries to claim credit for all this stuff that is not theirs. It is not a result of their work; it is a result of every small business owner who employs people, brings people to the Territory and does the hard work.

That is who has been growing the economy, not this government. It is the hardworking, everyday people in the Territory who are doing it tough, yet you decide to come in and pat yourselves on the back saying, 'Great job CLP, we are so good'. The CLP stands for the care less party, because you do not care about people.

You clearly do not care how hard people are doing it, because you have come in here to celebrate how the economy is great, saying, 'Look how great she is. She is right, there are no problems.' There is a big problem; people outside are doing it tough. People outside are trying to find money to pay their rent or their mortgage. They are trying to pay their power bill that the CLP government increased because it put power prices up. That is what they are struggling with every day. People are having to make decisions, asking themselves, 'Can we or can't we afford to go on a holiday this year for Christmas? Can we or can't we afford to buy the kids Christmas presents this year?'

The economy is hurting. When we talk about the economy, we are not talking about a living, breathing thing. It is not a person. People outside—our constituents—are people. They live, they feel, they hurt and they are hurting right now because the economy is not as good as you are all making it out to be.

You have turned your back on the bush and the infrastructure budget spend. It is not only me saying that. I was at a Housing meeting with the Member for Nightcliff, who is the shadow housing minister, where businesses were saying that this government has turned off the tap. This government has turned off the tap of any project that is outside of Darwin or any project that is not in their electorates.

They have turned that tap off high and dry. The only money keeping the Territory going is Commonwealth money—the money that Marion Scrymgour has brought into the Territory to pave those roads, to build those houses and do that work. It is Commonwealth money. CLP members come in here and claim that they are doing this and that, but 70% of the Territory's budget is Commonwealth funded.

Let us be clear that the CLP is not keeping the lights on in the Territory, the Commonwealth is. It is Commonwealth money being invested into the Territory to keep things going, so I welcome a realistic conversation on how we should grow the Territory. Where are the opportunities to grow self-generated revenue?

Let us not forget that the CLP got rid of TIO. When people get their insurance premium bills this year after all the flood events and they have increased, people can thank the CLP for increasing insurance premiums.

Mr KERLE: After that contribution I do not know where to even begin with that pile of children's toys, scattered across the floor. My kids do a better job of cleaning up their toys.

Mr Paech: People's lives are not toys.

Mr KERLE: I pick up on that interjection from the Member for Gwoja.

Madam SPEAKER: Please pause, Member for Blain.

What is your Point of Order, Leader of Government Business?

Mr EDGINGTON: Interruption, standing on his feet and yelling across the Chamber, it is clearly in breach of Standing Orders.

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, it is disorderly. Member for Gwoja could you restrain yourself a bit please. We only have a few more minutes until lunch. Member for Blain, please continue.

Mr KERLE: The Member for Gwoja needs a history lesson. If he is going on about people buying items—which I do not believe is true—he should remember that Labor is the party of Linda Burney who flew a gold-plated charter jet into a remote community, dripping in Gucci, Senator Nampijinpa Price, at the time, stated:

> *Minister Burney might be able to take a private jet out to remote community dripping with Gucci and telling people in the dirt what is good for them, but they're in the dark.*

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That is what the Labor party is like. If you want to talk about where money goes, look at the Federal Labor government. They are the ones who wear all the nice stuff and buy all the Gucci, jump on a nice charter flight.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. Minister Burney is not even a minister anymore; she is not even a member. Talking about your members flying business class …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja you are on a warning. You have just been talking about other members in the same way, so please restrain yourself or you will be out.

Mr KERLE: Thank you, in the four minutes I have left—the Labor party goes out to Indigenous communities, where our most disadvantaged Territorians live, covered in pearls or pearl necklaces that would cost thousands of dollars and tell people who do not have two sticks to rub together how they should live.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The Member for Gwoja is again on his feet yelling across the chamber. He is on a warning and I ask that he be excluded.

EXCLUSION OF MEMBER
Member for Gwoja

Madam SPEAKER: The Member for Gwoja will be suspended from the Chamber for one hour.

Mr KERLE: Further, he talks about the need to work with Indigenous Territorians. Well, again, he needs to look to Canberra because when I talk to the people that come to Palmerston from remote communities, when I talk to people who are trying to get a business off the ground out on their traditional lands, they repeatedly tell me that they are blocked and stymied by the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act where a traditional owner has to go, cup in hand to other people and ask for permission to develop on their own lands, to engage in business on their own lands or build a shed on their own lands.

If the Member for Gwoja wants to point the finger anywhere, he could point it at himself or he could point it down to Canberra.

In the time I have remaining, I quickly comment on the contribution from the Leader of the Opposition. I noted that in her contribution she talked repeatedly about spending, that the Treasurer should have gone out and announced cost-of-living measures; he should have been out there saying, the government will spend this, the government will spend that. It clearly shows why are we are in a position of having such a ludicrous debt and deficit, with over $11 billion of debt—running hundreds of millions of dollars of deficit a year that we inherited from the previous government, over $1m in interest every single day.

The amount of interest we pay annually we could be filling the Territory with new schools. We could be hiring doctors and nurses left, right and centre. It is clear they have learned nothing. They are obsessed with spending taxpayer money instead of focusing on productivity.

The Leader of the Opposition commented on inflation; if she wants to talk about inflation she should talk to her mates in Canberra who are spending out of control, which is driving inflation through the roof. They are destroying the national economy with their flagrant and ludicrous economic policy which is cascading around the country and impacting on us.

I do not have the time to talk about Labor in Victoria and all the allegations of corruption coming out of the big build. Bikie gangsters working on construction projects, sitting at home, going to the gym, sending in 12-hour timesheets. This is what Labor do when they are in government. They get into bed with bikies and gangsters. They view the public purse as their own private spending money. They have no interest in developing the economy.

This government has been highly focused on removing every impediment to honest business and enterprise. The Chief Minister says time and time again that she has cleared everything off her minister's desk so that enterprise, small business and big business can come to the Territory, play by the rules and contribute to the economy and that is why we are the fastest growing economy in Australia now.

Debate suspended.

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The Assembly suspended

QUESTION TIME

Castle Law

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

Last night you took to social media to announce the intention of the CLP government to introduce castle law. Given you are the one who announced this policy via social media, who have you consulted on this proposal for castle law and when will the CLP government be introducing this?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is great that my social media is so active that even the Opposition Leader takes to following me. Thank you.

That is not a policy. I let the Opposition Leader know there are many things we talk about on social media that people raise with us. We came to government with a strong law and order policy and reducing crime. We have gone a long way to reducing the crime, unlike those on the other side of the Chamber.

It is something that has been raised. The Chief Minister spoke about it a couple of weeks ago on Katie Woolf. I am asked the question. There are a lot of options on the table we are looking at. It is not policy.

One thing we remain consistent on is reducing crime. We will continue to place the rights of victims and community safety above offenders, unlike those on the opposite side, who flip-flop around with their eight changes in their little group—their little reshuffles. They do not know what they stand for at the moment …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110. The question specifically asked who has the minister consulted and when will they introduce the law.

Mrs HERSEY: I answered that questions when I stood up …

Ms Uibo: Were you consulted when?

Mrs HERSEY: If the Opposition Leader chooses to yell out across the Chamber and not listen to the answer, that is something for her.

I will say again is that our number priority is to reduce crime. We will continue to place the rights of victims and community above the rights of offenders.

We continue to examine all options, which is what I said, and keep Territorians safe in their own houses.

We just had the OC spray, about which the Opposition Leader did not think of it as an option. She is trying to confuse people by saying that OC spray and a crossbow are similar.

I am not sure what the Opposition Leader thinks is an offensive weapon …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Can we have some silence please?

Mrs HERSEY: The people who are using the wasp spray can now use the OC spray …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 100, the conciseness of answer. The question had nothing to do with OC spray. Minister, who have you consulted in relation to castle law and when will you introduce it for your CLP government?

Mrs HERSEY: My ears bled from listening to the Opposition Leader before lunch and they have started again now. Sorry for anyone who is listening …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

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Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, this is your third point of order.

Ms UIBO: Standing Order 31A. The minister is bowing down extremely low to offensive words and descriptions …

Mrs Hersey: Oh, goodness me.

Members interjecting.

Ms UIBO: … and I would like to have an answer because she is the one who was spruiking this on social media. Is there an answer or not or does she want to keep rubbishing me …

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, please take your seat. You find what offensive? Bleeding ears? Is that what you …

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order. You are not even listening to me, Opposition Leader.

Mr Maley: Throw her out.

Madam SPEAKER: No, I will not be directed either, Deputy Chief Minister.

Mrs HERSEY: We can allow Territorians to make up their minds and know what is right and wrong. They are able to buy OC spray.

This is not policy, we are just discussing.

Economic Growth

Mrs ZIO to CHIEF MINISTER

One of the things I love most about representing the Fannie Bay electorate is getting out and about and talking to residents and businesses. Throughout 2026 the CLP government has continued to deliver on its commitments to rebuild the economy and restore our Territory lifestyle.

From unlocking major projects and supporting Territory businesses to creating employment opportunities, attracting new investment, delivering cost-of-living relief and showcasing the Territory on a national and international stage, there has been significant progress.

The Territory's achievements are increasingly being recognised through national economic data, independent industry assessments and international endorsements. Can you please update the Assembly on the government's achievements throughout 2026 and how these are creating greater opportunities, prosperity and a better lifestyle for all Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I had the great privilege of being out with the Member for Fannie Bay meeting many of the businesses in her electorate across Fannie Bay and Parap. It was fantastic to be speaking with those business owners regarding their aspirations for the future. It is so beautiful that we share those aspirations because the Territory's economy is growing. That is good for business and the everyday Territorian because a rising tide lifts all boats. It is critical that for Territorians to do well, we must have a strong economy.

The ABS data that came out two weeks ago very clearly shows that the Northern Territory, under CLP Finocchiaro government, now enjoys the fastest growing economy in the nation. That is a far cry from the being the worst performing economy in the nation, year on year under the previous Labor government.

In just two years, we have gone from eighth to fourth in the CommSec State of the States report. ABS says we are the fastest growing economy in the nation. Our own Treasury gives us a mid-year report card that shows us that we are now forecast for 7.1% growth on the 5.8% we thought we would grow. Things are on the up.

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Business investment is forecast to grow 12.8% this year. Just this morning, I launched the Major Projects Conference at the Convention Centre. I spoke to two new businesses from national firms that have set up their shops here in the Northern Territory because people are investing. At lunch, I had the privilege of launching Identity Magazine, a magazine which showcases the tourism, the shopping, the stories of Territorians, a beautiful coffee table piece that shows pride in the Territory, pride of place and showcases the Territory for all of our glory.

We are expecting $155m more in revenue to the Territory due to that economic output, which means more money to spend on the things that Territorians value so much—health, education, roads, police and security. These are the types of things we can invest more money in when our economy is strong and the revenue is coming through the door. On top of that, debt is down $100m on where we thought we would land this year, which is huge. It shows we are doing the responsible work of a responsible government.

I thank the team. We are very proud to be delivering on our commitment to rebuild the Territory's economy. The Business Council of Australia's Regulation Rumble ranked us first for the speed of investment. We are doing the heavy lifting on regulatory reform, red tape reduction, and giving confidence and certainty to Territorians and the investment sector that the Territory is the best place in this nation to live, work, visit and invest.

Police Rosters

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for POLICE

It has been 24 hours since I asked the question regarding whether there were any police units on duty in Darwin on the night of 11 November 2026. Have you received a briefing since then, and can you please advise the House if there were any police units on duty that evening?

Secondary to that, can you please confirm if there have been any other nights when police duty units were not available in Darwin under your watch as the Minister for Police?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I answered this same question yesterday. This is an operational matter. I do not know what the Opposition Leader did when she was a failed Labor minister. I certainly do not get the police rosters and do the rostering. That is not a job I do. It is entirely operational. Territorians would be horrified if the government was to move into an operational space. This sits squarely with Police. If you are so interested, I am sure you could ask them yourself.

Resource Industry – Upcoming Projects

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for MINING and ENERGY

The Territory is the fastest-growing economy in the nation. Mining contributed two-thirds of that growth, yet those opposite spent the whole morning telling Territorians that it has nothing to do with hardworking Territory businesses. Across the Territory from Mount Bundy to Tennant Creek and Central Australia old mines are restarting, new projects are breaking ground and explorers are back out in the field. Can you update the Assembly on the momentum in the Territory mining and resource industry and what this government is doing to prepare for the wave of projects ahead?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Goyder understands numbers and that they are important and the money that mining and resource royalties bring to the Territory build a stronger Territory.

Labor has always been anti-development. It put in the gas moratorium, which took years to lift; backflipped on Lee Point and wants a review on data centres and to stop that. Four of the six Labor members oppose gas to keep the lights on—like yesterday, no lights. The Member for Nightcliff wants 100% renewables. That gets me started: you cannot trust Labor.

The Chief Minister spoke about the economy being the fastest growing in the nation. Mineral production hit a record of $6.1bn, up by 40%. All we hear from those opposite is just a cycle, and nothing to do with the Northern Territory. In fact, in May the Leader of the Opposition told the ABC:

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… that the economy is stalling on the Treasurer's watch …

They were her words. Now that the Territory leads the nation, suddenly the government has nothing to do with it whatsoever. When the numbers are bad, it is the government's fault, but when the numbers are good, it is the weather. The Leader of the Opposition could disagree with herself and still think she won the argument. It is amazing.

We are putting the certainty back in, and that is where I was this morning. I was with Core Lithium as it loaded the first shipment from its mine since it restarted, 10,000 tonnes. That is royalties and jobs for the Northern Territory. Core Lithium said that 90% of its workforce is in Darwin. Since July the price of lithium has fallen, but this company has started production and today was the first mine of its new ore. We know that things go up and down, and Core is not alone.

The certainty I spoke about—there are 16 projects, worth $6bn. We are getting ready for that. We have released the NT skills program; delivered the biggest mining titles overhaul; abolished third-party reviews; set up the Territory Coordinator; raised the payroll tax threshold; set up mining cadets for minerals; and have housing grants of $50,000 and $30,000 to get people here to build the economy. We have put jobs and money into our economy, unlike those on the other side.

Utility Prices

Ms UIBO to TREASURER

This year you have bumped up Territorians' power, water and sewerage prices by 5.3% and you have hiked up the cost for councils by 30%, after trying to sting them for even more. As we head into Christmas, Territorians want to know whether you intend to be Santa and scrap the above-inflation power price hikes or will be the Grinch and whack Territorians with more price hikes in 2027?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, power prices are linked to CPI. We did our budget with power prices linked to CPI. We know that we cannot just keep throwing money at the CSO. The CSO is important, so I will talk about what the CSO does for Territorians. If it was not for the CSO and the subsidy that we provide for power prices, every Territorian would be paying an extra $1,200 per annum on their bill. We are committed to the CSO but we are also committed to making sure that we do everything we can to reduce our cost of generation for our power prices.

Let us talk about this, because the opposition talked a big game about this. The moratorium that the opposition members put on development of gas out of the Beetaloo, put us years behind on cheaper gas prices to be able to generate power cheaper in the Northern Territory. For years they had a moratorium on gas.

The way they managed their contracts for gas supply in the Territory was horrible. We ended up in a position where we had to buy emergency gas from INPEX at market prices; that is spot prices, which is two or three times the price that we were buying it on contract. That drove the cost of generation up, which then drove up the cost of the CSO. But we have maintained the CSO, and we support Territorians on power prices to keep them at reasonable levels.

If we had been able to get gas out of the Beetaloo sooner—unfortunately the moratorium from Labor put that many years behind—we would have been able to generate power much more cheaply and the Territory would have been in a much better position economically than we find ourselves in now, but that is the short sightedness of those opposite.

We are working through our budget development now, moving into next year. We are looking closely at CPI and inflation. Sadly, inflation is being driven by the opposition's colleagues in Canberra. You only have to look at what is happening nationally with the cost of CPI and increases in inflation driven off the back of high government spending, which is now driving up interest rates. That is the reality we all face, but we are doing everything we can to make sure we do what we can for the people of the Territory, with the levers that we have available.

If we left it to those opposite, they would keep borrowing money and putting us further in debt.

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Utility Prices – Supplementary Question

Ms UIBO to TREASURER

Will you guarantee Territorians that you will not increase their power, water and sewage in 2027 above inflation rates which you have already done?

Mr KERLE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing Order 31; she is asking him to make a commitment.

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, you have the call. You can answer the question.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Would you stop this conversation across the Chamber please. It all has to come through me. I am the person you look at and I am the person you talk to.

Mr YAN: As I said in my response to the Opposition Leader's question, we are working through the budget process on what it will look like for 2027–28, That process is in train. I am not going to stand here and give guarantees to the Leader of the Opposition so she can go out on social media this afternoon and crow about it. She will, because I have not given her a guarantee. That is one thing I can guarantee because I have not given her what she wants, she will be out on social media this afternoon.

We will develop what our pricing orders look like across our budget as we develop it over the coming months.

Economy Update

Dr RAHMAN to TREASURER

When the Finocchiaro CLP government came to office we committed from day one to try to rebuild the remnants of the economy that Territory Labor had left behind. That meant making the Territory the best place to do business by keeping taxes as competitive as possible, cutting red and green tape where possible and giving businesses clear rules, faster decisions and better access to government support.

Treasurer, can you update the House on how our CLP government is delivering on that commitment and tell us what the latest mid-year budget report is indicating about the state of the Territory economy.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I love speaking about the economy. It was tough talking about the economy when we first came to government because it was horrendous. I can now say that we have turned a corner. I thank the Member for Fong Lim for the question because he is very interested in finance and the economy; he gets it. It is something that those opposite certainly do not get.

The Territory leads Australia's economic growth, and that is a result worth celebrating. It is worth shouting to the world that the Territory is leading economic growth in this country above every other state and nationally. We grew by 3.2% to $36.5bn in 2025–26, well ahead of the national rate of 2.3%.

The midyear budget report confirms we are on track, with Treasury now forecasting growth to accelerate to 7.1% this year, up from 5.8% in May. Those opposite do not seem to like that; they keep talking it down.

Territory businesses and workers earned this success. This is off the back of the certainty and security that we are providing for Territorians and investors. From day one we backed industry by cutting red and green tape, lifting the payroll tax threshold to $2.5m—which Labor could have done but chose not to—and removing payroll tax on apprentice and trainee wages.

The results are clear. Business investment jumped by 18.7% to $1.1bn in the June quarter, with 12.8% growth forecast this financial year.

Construction is underway on the $1.6b Nolans rare-earths project near Alice Springs. Employment grew by 2.1% last year, almost double May's expectations. Goods exports rose by 17.8%. Visitor spending hit a record $2.36bn off the back of great tourism, particularly the cruise ship market.

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Treasury now forecasts $155m in extra revenue this year, $102m less net debt and an operating surplus returning next financial year. We are growing the economic pie so that Territorians get a bigger slice. We are funding the schools, hospitals and roads Territorians rely upon. Territorians are confident in their future, having a bit of extra money in their pocket to enjoy themselves this coming festive season. That is thanks to the Finocchiaro CLP government.

Ozanam House – Relocation

Mr SMELT to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Late last year the Member for Fannie Bay said that land would be identified for the permanent relocation of Ozanam House by early 2026. Almost a year later, the community is still waiting for an update, with no permanent location publicly confirmed. Why has your government failed to deliver on the commitment made by your own colleague? When will a permanent home finally be secured for Ozanam House?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak about this issue. It is important to understand what got us into this position where we even have to consider Ozanam House. The former Labor government kicked the former service with Vinnies out of Stuart Park. Labor members were frustrated at what was happening in one of their electorates and wanted to move the problem on. Those opposite wanted to do that and they did. It was short-sighted and they had no plan for the future and no plan to support homeless people who needed the support of the service of Ozanam House. That is what happened. It is on those opposite as to the situation we found ourselves in upon coming to government.

As a responsible government, we have been working with all those people involved. We have been speaking with St Vincent de Paul and Larrakia—all these people are stakeholders in this space—to make sure that we can get the best outcome for that service and the residents.

I went to a local park. I spoke with the residents. I believe the Member for Fannie Bay was there with me. We heard firsthand from those residents the issues that they were having as a result of the failed Labor policy to stick them somewhere where they should not have gone. That probably was not an appropriate location. That is what those opposite did. We listened to the community, we consulted with them and we have been working with all the stakeholders.

Members interjecting.

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20: No Interruption of Debate. I would like to hear the minister's response.

Madam SPEAKER: I did not think it was too bad, but everyone could be respectful.

Mr BURGOYNE: Sometimes I am a bit quiet in here, so I will make sure that I am speaking up for the Member for Goyder.

Madam SPEAKER: You have good volume, minister.

Mr BURGOYNE: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I will direct my comments through you. I respect you as the Chair.

We are getting on with the job. We are talking with the stakeholders about a new home because the Member for Nightcliff is correct; it is not a long-term solution. Labor was short-sighted when it put Ozanam House there …

Mr SMELT: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was specifically about when. The minister has talked about a lot of things, but he has not talked about when the permanent location will be announced. It was going to be the start of this year.

Madam SPEAKER: Please continue, minister.

Mr BURGOYNE: There are two things that those opposite did not give anyone when they put Ozanam House in the current position. We are working as a responsible government with the stakeholders. We have been discussing with St Vincent de Paul and Larrakia about a new site because we know longer term that service

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will not work in that location. We have spoken to everyone, including residents, and everyone is of that opinion. We are working with individuals to ensure when we move that service and decide what will happen long term, it will be the right decision. We will not negatively impact other residents elsewhere. It will be the best outcome for the people who need to use that dignity service day-in and day-out because we respect the fact that we need to get this right, not get it wrong as those opposite did when they moved the service there in the first place.

Tourism Update

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

The year 2026 has been fabulous and fruitful for the Territory. There is a couple of good F words in there. Despite the flipflop flap negativity of the opposition, we have just learned that the Northern Territory is leading the nation in economic growth, with our economy growing by 3.2% to $36.5bn. We have seen record-breaking events, growing visitor numbers, international recognition and major investment in our parks and outdoor lifestyle. I must say that many of the families in my electorate have enjoyed those events.

As we approach the end of 2026, can you share the highlights of how your portfolios are rebuilding our economy and restoring our lifestyle, as we outlined in Our Plan?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Karama is the assistant minister for Tourism and Hospitality, in addition to being the Deputy Speaker. That is a big workload for the Member for Karama, but I know that his number one priority is his constituents living in Karama, Malak and Knuckey Lagoon. I know that because we hear about that every day, which is fabulous. Keep working hard, Member for Karama; they appreciate it.

It has been a huge year for tourism in the Territory. I have said it before and I will say it again: we are making headlines nationally for all the right reasons, which is fantastic. I will tell some stories this afternoon.

Central Australia used to be in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. The tourism industry was decimated under the Labor government and Labor did not want to do anything about that. It was horrendous for our industry. Danial Rochford, the Chair of TCA, banged that drum for a long time. He told a story when I was there recently that for the first time, instead of being talked down, Alice Springs—he was proud that they turned everything around with the support of our government—was named by *Lonely Planet* as the number one destination to visit in 2027 to experience Central Australia's art. That is a fantastic story from Central Australia. It is a wonderful part of the world. I spent a lot of time there in the last couple of months, enjoying every moment of it.

While I am speaking about Alice Springs and Central Australia, I will tell another story about Bojangles. I was there a couple of weekends ago. We had our Tourism protocol function there. Normally, we have those functions in the Top End at Parliament House, but we decided to have it at Bojangles. Pearl was thrilled to have so many people there. There were people from interstate who saw Bojangles for the first time. For all of you who have not been there, it is a Territory, iconic, nowhere-else-in-the-world kind of place to be. People from Alice Springs were at Bojangles who had not been there for many years, but they remembered the old Bojangles and were loving it. We had a night of nostalgia and they thanked us for having that event there and putting Bojangles on the map. For the Red CentreNATS they had the motorbikes coming through and nearly set a record. She was devastated that she did not quite get there.

I will quickly talk about the Top End while my time is running out. There is the Hilton on the Esplanade—the old Beaufort, for those who remember—and with that private investment, they have spent $22m. They saw the potential that the Territory has. They said, 'We are on the way up; let us get in there and spend that money.' They have invested. The scaffolding is down. It is looking fantastic. I was there last night for a Tourism Top End meeting and Christmas party. I cannot wait for that to see how it goes. They renovated all the rooms. It looks amazing, and I cannot wait to see what else the Territory achieves.

Environment Protection

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Over the past two years you have broken your election promise to reduce emissions, failed to fund a renewable energy transition, broadened new laws to silence the voices of Territorians on major

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development decisions and eroded a host of environmental safeguards for onshore gas regulations. Do you still consider yourself the most green-credentialed member of parliament?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, that is asking for a bit of an opinion.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I like to say that I put the 'conserve' in 'conservative'. I am out there every day, whether it is looking after the roundabout at the front of my office, making sure I am propagating those desert peas that tourists love when they come to Central Australia, or in this House, introducing the Territory's first safe air Bill. That is what our government is all about. We are about protecting the environment. That is important.

When we look at what we have done across our portfolios, including the Limmen Bight Marine Park, we see that we have been doing so much in this space to expand that marine park to look after the dugongs and the seagrass. These are the things that I am excited about as the Environment minister. When we look at some of the land around Darwin, our national parks and how we are trying to protect and conserve the environment like Silkwood—what an incredible investment. With my Lands and Planning hat on, I was proud to be a part of one of the largest new land acquisitions for the Northern Territory in more than three decades. It is 30,000 hectares. This is what we are doing.

We are making sure that we are working with everyone. We are also working with our power and water authorities to get the balance right because the question also asked about emissions. We are looking at where we can invest in battery and solar technology across the Territory so that we are burning less gas and can do everything that is responsible to keep the lights on and bring down the cost of generation for Territorians.

Unlike those opposite—I know everyone here from Alice Springs will remember under the former Labor government the lights literally went out. We were all sitting in Alice Springs, and the lights went out. I think those opposite had to sack a few people.

We are doing what is responsible regarding greenhouse gas emissions and looking after the environment, because we care. I am a proud Environment minister.

I know a lot of people do not like me talking about it, but I love talking about the Container Deposit Scheme, taking what would otherwise end up in waste and possibly cause additional emissions from being burnt or all these other things. We are now the first jurisdiction where plain milk bottles can be recycled; that is something we should be proud of. As the Environment minister, I am proud of it.

I will continue to get out there on my electric moped and do my deliveries. I will continue to look after the Sturt's desert peas in front of my office to make sure that the community can enjoy that wonderful environment because we care. We will continue to look after the incredible lifestyle that we have in the Territory through national parks, expanding these land acquisitions so that Territorians into the future can enjoy the wonderful environment in the Northern Territory.

Early Childhood Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan – Update

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

In December 2025 the Finocchiaro CLP government launched the Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan, with a clear commitment to putting children's safety first and lifting quality across early childhood education and care services, particularly in meeting the safety and quality requirements under the National Quality Standard.

While the opposition ignored early childhood, this government is focused on delivering practical action and measurable improvements for Territory families. Can you update the Assembly on the progress of the Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan and outline how the Finocchiaro CLP government is strengthening safety standards, improving the quality of early childhood services and ensuring every Territory child has the best possible start in life?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, with an impending baby due at any moment and two small children, the Member for Drysdale wants to improve the early childhood outcomes in his electorate.

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In February this year, at the Education Ministers Meeting in my capacity as the Education minister, I put fencing for early childhood settings on the national agenda. That is something that those on the other side ignored while they were in government. That was the first time we have had something on the national agenda; it took a CLP government to think that was an important thing to contribute to. We partnered with Kidsafe to develop a guide on safe play and fencing to support our educators, and we delivered our Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan, which is at the heart of early childhood.

We are backing the early childhood profession with 25 scholarships across the Cert III Diploma of Early Childhood and the Bachelor of Early Childhood Teaching.

On our watch, 96.85% of all early childhood services are meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard for Quality Area 2, and that is something I am proud of as the minister. Children's health and safety, which is Quality Area 2, equates to only 6 centres across the Territory that we still have working towards exceeding those standards.

We set a courageous target of 85% of all centres to meet or exceed the National Equality Standard by 31 December this year. I am pleased to say that we have surpassed that target as of 1 October with 92.3% of our 235 services now meeting or exceeding those standards. That is a fantastic result. This time last year we were 8th place—dead last— nationally in terms of our overall compliance. I am proud to say that the Northern Territory is now tied second with New South Wales, just behind Victoria.

I thank those in the department, especially Audrey Billias, who work tirelessly to make sure that the Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan is rolled out across the Territory and our early childhood services are supported.

They ensure we meet and exceed those National Quality Standards. We know that if we want to get people here to the Territory, we need to have great early childcare centres. I am very proud as the Early Childhood minister to make sure that we are exceeding in those areas.

Housing – Land Release

Mr MCGRATH to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE referred to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

On your watch, there has not been a single new land release for housing that was not already underway. Will you make a New Year's resolution to listen to the construction industry and finally implement our Title land release pipeline to ensure a steady supply of new homes being built?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, let us look at and talk about housing. I will soon hand over to my colleague, the minister who is responsible for land release, but let us first talk about housing and housing delivery. Look at the hundreds of houses we have delivered in just two years—hundreds upon hundreds of houses delivered right across the Territory.

The previous government dropped the ball on securing land release for new housing, and that is why we have seen a drop way in some areas on being able to deliver housing. We have delivered 502 remote houses since we have been in government. The opposition forgot the land release to go with them; they forgot the subdivisions. Now we are scrambling to get subdivisions so that we can get houses out on communities. We are picking up the ball that Labor yet again dropped.

Let us talk about the National Housing Group. We have tried to negotiate with the Commonwealth on how land servicing is done. Yet again, the previous government signed up to a deal and did not do the work to make sure that is was appropriate for the Territory …

Mr Edgington: Headlines but no headworks.

Mr YAN: Exactly—headlines, no headworks.

I will hand over to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment who is responsible for doing land release, who may be able to provide you, Member for Mulka, with a few updates on the specifics you have asked.

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Mr BURGOYNE: Madam Speaker, I want the Member for Mulka to know that we, on this side of the House, are in favour of land supply, unlike the Member for Nightcliff who has flip-flopped on Lee Point and is against releasing housing supply **…**

Mr Kerle: On every side of every issue. They are for it and then they do not know whether they are up or down …

Mr BURGOYNE: … but will tell us all that we need more houses.

As a government, we are investing millions of dollars into Holtze, Asche …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20. I am genuinely interested to hear from the Member for Braitling, but the Member for Blain is interjecting.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Okay. Stop, cease. Everyone, be quiet. Minister, talk.

Mr BURGOYNE: This is a first: the Member for Gwoja wanting to hear from the Member for Braitling. This is fantastic.

We know what is happening over there at the moment. We have had eight reshuffles, two Deputy Opposition Leaders and they are not sure whether they want houses or not.

We love land release. Sienna Village in Alice Springs—there is land available there, but it has been sat on for years. Those opposite thought it was all too difficult.

This weekend land will be on auction at Sienna Apartments. This is a fantastic opportunity that we are bringing to market. I have been speaking about the millions of dollars we have been putting into Holtze. We have land that will be available in Tennant Creek. We obviously have Kilgariff in Alice Springs. We are ensuring that we are delivering land for Territorians so they can set down foundations here in the NT.

NT Police Force – Restructuring

J DAVIS to MINISTER for POLICE

When was the decision made to restructure the NT Police Force to remove the dedicated Assistant Commissioner for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence and Youth, which was a recommendation of the Coroner? Why was that decision made?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is incorrect. I will get the correct information by the end of Question Time.

Businesses – Support

Mrs CARLSON to TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

Supporting local businesses, community organisations and consumers are central to rebuilding the Territory economy and strengthening all our communities The CLP Finocchiaro government is committed to reducing unnecessary red tape, simplifying licensing requirements and ensuring community organisations can focus on service delivery rather than excessive administration. At the same time, effective regulation is essential to protecting consumers and maintaining reliable access to all our essential goods and services.

Can you update the Assembly on how the government has delivered practical legislative reforms to streamline regulations, reduce administrative burdens, support our local businesses and communities and strengthen community protections to ensure the security of essential goods and services across the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as with many of your colleagues, small business is such a critical component of the Member for Wanguri's electorate. I know how hard she works to support them.

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One of the things that drives small business crazy is red tape. It was fantastic to come into government and have a good look at what was making it difficult for business to do business. We have worked hard in the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations over the last two years to get rid of as much red tape as we could.

We started with procurement, Member for Wanguri, because the strong message we were getting from business was that they could not do business with government because the procurement frameworks were so far out of date and not up to date with what they needed that it was making it difficult for them to do business.

It was interesting when I found out that there had been a review in 2023 by the previous government with a number of significant recommendations made. Guess what? That report and review was never released and action.

We, on the other hand, took the steps needed and made sure that we made it easier for local business to do business with government. We raised the Tier 1 threshold to $50,000. We made sure that departments were held to account for shopping locally as they should. We made sure that local meant local. If people are in Alice Springs, it is local to Alice Springs. If it is Darwin, it is local to Darwin, and so on across the Territory.

The other area that is important—Member for Wanguri, you have many community organisations in your electorate which do amazing work in sport, arts and a range of events. The red tape for associations was difficult to navigate. There had been little support for associations to understand what they needed to do to comply. It made it difficult for the department to step in and assist when they got into trouble. We recently passed legislative reform which makes it easier and clearer. We have removed the need for small associations to do a full-on audit which is expensive. They still have to deliver profit and loss statements and need to keep their members informed, but it is much less red tape for them.

Most critically, we are also looking at protecting consumers. In the recent fuel situation initiated by the Middle East conflict, we made amendments to the legislation to hold fuel suppliers to account to make sure that consumers were looked after and supply went where it needed to be and that the Territory could keep moving.

I am proud of the work that is being done by the department to keep the Territory moving and get rid of red tape at every possible opportunity.

Land Development

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

The CLP government was elected with a commitment to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle. From unlocking new investment opportunities and progressing strategic land development projects to delivering long-awaited housing and infrastructure solutions and activating underutilised assets, the CLP is creating a stronger and more prosperous Northern Territory.

Can you update the Assembly on some of the significant achievements from the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment and the Land Development Corporation that are creating jobs, unlocking investment and delivering better outcomes for all Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina understands how important it is to get the mix of investment right so that Territorians can have a place to call home and set down roots in the Northern Territory.

Since coming into government we have been getting on with the job of rebuilding our economy and making the Territory the best place in the country to live, visit, work and invest. The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment and the Land Development Corporation are core to doing that.

We have been delivering some of the most significant regulatory reform programs in NT history, implementing 30 of the 31 Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce recommendations. We have been cutting red tape, streamlining approvals and reducing regulatory burdens across the NT because that is what businesses told us they wanted when we consulted them. They wanted it to be easier to do business in the Territory and that is what we are delivering.

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We have assessed almost 900 planning applications, issued more than 12,500 building permits, made decisions on more than 300 water extraction licences, approved about 180 environmental (mining) applications, issued more than 120 environment approvals and licences and assessed dozens of heritage and environment management applications. We on this side know that we have to get the mix right with protecting our heritage and getting on with development.

We have also delivered the NT's first climate resilience plan. I love talking about the Container Deposit Scheme. We have implemented three-litre containers or under being recycled in the Northern Territory, the first jurisdiction in Australia to recycle plain milk containers. That is something we should be proud of.

We have invested more than $37m in enabling infrastructure and land development, supporting projects across the NT such as at greater Holtze. I have spoken about Sienna Village. We are getting on with delivering. St. Mary's in Alice Springs will also be a good location.

There is the potential for more than 3,800 residential lots to be delivered across the Northern Territory. We have finalised the long-running Kenbi land claim and secured about $90m for water infrastructure projects. We know how important water is to the Territory. We will continue to develop these projects.

We acquired Silkwood near Litchfield National Park to expand recreational tourism opportunities.

Along with all that, these achievements demonstrate what our government is focused on—outcomes, reducing barriers to investment, creating jobs and delivering more houses, unlike those opposite who keep flipflopping on whether they support developments.

I thank the departments that have been getting on with delivering for Territorians and we will continue to deliver on our commitments and building a stronger Territory for future generations.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Nurses and Midwives Pay Offer

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for HEALTH referred to MINISTER for PUBLIC SERVICE

After months of working under immense and sustained pressure and enduring threats of abuse in the workplace, our nurses and midwives were outraged by the public pay offer made by the Minister for Public Service. They have written to all MLAs asking to support and secure a better offer. I seek leave to table their correspondence.

Leave granted.

Mr PAECH: Now our nurses and midwives are considering protected industrial action. Minister, why have you failed to stand up for our health workers and told the Minister for the Public Service to deliver the pay and conditions our hardworking nurses and midwives deserve?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am backing our health staff who, every day of the week, are out on the front line, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When it comes to the pay offer, I think the Member for Gwoja has me confused with the Public Service minister, so I will hand over to her to answer his question.

Mrs HERSEY: I thank the Member for Gwoja for inadvertently asking a question about a frontline service that we absolutely value on this side of the Chamber, unlike those on the other side that had a pay freeze and got us into a debt that you could hardly even jump over. I think it is a bit rich for them to be commenting on anything like this. We have been negotiating in good faith for quite some time. The commissioner is the person who negotiates with the nurses' union on this.

We have certainly been doing that along the way. We have been left with a debt legacy, but the Treasurer has repeatedly said that we must be fiscally responsible and that we have a wages policy and we must make sure that we keep within those parameters of that wages policy.

Ms BOOTHBY: It is better than their wage policy.

DRAFT

Mrs HERSEY: Yes, it certainly is, Member for Brennan. It is better than Labor's wages policy, which was zero. We have 100% backed our frontline workers, and we certainly 100% back our nurses. We continue to negotiate in good faith. We want nurses to get a better fairer pay deal, and they deserve it. We want this bargaining to come to an end, and we want to have this outcome before Christmas. We also need to have people understand and to look at what is in the negotiating parameters. Everyone needs to have a look at what is on the table because I think sometimes the unions do not always say what is the best for everyone.

We on this side of the Chamber want the best pay deal for the nurses. We understand that coming off the back of the then Labor government, now opposition, they did not do anything about the pays; they actually froze them. On this side, we will make sure that we are backing frontline workers 100%. We want our nurses to get a good pay deal and the commissioner is negotiating in good faith.

I think she is meeting with them again tomorrow afternoon and we will continue negotiating in good faith to come to an agreement that hopefully will be done before Christmas.

Foster Carer's Travel

J DAVIS to MINISTER for CHILD PROTECTION

I am aware of foster carers still waiting for approval to arrange Christmas travel with children in their care. With rising prices, some have told me they can no longer afford to book, while others have had to cancel flights and risk significant financial losses.

Is it correct that all financial delegations, regardless of value, now require your direct personal approval? How many approvals are currently outstanding? What is causing the backlog? Why can't these decisions be made by the CEO or the acting CEO? Does this requirement now also apply to health and medical treatment, regardless of cost or urgency?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I can categorically say that, no, not all financial transactions require my approval. As you would expect, it is up to the minister to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and carefully, and there are delegations which are allocated to that.

Regarding travel, I can tell you there are no travel approvals outstanding. If there is anything that has not been approved, it has not come to my attention from the department. Thank you for alerting me to that because I will follow it up immediately to make sure that nothing has been held up.

The reasons for the process that we are undertaking is to ensure that statutory obligations are met. In the absence of a permanent appointment to the chief executive, as we have worked through the concerns that have been raised over the past few months into the way in which child protection has been operating in the policy framework of which serious review is required, I have made it my business to ensure that we are doing right by the children who are in the care of the department and that we are making sure that they are appropriately supported when they have to travel. Foster families, carers, kinship carers and family are also appropriately supported when that is needed.

I make no apology for that because it is critical that we ensure that everything possible is done to keep children safe, supported and ensure that when they are in the care of the department, we are doing everything we must to make sure that they are cared for appropriately.

Barkly Regional Deal

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

I am excited to ask questions and hear from our ministers, unlike the Member for Gwoja, who was yawning over there.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; it has been a convention of this Assembly that you cannot make accusations or allude to people's conduct in the Assembly. I ask him to withdraw.

Madam SPEAKER: Can we have silence. This is an interesting point, and we will hold the clock. A lot of inferences and attention is given to people smiling or laughing. If it will include yawning too, we will keep that in mind for future reference.

DRAFT

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Sit down, Member for Gwoja. Please withdraw, minister.

Mr KERLE: I withdraw.

The Finocchiaro CLP government is committed to restoring the Territory lifestyle, and that means delivering for families in our regions, not just in Darwin. The Barkly Regional Deal was Australia's first—a 10-year, $100m partnership, and the Barkly community chose its priorities from housing and youth services to education and infrastructure. Barkly families want to see every one of those commitments delivered.

Can you update the Assembly on the recent recommitment to the Barkly Regional Deal, what has already been delivered on the ground and how the government will see the job through for Barkly families?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is an important question because the Barkly Regional deal was established in 2019, and I am proud to say that I was the Mayor of the Barkly Regional Council then.

Recently, the federal government, local council and the Northern Territory Government came together to sign a statement of commitment. I was extremely pleased this time because the federal government and the Barkly Regional Council finally agreed to a date when I was available. I thank both of those levels of government for accommodating the fact that I was available.

This regional deal is a 10-year deal of $100m, with 28 initiatives, and these priorities were chosen by the people of the Barkly region. The new statement of commitment was agreed to by traditional owners, the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, all three levels of government, young people and, of course, local businesspeople in the Barkly.

So far, the Barkly Regional Deal has delivered a number of initiatives in the Barkly, and I want to outline a few of those: the Tennant Creek Youth Centre; the Barkly Business Hub has been refurbished; the Alpurrurulam airstrip has been upgraded; a housing partnership developed to build new homes for locals in Tennant Creek; and, importantly, under construction at the moment is a 40-student bed boarding facility in Tennant Creek. This is particularly important for all families in the Barkly region because it gives the opportunity for students in Alekarenge, Elliott, Alpurrurulam and homelands to come in, board in Tennant Creek and attend the high school.

There are future projects still on the horizon. I will speak about a couple of those. The Tennant Creek weather radar—which the federal government has been dragging its heels on—is finally back on schedule for 2027. The new Alekarenge Youth Centre is an important project under the Barkly Regional Deal. Next year the Tennant Creek visitor accommodation will be built in Tennant Creek as well.

I thank everybody involved with the regional deal, particularly Barb Shaw, the independent chair of the governance table. The regional deal is delivering. It is a strong commitment for the Barkly region. It is all about restoring the Territory lifestyle and I am pleased that it is delivering.

Building a donkey fence at Canteen Creek is one of the projects through the project fund that are assisting communities. The Barkly Regional Deal is delivering. The Territory government is getting on with the job and delivering for the Territory.

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

ANSWER TO QUESTION
NT Police Force – Restructuring

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 115, I am providing further information to the question from the Member for Johnston. I can confirm that there remains to be a dedicated DFSV command within police. DV and Youth used to be together; now it is DV and Crime. It has just been swapped around to better align their specialists and investigative functions. There is no change or reduction in resourcing or capability or anything like. It is all consistent with the Coroner's recommendation number 12. Instead of it being DV and

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Youth, it is a separate command. Instead of it reporting to the Assistant Commissioner for DV and Youth, it is now reporting to the Assistant Commissioner for DV and Crime. That is the only change.

I am aware of some of the misinformation that is being put out into the sector on this, but it is incorrect and would be scaremongering, Member for Johnston, to purport anything otherwise. It would be unfair on our hardworking men and women who pull on that blue uniform every day to serve and protect Territorians, especially on something as serious as family and domestic violence.

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110.

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of reply or further question …

J Davis: It did not answer my question. The question was about commissioner, not …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Johnston, under this standing order …

Mrs Finocchiaro: There is only one Police Commissioner.

Madam SPEAKER: Okay. stop the banter. Stop the communication. Take it outside if you want to debate it.

J Davis interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Johnston!

Mrs Finocchiaro: I just explained that.

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister!

MOTION
Governing in the Interest of all Territorians

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I move that the government governs in the interest of all Territorians to generally consult with communities on the decisions that affect them.

Territorians expect their government to govern for everyone, not just those who agree with them, support them or those who live in the major centres. Every Territorian deserves to be heard, respected and represented, regardless of where they live across the NT. Unfortunately, time and again, the CLP government demonstrates that it has little interest in listening to people who do not live in their electorates and who they are elected to serve across their roles in government. It does not want to consult.

The CLP government does not want to see scrutiny, and it certainly does not want to be challenged in any way, shape or form. Instead, the CLP wants to dictate, make decisions behind closed doors and expect Territorians to simply fall in line and not ask questions.

We have heard the Chief Minister personally attack Territorians who dared to speak up and challenge her CLP government. What sort of leader responds to legitimate concerns with personal, malicious and quite petty, intimidating attacks? The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory CLP government—Lia Finocchiaro—that is who. Territorians are increasingly being given the message, ‘Sit down, shut up and do not question the CLP government’.

One of the most concerning attributes of the CLP government is the way that it is treating Aboriginal Territorians. We have seen laws and policies introduced in this place that disproportionately impact Aboriginal Territorians, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal homelands, while investment is being systematically stripped away from those who live away from our towns and regional communities.

Aboriginal Territorians have suffered with health, housing, education and employment outcomes. There is a systematic and very disconcerting deliberate action by the CLP government to do this. Aboriginal leaders have walked away from their high-level positions here in the Northern Territory—some who have left the Northern Territory altogether—because of the government's failure to engage with Aboriginal Territorians and Aboriginal leaders, respectfully and meaningfully. That should be a serious warning for every single Territorian.

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You cannot claim to be a government for the whole of the Northern Territory while systematically dismissing the voices of Aboriginal Territorians and leaders who make up over 30% of the Territory's population. Genuine leadership means listening, building relationships and working together, not shutting people out when their views are inconvenient for the government.

The Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro, finally got the opportunity she had long sought to lead the Northern Territory after sitting in opposition for eight years. But what has she done with that opportunity? Territorians are not safer. They are not better off and they are certainly not seeing the positive leadership and direction that they were promised under her guidance.

Instead, Lia Finocchiaro is leading a CLP government, which appears more interested in looking busy than actually getting things done, and that governs by selfie-stick, staged media opportunity, a media release and political spin. There is plenty of time for opportunities for photos, press releases and political theatre but where is the substance behind it? Where is the meaningful engagement? Where is the long-term plan and the long-term vision of the CLP government? Where is the action that actually improves people's lives for the better under the CLP leadership?

We hear the same message in communities right across the Territory. Territorians feel sidelined, ignored and belittled. Many are reluctant to speak out publicly because they fear consequences of speaking out against the CLP government, particularly our non-government organisations which rely on that critical government funding to be able to operate.

People should never feel intimidated or afraid to raise legitimate concerns with their elected members. We have countless conversations with Territorians who tell us the same thing—that the CLP government will not listen, engage, consult and act. As I said yesterday, Territorians do not have a seat at the table under the CLP government. They cannot even get in the door.

A government should never confuse winning an election with having a licence to dictate and ignore people when it is supposed to represent them. Being elected gives a responsibility to listen and not permission to silence the criticism because it is inconvenient or uncomfortable.

The Northern Territory deserves a government that listens before it legislates, consults before it makes decisions and respects people even when it disagrees with them. It deserves a government with a vision for the future, not one obsessed with managing its image and continually quoting political rhetoric.

Territorians deserve more than political stunts, staged announcements and carefully curated photo opportunities. Territorians deserve leadership, accountability, transparency, and a government that actually delivers.

Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro had the opportunity to provide that leadership and so far she has squandered it. Her behaviour yesterday was abysmal. You cannot govern the Territory by talking at people and talking down to people. You have to listen to them, work with them, respect them and then deliver for them. You cannot build a strong Territory by shutting out the very people who want to make it better. You cannot claim to be a government for all Territorians when so many people feel that they are being ignored and left behind. Territorians deserve much better than this government.

The most pressing issue confronting Territorians is the CLP continuing to ignore and play down just how tough Territorians are doing it right now. In fact, just last week the Treasurer, Bill Yan, tried to run a line that everyone has extra money in their pockets to spend; that is completely out of touch. The CLP government's failure to engage meaningfully on the cost-of-living pressures demonstrates that the CLP is unable to change its fixed agenda and three-line slogan to respond to the most pressing needs of everyday Territorians.

Its failures include:

- failure to provide genuine cost-of-living relief for families by freezing back-to-school and Sport Voucher payments

- frozen payments under the Seniors Recognition Scheme despite rising electricity bills, grocery prices and other cost-of-living pressures facing our older Territorians

- frozen Concession Scheme payments that help Territorians, including Territorians with a disability, to meet their daily living costs

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- jacked up power, water and sewage bills for all Territory households by 5.3% and a failure to guarantee that it won't increase those prices any further. We heard that from the Treasurer just today.

A decent, safe, affordable house is a fundamental human right. Under the CLP, only some Territorians are granted or supported with that. Without a steady and adequate supply of housing for all Territorians, no matter where they live or the size of their pay packet, the Territory will never realise its full social and economic potential.

We are facing a significant housing shortage in our cities, regional towns, remote communities and homelands. Rents are becoming increasingly unaffordable for a significant number of renters, who make up almost half the population of the Northern Territory. We have heard continuously from the construction industry and the community housing sector that this government has failed to provide a pipeline of titled land for new affordable housing development. That was a question that we asked today in Question Time and we received a poor answer.

The industry is clearly asking the same question as highlighted by the Master Builders CEO Sallyann Innes, who in today's paper said:

Where are we going to house the people we want these opportunities to attract?

Sallyann goes on to say:

What they need is serviced land to build on, backed by a dependable pipeline for its release.

This is the industry that has been desperately calling on the CLP government for the past two years, mind you. They are still waiting for an answer from the government that released a housing strategy without a target or delivery plan. They had an explanation of the problems, which we all already know, but there was no solution attached. I

Industry and developers are clearly telling us they need certainty and confidence that land will be available when they are ready to invest and build. That means establishing a clear pipeline of suitable, well located, titled land to give industry the certainty it needs to plan, invest and deliver homes ahead of demand rather than constantly playing catch up.

After all, where will the Member for Barkly go to take all of his selfies if they are not building houses? He loved taking photos with what Labor built, but there are not so many photos and selfies now.

The CLP has not greenlit a single new housing development that was not already approved or progressed by the former Labor government. It failed to access hundreds of millions of Commonwealth funding available through the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) despite the desperate need for more social and affordable housing here in the Northern Territory.

We hear the demonization of social and affordable housing by the CLP government and the disrespect it has for Territorians who may never own their own home. That may be a reality for many individuals, couples or families here in the Northern Territory, and it is treated with disdain by the CLP government. That is the rhetoric we hear day-in and day-out about people who need social housing, and it shows a lack of care for building more affordable homes in the Northern Territory.

The CLP government shut down the YiSSA short-stay accommodation. With 400 beds, it was one of the largest short-stay accommodation facilities in Australia. It did not have much explanation as to why, other than a little petty issue about contracting. The CLP government did not even take up the federal government's offer of $3.5m by Minister Malarndirri McCarthy, the Northern Territory Labor senator, to ensure that vulnerable Territorians had short-stay accommodation, which they paid for. There is horrible rhetoric in the community about the short-stay accommodation being a big freebie. However, people who stayed at YiSSA paid to stay there. That can just go out the window.

The disdain and the concerted effort by the CLP to shut down YiSSA and treat the vulnerable Territorians who need access to those services was a miscalculated move. The CLP government was clearly mistaken about how much Territorians care about fellow vulnerable Territorians. It made a gross miscalculation about the closure of YiSSA because of that very fact.

I was in the city yesterday during my lunchbreak. A retailer brought it up with me and said, 'Isn't it terrible what the CLP has done with YiSSA?' They noticed there were more people displaced in the city in Darwin.

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They asked: where do people go? This was brought up with me; I did not raise it. I was just looking at some things in the shop and the retailer approached me specifically to raise this.

The CLP government shut down YiSSA and put more Territorians on the street, with more than 5,000 people already on the public housing waitlist. The CLP is intentionally stalling remote housing programs which are desperately needed and are safeguarded through a 10-year, $4bn partnership deal between the federal government and the Territory government. It should not matter who is in government. We should always look at how we improve the lives of fellow Territorians across the Northern Territory. The CLP is shamefully and deliberately stalling this important remote housing program which is focused on decreasing overcrowding in the Northern Territory and halving overcrowding in our remote communities. It is deliberately stalling because it does not want to invest in the bush. This is a huge problem.

We have seen the CLP refuse to take any steps to address the growing rental affordability crisis, leaving many Territory households struggling to find somewhere decent to rent within their budget. Some people are becoming at risk of being homeless.

Every Territorian deserves to feel safe at home, at work and in their community. There is one critical question that the government needs to answer: does the community feel safer under the CLP's leadership? For many Territorians, that answer is no. The Chief Minister loves to hide behind statistics. On her own measure we have seen crime and antisocial spikes in Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Darwin and suburbs like Parap.

People tell us that they have stopped reporting crime because they do not have faith that there will be a response. This is no criticism of our hardworking police in any way, shape or form. We know how hard and difficult their job is. We know the challenges, and we are grateful for all that they do to keep our Territory safe. The CLP is not supporting the measures that alleviate the pressures that our police are facing; rather, CLP members are enjoying their own rhetoric. We hear about shifts running without a single police unit on duty in Darwin, our capital city. This is incredibly concerning. I asked the Police minister yesterday and today, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, who prides herself on knowing and answering everything on all issues to do with police, but she will not even acknowledge the issue.

In our remote communities there are currently 60 policing positions vacant. Does the bush not deserve to be safe too? Do Territorians who live in our remote communities deserve to be safe too? We do not hear any song and dance from the CLP members. The CLP has a couple of bush members. I wonder whether they are knocking on the Chief Minister's door—she is the Police minister—to fight for their constituents to fill those vacancies in our remote stations.

This puts enormous pressure on stationed officers in our remote areas who are struggling to respond to jobs and undertake proactive bush policing. Many people remember that good community bush policing is proactive. The CLP invested funds in the last budget to upgrade police housing in the bush. Since then communities have heard nothing about what housing in which communities will be upgraded or when any of these works will commence.

The CLP is also letting down our hardworking frontline Fire and Emergency Services officers who do difficult and dangerous work in communities across the Northern Territory. The government took eight months to get the flood recovery funding out the door, leaving communities waiting for urgent upgrades. It has left this too late for the work to be done ahead of the current Wet Season.

Our firefighters have been forced to take their fight for decent pay and conditions to the Fair Work Commission because of intractable bargaining; the CLP government will not negotiate with them in good faith. We heard the Minister for Public Service talk about negotiating in good faith in Question Time, but I do not believe her; I believe the firies who are taking their fight for better pay to the Fair Work Commission.

Despite the last record Wet Season and the severe and growing risk of fire across the Northern Territory, the CLP government did not deliver additional funding to either Fire or Emergency Services in the latest budget, so those frontline services are left to operate within existing resources while the scope and complexity of their work grows each year.

The CLP has failed to continue funding for the gamba army, which played an important role in managing the threat of gamba grass, a huge fire risk, as many Territorians know, across the greater Darwin region.

If the CLP government was serious about helping Territorians to reduce their electricity bills, it would support Territorians to access solar, batteries and other practical energy-saving measures, as other jurisdictions

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around the country do. Instead of supporting the renewable transition, as each jurisdiction in the country does—indeed, we are seeing more work around the world—this is what the CLP has done instead. Almost immediately, it scrapped its election commitment for a home and business battery subsidy, denying hundreds of Territory households the important opportunity to bring down the cost of investment in solar energy.

We have seen the CLP walk back an election commitment to ensure that it would double the feed-in tariff during peak times and replaced it with a scheme that largely operates in off-peak times, mostly at night, and the benefits to Territorians are minimal. Plain and simple, the CLP lied to voters at the election.

It wasted no time in scrapping Labor's renewable energy target without articulating any clear alternative. Renewable energy is critical to sustainable affordable power, but it requires planning, investment over time and important targets. A well-managed transition plan should be about bringing new generation of energy and storage online in a coordinated way, maintaining reliability, managing costs and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels over time. However, the CLP has made it clear that it does not and will not support this critical work to ensure a sustainable future in the Territory, leaving us with less security and certainty regarding affordable energy for generations to come. It is a massive failure on the CLP's part and Territorians will continue to pay the price for energy.

We want to see development and make sure that it is done with appropriate safeguards, sustainability and to protect and preserve our beautiful environment and natural resources of the Northern Territory. We are stewards of the Territory, and this is not ours to sell out to the highest bidder. The CLP needs to stop treating the Northern Territory like that.

The CLP is systematically dismantling critical environmental protections that are designed to safeguard our water, pristine landscapes and areas of cultural and heritage significance, which Territorians want to protect. The CLP is doing this without transparency or accountability because they know that the majority of Territorians want to see development done sustainably and in the best interest of the Territory. Instead, the CLP continues to put the interests of our big industry ahead of the interests of everyday Territorians. The CLP cannot be trusted to manage our environment, and it will be our children and grandchildren who suffer the most from the development and the costs of the CLP mentality.

We know that Minister Burgoyne calls himself the most green-credentialed member of parliament. He has definitely steered away from that in Question Time today and …

Mr Maley: What about me?

Ms UIBO: You never called yourself that Member for Nelson. If you want to take that title you will have to fight the Member for Braitling.

Mr Maley: He's is the data dude

Ms UIBO: Yes. Unfortunately, Minister Burgoyne's actions speak louder than his words, as much as he loves the Sturt Desert Pea, the roundabout in front of his office and riding his push bike around Alice Springs, he is systematically dismantling important environment safeguards and water protections.

He is gearing up for that tomorrow, and that is very concerning, not just for our Labor opposition, but the many Territorians who have come to us and organisations that have spoken their concerns on the massive Bill that will be before the House tomorrow. Also, the many industry pastoralists and businesses which rely on country and that lifeline of clean and pristine water, to have their livelihoods and to look after their families, are worried about what these changes and anticipated changes proposed by the CLP government will mean, not just now, but into the future.

Rather than protect and preserve our environment for the future generations, Minister Burgoyne will systematically erode those important safeguards for the environment, for the benefit of big industry, rather than putting Territorians first.

A sorry legacy of the Environment minister includes scrapping the Northern Territory's renewable energy target; and abandoning a problem to implement emissions target of 43% by 2030.

Mr Maley interjecting.

Ms UIBO: The Member for Nelson wants that title, so I will put them both in the same bucket. They are all pretty much the same orange—different bad decision.

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Supporting the Territory Coordinator's role with the power to override 32 territory laws, including: environmental protections to fast-track development; removing third-party merits review from the Territory's petroleum, environment and water laws; and doubling the amount of water that can be extracted from the Tindall Limestone Aquifer through the Mataranka Water Allocation Plan without consultation. That is a massive one and people in the Arnhem Electorate in that Mataranka Never Never region are outraged. Still outraged two years later of what Minister Burgoyne and the CLP government have done when it comes to the Mataranka Water Allocation Plan decisions.

Minister Burgoyne and possibly the Deputy Chief Minister want to claim his bad decisions too: defunding environmental advocacy groups; ignoring community and expert input; releasing a buffel grass weed management plan that fails to manage the risk of buffel to the environment and the communities across our beautiful Central Australian region; establishing an air quality monitoring scheme without any details about how the scheme will operate; weakened sacred sites protection; and we saw the malicious forward planning of the CLP, last week, where the changes to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority meant that a certificate for sacred sites can be transferred from one development proposal to a different development proposal without any changes in process to inform traditional owners, Aboriginal custodians and Aboriginal Territorians who have a responsibility to protect and safeguard country. We saw the deliberate change in that legislation earlier in the year.

Last week the truth came out, the reason why the CLP pushed that through, ignored the four Aboriginal land councils in consultation and did not want to scrutinise the amendment to that Act. We saw in your home town of Alice Springs, Madam Speaker, that the changes to the AAPA sacred site certificate transfers and clearances were, in fact, so that the CLP could change a development site from one purpose to another and not inform any traditional owners and Aboriginal custodians of that beautiful Mparntwe country. It has now caused a rift, from my understanding—you would probably be aware of that, Madam Speaker—in Alice Springs (Mparntwe) where traditional owners had no visibility of and no consultation about that transfer of the sacred sites clearance and development to a different project in Alice Springs. It became clear last week that was the purpose—malicious intent in changing and amending laws, like what we will see tomorrow with the Environment and Water Legislation Amendment Bill.

We will see, maybe in one of the announcements made today in Central Australia, more of the truth of how the CLP is pushing through and changing laws without scrutiny so that it can push through and fast-track development without proper safeguards, engaging and consulting the community and Territorians who are directly impacted by any of the decisions that may be made by the government. We are seeing that erosion of safeguards and protection for Territorians, particularly on country and when we are considering decisions of Aboriginal Territorians.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO: Further to some of the failures, we have seen Minister Burgoyne introduce the Bill eroding protection in water and environment. Some of the huge concerns are about limiting community input into heritage decisions, the removal of regular reviews and renewals of licences, including for LNG facilities.

Economic development matters, but it must not come at the expense of sustainable water supplies and our beautiful pristine waterways. Our water, the environment and heritage belong to Territorians, not just now but into future generations. They do not belong to the CLP government. These important protections should not be stripped away without Territorians having a say in the process. We need to ensure that the government focuses on extensive consultation regarding changes for waterways and ensures that the community is part of that work every step of the way.

We continue to see the CLP government dismiss the support and respect it should provide to Aboriginal Territorians, investing in initiatives that reduce poverty and disadvantage. The CLP has consistently sought to sideline, undermine and demonise Aboriginal Territorians under its leadership.

I turn to youth justice and detention. The CLP lowered the age of criminal responsibility from 12 years old to 10 years old. That was a backwards step in the view of every other jurisdiction in the country.

The CLP's 2024 laws mean that children aged 10 and 11 can again face criminal charges. Aboriginal health and justice organisations warned against the change. The CLP has reintroduced spit hoods into youth

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detention, despite this being a clear recommendation by the Royal Commission into Youth Detention to not have spit hoods.

The changes that have been made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led child principle are abysmal. This has created a harder pathway for Aboriginal children to be reunited with their families, ignoring the realities of housing and other services of support to families. The disdain for the reasons of that important principle and the decades of work to ensure that there is never again an Aboriginal Stolen Generation in this country has been completely dismissed, ignored and downplayed by the CLP government because apparently it knows better than all of the experts.

Aboriginal community controlled health services are central to our cultural safety and care models. Some of these Aboriginal medical services are the primary healthcare provider, particularly in our remote communities, and offer prevention to elements of our health system like chronic disease management in some remote and regional parts of the Northern Territory. If we do not invest in that community based care and preventable illnesses, we will continue to see an already overloaded hospital and our clinical systems increase more and more and compound year after year. The Territory cannot build a sustainable health system simply by expanding our emergency department.

Continuing on with the failures, there has been no consistent consultation with the four Aboriginal land councils over a number of Bills and reforms that directly impact traditional owners who have the responsibility sitting with the land councils to have those legal protections when it comes to traditional owner country.

Some of the reforms that have been neglected when that important consultation should have been engaged with our land councils include the Territory Coordinator Bill, eroding sacred sites legislation, changes to Aboriginal water reserve, erosion of environment and water safeguards, water allocation planning and public housing reforms.

We still have not forgotten about the atrocious election commitment broken promise to provide $12m over four years for Aboriginal ranger grants. This is something that Bill Yan, the now Treasurer, promised prior to the August 2024 election. In the first budget less than six months after, he broke that promise to Aboriginal rangers for a important grants program delivered and implemented through the Northern Territory government. People have not forgotten about that broken promise.

We have seen the Aboriginal Affairs minister abolish the treaty portfolio. We no longer see a continuation of local decision-making support beyond the current agreements and initiatives that have already commenced in the Northern Territory.

We do not see any clarity on whether or not the CLP intends to continue the current Aboriginal Justice Agreement, a landmark agreement in the country, led by the Northern Territory and the 152 consultations across the Northern Territory to establish that important agreement.

It expires next year. Any time that our Labor opposition has asked questions of the Attorney-General to explain how the work she is doing is improving the justice outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians, she dismisses, deflects, diverts and does not answer the important question about the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and better justice outcomes in the Northern Territory.

The CLP government has defunded law and justice groups and does no important work to increase the target in the Aboriginal Justice Agreement for more law and justice groups. There are only five or six currently in the NT. It is the same amount as when the CLP came into government in August 2024. The Aboriginal Justice Agreement has a target of 20. There has been no work done—maybe deliberately—by the Attorney-General and the CLP government to improve justice outcomes led by the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. I remind the CLP government that the Aboriginal Justice Agreement was a bipartisan agreement. Both Labor and CLP signed that agreement.

Mr Edgington: Eventually, yes, after you let us.

Ms UIBO: Put your name and face on there, Member for Barkly. I was proud that the Member for Barkly signed on behalf of the CLP opposition at the time. I say that in truth, not in jest.

Mr Paech: He downgraded the document.

Ms UIBO: No. I will not stoop to that. I am disappointed that the Member for Barkly did not become the Attorney-General and did not lead that work on behalf of the CLP government after August 2024. The

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Member for Brennan and she has not led anything. She has led nothing and completely walked back. Things would have been better when it comes to improving Aboriginal justice outcomes if the Member for Barkly had been given what maybe he was promised. Again, maybe that is another election commitment broken by the Chief Minister. If he had been given the Attorney-General portfolio rather than the Member for Brennan, who just seems to stick up for the Chief Minister all the time and not actually do the work that her portfolio has asked her to do.

We have not seen clarity under the CLP government regarding whether funding for the repair and maintenance of homelands will continue. Just last week I was travelling to multiple communities and homelands in the Arnhem electorate with the Federal Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour. Every single person and organisation we met with spoke about the importance of homelands and the worries and the concerns that there is no investment, no plan and no support for Territory homelands. They are not going away.

I am not sure why the CLP government is ignoring our important homelands. We need to …

Mr Edgington: Because you left it out of the agreement.

Ms UIBO: I will just remind the Member for Barkly that in the October sittings, I tabled the original document of the Remote Housing Agreement. There are several sections highlighted—which the minister knows—regarding homelands. I have sent that to every single one of my constituents who have asked me to, because somewhere we have seen the Member for Barkly remove that element of the important homelands from that very important agreement. Apparently the Joint Steering Committee on Remote Housing no longer has the homelands component in the agreement, which has my signature on it. We will ask some questions about that.

They do not govern for all Territorians.

VISITOR
Councillor Shani Carson

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of City of Darwin Councillor Shani Carson.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we just heard 40 minutes of the scattergun approach by the Opposition Leader. I wish I had that gun when I went goose shooting next. Surely there was enough shot in the air that something had to get hit. Unfortunately, nothing really got hit. She is talking about 'sit down and shut up'. That is what she wants everyone else to do, to sit down and shut up and listen to her.

I will correct some of those attempts to rewrite history from the Leader of the Opposition. She spoke about the Chief Minister being in opposition and now that she is leader, she wants to look busy and not get anything done but there is a plan. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, I see you wave that plan around a lot.

That is a plan that we have stuck to. In August 2024, Territorians booted out the Labor government. They were sick of the press release after press release and no action. Crime was out of control. The economy was in the toilet and there was no lifestyle. We created a plan and we have stuck to that plan.

It is a long-term plan. I am sure you have heard many times people on this side of the House talk about reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our Territory lifestyle. That is what our plan is about and that is what we do on this side of the House. We make sure that everything we do ties in with that plan to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle.

The Opposition Leader asked whether our lives are better. We have been in office for two years and things are getting better, but there is a big shift. Let me tell you that there was a very low bar at our starting point. The Territory was down the gurgler after 19-odd years of Labor government. After 19 years, the Territory is looking better and it is a better place to live and our lifestyle is starting to get better. I got into parliament to make sure that we fight for our lifestyle. The Territory is worth fighting for and that is what I am here to do.

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The Leader of the Opposition spoke about how we do not listen before we legislate. I will correct the record: the former Labor government removed the scrutiny committee. It had a committee where legislation went for scrutiny and the public was allowed to comment and make submissions, but Labor removed it. It was there for four years, then those on the other side—at least two of them were ministers in that government—removed that committee. When the Leader of the Opposition talks about the CLP not listening before we legislate, I remind people who are listening that we put the scrutiny committee back in place. In fact, all three Bills we introduced today are going to that scrutiny committee.

The Leader of the Opposition was a minister. She removed that committee and the opportunity for Territorians, organisations and the public to give a submission to people in government who could listen to those submissions and make recommendations or amendments as required. That is what listening is all about. The Labor government removed the scrutiny committee.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about leadership, housing and all these media events that we go to. When we came to office—I spoke to the Treasurer about this—the Labor government's program on the infrastructure list was about $4.5bn. That was to get things built to make the Territory a better place. How did that go? After examining the books, we found that it had only put about $300m of cash towards that program. There was a long list on the program, but there was no funding for it.

If you want to talk about evidence, there is evidence that you cannot just lead by media release, which the previous Labor government did. Its own figures, its own books, had $4.5bn worth of infrastructure program and $300m worth of cash. It gets worse. That $300m cash was already committed to the State Square Art Gallery and the Mandorah Jetty. Of that $4.5bn worth of infrastructure program, there was no cash available to do any of it.

When the Leader of the Opposition talks about leadership, I think she needs to be careful of her own leadership when she is making statements about how good she was in government. I am sure the backbenchers on the other side who were not in the previous government do not know of these decisions. I invite them to check out their own budget books. You can see that the Leader of the Opposition might be scared of her own leadership because she was involved in these programs, these things I am talking about now. She and the Member for Gwoja were senior ministers in that government and they had a program worth $4.5bn and $300m cash which was already spent.

We also found out that to stay under the cap of its budget—again, this is history. The previous government was in power for approximately eight years. When Labor came into government, there was about $1.8bn worth of debt; when it left, there was about $12bn worth of debt. It was a fraction more than that, but I will round the figures. That means it overspent by approximately $1bn each year.

I could understand that if it was your own bank balance and you earned the money and you spend it and you want to get yourself in debt, but remember the government does not earn money; we spend taxpayers' money. We spend taxpayers' money on programs. The previous Labor government overspent about a billion dollars. That is not $1m, that is 1,000 million dollars every year. It is a lot of zeros and what have we got to show for it?

There is a list, and I know the Member for Barkly likes to talk about this list because he has a copy. I am going to run through some of these overspends that the previous government had in its eight years:

- $515m for the shiplift, which is blown out, so that was wrong
- $164 million overspend for the Tiger Brennan bridge we did not need
- remember the previous government gave a $35m payout to the youth offenders and then tried to hide it. They instructed their lawyers to make suppression orders so it would not get out there—$35m and they tried to hide it
- $432,000 to move a bus stop, and then to put it back. When we are talking about the cost of living—which I am going to get onto next—$432,000 is a lot of money
- what about the $7m blowout for the underground car park here next door to Parliament House
- What about the shade structure? I think the Treasurer talks about getting his noodle sunburnt in a crisscross pattern because there was never ever a shade in that thing; $2.7m and $80,000 a year to maintain it.

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That is where the previous Labor government has spent taxpayers' money and of course there is more. One of my favourites is $5,000 to rent a Christmas tree for the Health department and the $2m overspend on the Myilly Point playground. Again, this is taxpayers' money spent.

What about the $220,000 on the renewable target report that they commissioned and then it was released under FOI with every single page redacted except the front and back—every single page. Member for Nightcliff, when you talk about the 100% renewable target you want, go and read that report if you could find it because it is redacted, but I am sure your colleagues have got a copy because they were in government when they when they did it. What about the $40,000 that we shot out to space—$40,000 shot to space.

When you talk about spending and talk about the cost of living, the government should set the example. We should make sure that we do not waste money. Again, what about the $12m grandstand—I forgot about that one—and the $40m overspend on the new road into the city? That is not what it cost, that was $40m over budget.

What about all the money? What about the Nightcliff Police Station—$12m on a police station that is not manned. That is where our taxpayers' money went. What about the cost of living; the Opposition Leader spoke about that. What about crime that went up in eight years; in places like Tennant Creek it was up 3,000% sometimes. Domestic violence assaults, which is a very serious matter, under the previous Labor government, went up 89.9% in eight years. For two years it has gone down under us.

What about house break-ins?

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the chatter. Let the deputy Chief minister speak in silence, please.

Mr MALEY: What about house break-ins, which were up by 111%; commercial break-ins were up by 70%; total assaults by 68%. When the Opposition Leader asks what have we done about the cost of living and whether we feel safe. 'Do you feel safe' were her words. For two years we have been in office and we have reduced those rates.

I want to refresh the memory of those sitting opposite of what it was like in the Northern Territory in 2024 and what happened with those figures under eight years of Labor. What happened to the Territory economy under 19 years, effectively, of Labor rule? It went down the toilet.

While I am on the cost of living, in the last term of the previous Labor government, it had a battery bonus solar panel scheme where people could invest in batteries and a solar feed-in tariff, which I will get to as well.

When we came to office in 2024, we had a battery scheme which was $6m. We doubled what the previous Labor government had and we had it up to $12,000 per person. Labor cut that down to $5,000.

Talking about cost of living, when we on this side of the House come into office, we said for the first year we would spend $6m. All that was spent. What did the previous Labor government do? It cut that program. When people were hurting after Labor getting into $12bn worth of debt, what did it do? It cut one of the programs it had in place to make it easy to live in the Northern Territory.

I want to get to the solar feed-in tariffs. I invite those opposite to look at what their leader had when she was in office. They had to feed-in tariff at about 18 cents. Then they said, 'No, we are cutting that down to nine cents and we will grandfather that. Anyone who has that can maintain it because we know cost of living is hurting. We have just spent your budget by $12bn and we just cut the battery bonus. But we will grandfather that program.' Guess what? It cut that program as well.

When the Leader of the Opposition speaks about how this side of the House is not doing anything for the cost of living—I am sure my colleagues will talk about what we have done in two years—I am refreshing the House of what the previous Labor government did in its 19 years—or eight years with this previous government—in relation to the Territory. It tore it up and threw it down the sink.

The Opposition Leader spoke about housing shortages. We have been in office for two years. Today in Question Time we heard the Minister for Housing talk about Lee Point where there will be 800. We know the Member for Nightcliff opposes that. We know there will be some land released at Tennant Creek. The

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Housing minister also spoke about Alice Springs. There are some land releases to make sure we can build houses.

The Leader of Opposition spoke about Sallyann Innes. I give a big shout-out to her and her organisation who do a great job. The Opposition Leader's words were, 'Where will you house the people we want to attract here?' I will talk about 'attract here' later because that is what we are doing. We are growing the economy, sending out messages of certainty and making our lifestyle better—honk, honk, that is the goose thing.

We are making sure we have land release available. We know those opposite us want to flip-flop around on Lee Point. They do not know what is going on. They oppose it, support it, then they oppose it. Then they say, 'There are no houses.'

You need to have land available and support progress and development in Northern Territory. Those people living in Nightcliff—I can tell you that was a forest many years ago. Someone cleared that, and people are living there. When I moved to my house in Howard Springs a long time ago, it was native bush. There are lots of rural area and now those areas are nice suburbs where people live. They have chickens, horses and dogs.

We are releasing land and we know those opposite oppose that.

We are still on housing shortage. What about our new homeowners grant of $50,000 for a new and $30,000 for a second? I spoke to the Treasurer and I said, 'Mr Treasurer, how is that going?' There have been over 1,600 applications and 1,500 approvals of those. There are about 100 still pending at the moment.

Those programs have gone out. I can give you some more details. There are 348 of the $50,000 and of the $30,000 there are 220 …

Mr Edgington: Are any at Lee Point?

Mr MALEY: When they finally get it up and approved. We want to thank the feds for doing that.

That is $30m worth of grants that are going into the community. Not only does that allow people to build a house; it also puts $30m into that circular economy. What does that mean? That means tradies get to work and spend their time building houses or sheds, then they get to spend that money at the local cinema or shopping centre. It goes around. They get to pay their rent or pay off their mortgage if they choose to own a home.

When we talk about housing shortages and the cost of living, the Leader of the Opposition says that we have done nothing, that the world is falling in and the sky is about to crash. I want to refresh those opposite on the truth of it, what has happened and what we are doing about the housing grant.

Of that $30m, the upscale of that—to build a house is a lot more expensive than $50,000—is millions of dollars. That goes back to what Sallyann and her organisation do, and I give a big shout-out to them for working hard for Territorians, listening to make sure that we get things going.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the 50% renewables target and how we have scrapped it to make it a new policy. That is what she asked the Environment minister about. We made that—the Energy minister—reliable, secure and affordable electricity. No matter where you live in the Territory, we want Territorians to have access to reliable, secure, affordable electricity.

Those opposite wanted 50% renewable. The Member for Nightcliff wants 100% renewable, but there is a cost. Clearly, cost is important to those in Labor because they blew out the budget. I have gone through multiple instances of what I would call the waste of taxpayer money.

On this side of the Chamber we want to make sure that Territorians have reliable, secure and affordable energy. We do not mind if it comes from solar panels, thermal or gas; we just want to make sure we get the cheapest available electricity for Territorians. We have turned on the gas—the Chief Minister and I were at Tamboran and she literally turned the wheel in the land of opportunity. The Member for Barkly was there; he is always in the land of opportunity.

We are making sure that we have that lowest cost possible for Territorians. If those opposite had not put the brakes on gas for seven years with its moratorium, we would have Beetaloo gas flowing already. We would not have spent all the money we have on importing gas. The minister for Environment spoke about that and

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how expensive it is. Going back to what we can do for the Territory, we listened to Territorians, and they told us that they want reliable, secure and affordable electricity. That is what we are offering them.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the security of sacred sites and asked whether we consulted the whole Northern Territory. We have made it so that you can transfer those certificates. Once the premises is inspected, a certificate is given—just like with planning, you do not have to go through the process again. Those sites are protected through the certificate, and we allow the certificate to roll on with that property. I cannot see how the world will fall in. There will not be new sacred sites because that property has already been inspected. All the proper work is being done, including all the consultation with the landholders and the traditional owners. After that is done, a certificate is issued and that is a valid certificate which rolls on.

We are trying to rebuild the economy and our lifestyle and offer certainty for Territorians, because certainty creates employment.

The Leader of Opposition spoke about care and protection and about changing the Aboriginal placement principle. Those opposite know that principle has not been changed. What has been changed is that we moved child safety to be our number one priority. We listened to Territorians, and they were clear that they want children in the Northern Territory to be safe. That needs to be the number one priority for Territorian children, so we moved that up. That is the number one priority.

For the Leader of the Opposition to go out there—I am sure she did not mislead the House on purpose. There has been no change that principle. What we have simply done is made safety the number one priority. I challenge anyone to a debate on why safety should not be the number one priority for any child in the Northern Territory.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of Aboriginal ranger grants. We know they are funded from the feds. We know that the grants are available and they can apply for it, just like everyone else. We on this side of the House have a responsibility to spend taxpayers' money wisely. Why should anyone have an opportunity to apply for taxpayers' money and have an advantage over everyone else? Everyone is on the same playing field. It is a fair playing field. Everyone knows the rules. Organisations can apply for grants no matter who they are and if they fit the criteria, and it is a competitive grant system, they get to have an access to taxpayers money fairly. We have listened to Territorians and what they have said is they want to make sure that access to taxpayers money is done fairly across the Northern Territory. That is what we have done. We have listened to Territorians, who have asked us to be fair, be wise and to look after taxpayers money.

The last thing I want to touch on is Aboriginal justice agreements. What we found when we come to office is that yes, the previous Labor government set them up, which is great. You know what they forgot to do? They forgot to fund them. You set up a program. Get it working and then you cut the funding. You run it for a year and go no more funding. We will just see what happens. What we have done on this side of the House with Aboriginal justice agreements is, we have continued to fund them. We are evaluating them to see if it a fair and just use of taxpayers' money. We will evaluate them. If it is fine to be fair, we will continue.

If we can find that we can spend taxpayers' money more wisely and get a good outcome for those people who are in the Corrections system—I will talk about Corrections later—that is common sense. We want to break the cycle of reoffending. We know those on the opposite side did not do that. The Member for Gwoja and his program, Back on Track—$35m for 35 kids, and we do not even know if they actually had a successful outcome. What we are doing is going back to spending taxpayers' money wisely and ask, is that fair spending of taxpayers money? It was $35m for 35 children and we do not really know whether it worked.

Back to Aboriginal justice agreements set up by the previous Labor government—Labor cut off their funding. They had them for a short time. We have continued to fund them for 12 months, then we will evaluate them.

I think the Leader of Opposition is trying to rewrite history and say how this side of the House is all doom and gloom, and we do not listen. I think she did forget about August 2024. When there was a big listening fest, and I think what happened was that there was a big shift in what Territorians wanted. They were sick and tired of the previous Labor government wasting their money on programs, running the Territory by press release, having these billion dollar programs with no money and no money to fund them.

A member interjecting. What about the rural residents?

Mr MALEY: What about the rural residents? We know about that. We are about trying to make sure that we protect rural residents. We hope we are giving certainty to all Territorians.

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We want to make sure that if you are a proponent and you want to put a development into the Northern Territory, we are listening. We are going to make sure that if you can fly with all our regulations; all our environmental laws and you can offer a benefit to the Territory, like employment and cash capital in, we will support that.

We have to make sure and Member for Daly, you know, banging on about our data centres—we will listen to the community. I challenge the Member for Daly and ask: what is a data centre? We know that the previous Labor government supported a hyperscale data centre. The Leader of the Opposition was here the last time saying that we do not support hyperscale data centres. The Chief Minister waved her own press release—hyperscale data centre; they support it; they approved it.

You can sit on the other side and try to rewrite history and say that you do not support data centres when you have already done two.

I think they have done four 'do not deals' with land. A 'do not deal' is simply, 'We will not deal with that land; you come back in a years' time with a proposal, and we will consider it in light of all the environmental factors, all the rules and regulations in the Northern Territory and what can we get for the benefit of Territorians.' That is what we will do. You cannot consult on something you do not know about, if you do not know what the data centre is or the information is.

We are making sure that we continue to consult and listen to Territorians across the Territory because those on the other side clearly have not done that. They are trying to scare and fear monger people about how the world is going to stop. When you upload your phone into the cloud, it is a data centre; it is not a cloud in the sky. It is actually the one you approved.

If the Member for Daly wants to talk about hyperscale data centres, the one that he approved and his government, we can talk about that. But what we are saying …

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 31; the Deputy Chief Minister made a reflection on me. I have not approved any data centres, and I ask him to withdraw it. He said that I approved. I have not approved any data centres, and he needs to revoke that.

Mr MALEY: I said 'your government'!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Deputy Chief Minister has confirmed that he was saying 'your government'. Leave it at that.

Members interjecting.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! There is constant interruption. Labor approved previous data centres.

Mr YOUNG: Speaking to the point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. He said me personally. I have not approved any data centres, and I ask him to withdraw that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, can you confirm whether you were talking directly about the Member for Daly or the government?

Mr MALEY: I can confirm that I am talking about the previous Labor government, which approved the data centres, two of them, and one was a hyperscale data centre.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That will do.

Mr MALEY: That will clear up anything. If I have misspoke …

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no more on the point of order, Deputy Chief Minister. Stop the chatter.

Mr MALEY: I want to confirm that the previous Labor government approved two data centres, one was a hyperscale data centre, and one was a smaller data centre.

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Back to being safe in your own home. We know that the previous Labor government wants to divide us and they want to make this a hierarchy of them and us, but all Territorians are the same. We listen to Territorians right across the Northern Territory and we on this side have spoken to thousands of Territorians.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr MALEY: What we do on this side of the House is we go out and we listen to Territorians and let me give you an example of how we do that. We go to school events, sporting events, mobile offices, we do door knocking, we attend markets, we go to social groups and multicultural groups. We go to football training; we go to information nights. We go to the golf club for dinner; we go and talk to people. That happens right across all seventeen members on this side of the House.

I am not sure what the previous Labor government did. I am not sure what the now Labor government did because if they are talking about 100% renewables, they are not talking to the same people that I am talking to because what we are over here is trying to make sure we give people a secure, reliable and affordable power. What we did hear, when we were out talking to people, is that Territorians wanted stronger action on crime so we introduced the strongest bail laws to make sure that if you commit a crime that the community expects something to happen and we have done that.

We have locked in the best pay deal for the police and welcomed over 259 new recruits across all streams. We have announced plans for updating corrections and the 1,200-bed facility and remand intake as well as a purpose-built 200-bed, all part of the plan that members on this side of the House wave around quite regularly. We have a masterplan for Corrections. We are developing that to make sure that if you commit a crime and the courts put you in jail, we have a bed for you and, more importantly, we act on breaking the cycle of reoffending. We are going out to the community to ensure that rehabilitation and work programs happen. We also heard that people want to see some of these offenders paying back their debt to society. The Member for Katherine and the Chief Minister were with the graffiti taskforce. Those work parties were out filling up sandbags in flooded areas last year. They are setting up with the show societies and the orchid clubs. That is about giving back to the community and paying your debt. We listened to community members about that; that is what they asked us to do, and that is what we are doing.

We are also making things safe with OC spray. We are making sure that crime rates are going down, and criminal offences are down by 10,000 a year. Victims of crime rates have fallen by 3,500 a year. These are true real-life events that are making the Territory a better place.

I love talking about the economy and have been asked questions today. We recorded the best in the nation at 3.2%, and 2.2% of that is in the resources sector. In fact, I was at Core Lithium today talking about the new product that it is exporting. It is the first time since it reopened its mine. This is new ore going out, which is jobs in the Northern Territory. Core Lithium told me today that 90% of its employees live in the Territory, around the rural area and Berry Springs. I am sure that the Member for Daly does not even know where Berry Springs is. He does not go there often; he lives in Nightcliff now. Five mining projects have reached FID in the last two years. That is more than $5bn worth of capital investment here.

Our population has grown by 1.6%. There are more people in the Territory and more people with jobs.

Residential building approvals have soared by 45%. I spoke about them earlier and what we are doing to release land and our first homeowner build schemes. We are clearing delays for homeowners, with a higher payroll tax threshold. We raised it from $1.5m to $2.5m. In my view, payroll tax is a tax on success, and we are making sure that you do not do that. Those companies and smaller businesses can expand to take advantage of the boom in resources, whether it be gas or mining. They can take an opportunity to expand their businesses.

On top of that, we exempted apprentices and trainees. That allows these businesses to put on a trainee or apprentice and train that young person so that they can stay in the Northern Territory, just like when I did my apprenticeship. I did it in the Territory, and I stayed here. We are trying to encourage that. We do not want people to go to different states because sometimes they do not come back. We want people to come here—I live at Howard Springs and had to travel to Darwin to do my training. That is quite fair that you might live in an area—as long as you stay in the Territory and have a long-term job.

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Nolans is a major project of $1.9bn with a 40-year mine life. A person could do their apprenticeship and stay at that mine. I bet if you were there for 30 years, you would not be a mechanic on the tools anymore; you would be up with a high-paying, good, purposeful job, and maybe your children could be in that community.

We all know that lifestyle is a huge part of the Territory, and it goes back to our economy because you cannot have a great lifestyle if you cannot afford to live there. I just spoke about how the resources sector is giving us that opportunity, giving Territorians high-paid jobs to stay in the Territory to achieve that lifestyle.

Going back to our plan, we said that we would deliver a new hunting area. Last week we delivered the new hunting area, Maley's way—sorry, not Maley's way—Beatrice Waterfowl Hunting Area, which is open for hunting. All those years when the previous Labor government talked about trying to get hunting votes—'We cannot find any land. We cannot find this.' Two years in, we found land and now there is a new area for people to go waterfowl hunting.

Fishing is a massive thing. This motion is about listening to the community, and somehow the previous Labor government members are saying that we are not. We know that fishing has been an issue here. It is popular. The previous Labor government did nothing; it was too scared and it was too hard.

We designed a Have Your Say for more than 88,000 people across Darwin. There were 1,200 responses and 23 written submissions put into that Have Your Say. Eighty-eight thousand people had the opportunity to have their say. We are listening and working on that, but we are not just sitting back doing nothing while we are getting on with this plan. We have released 9,000 golden snapper into the harbour—in fact, the Member for Goyder and I did that. We are putting 87 artificial reefs into the harbour with HCS Constructions and In-Depth Innovations. I went to their yards and saw these reefs sitting there. It is a $1.7m program to continue with that lifestyle piece of fishing.

Not everyone has a big seven-metre boat that goes offshore and stays overnight or for two nights and it cleans up on the fish. Some people have a smaller boat, maybe husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend, maybe a small family and they want to go somewhere closer. You do not have to go offshore and risk the weather; you can go in with one of our lovely boat ramps, go in the harbour, catch a couple of goldies, maybe get a barra and then go back home and have that day out there enjoying the Territory lifestyle. We are putting out those artificial reefs to regrow the population whilst we continue to work through the Have Your Say program to make sure we deal with the golden snapper problem. It seems that the previous Labor government knew about it and did nothing.

In relation to lifestyle we have also committed $4m over two years to continue our fishing compliance unit because we heard in the Have Your Say that compliance is a big issue with people out there doing the wrong thing, so we want to send a clear message, enjoy our Territory lifestyle, enjoy your fish, but stay within the rules; do not increase your fish, get your bag limit. If you get your goldies, go somewhere else. If you get your barra go somewhere else. If you get your jewies go somewhere else. Once you have a bag limit, go home. I will leave it there because I think I have said many times, tomorrow's fishing starts today and we need to make sure that we get things up and running.

I will talk about cattle. The Cattlemen's Association, Romy and her group, do a massive bit for our society. The cattle industry employs directly and indirectly thousands and thousands of people and puts millions of dollars in our community. We want to continue to do that and we listen to those groups to ensure that we can progress the live export and the box beef and can cut their regulations to make the Northern Territory a better place to produce cows.

I have been involved in agriculture for a long time and I know how important it is not only to the Territory economy but also the lifestyle. People going out, living on a cattle station, working every day, going back and sitting, having a feed, having a steak with the boys and girls, then going back to work is a lifestyle thing. People get on their horses—everyone knows I ride my horse—it is a great atmosphere, and it is about our Territory lifestyle. We want to support that because they support us in jobs and with the export. There is a whole chain of industries that flow from the cattlemen, so thank you for that work.

The mango industry—they do a great job—thank you for that.

I have five seconds left. I think that the Territory is in a good place and I enjoy living here.

Mr CHARLS (People, Sport and Culture): Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to this motion and reflect on what the commitment means in practice.

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As Minister for People, Sport and Culture, I have the privilege of working across a portfolio that touches the lives of Territorians at every stage, from supporting children and young people to improving opportunities for people with disability, recognising our veterans and older Territorians, investing in sporting and celebrating our arts and culture. Our work is fundamentally about people and if we are serious about governing in the interest of all Territorians, we must listen to them. We must understand the challenges facing different communities, recognise that the needs of a family in a regional town may be different from those of a family in Darwin and make sure that people have a genuine opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect their lives. That is what consultation is about. It is not simply holding a meeting or asking people to provide feedback; it is about listening, understanding different perspectives and using that knowledge to inform the decisions we make.

Since commencing my role as minister, I have made that a priority across the Peoples, Sport and Culture portfolio. In the past year alone, I have attended more than 150 events alongside hundreds of meetings with community organisations, peak bodies, service providers, sporting organisations, artists, disability participants, advocates and individuals. I have provided opportunity to hear directly from thousands of Territorians.

These engagements have taken place across the Territory and have covered a wide range of issues. They have included conversations with people who are delivering services on the ground, volunteers who gave their time to their communities, young people who want to have a say in their future and organisations that represent the interests of some of our most vulnerable Territorians.

I acknowledge that engagement is not a one-off exercise; it is an ongoing responsibility and one that must continue throughout the development and delivery of government policy. One of the most important ways we support that responsibility is through our advisory councils and committees. These bodies bring together people with experience, knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. I value advice that comes directly from the people who understand these issues best. They provide an opportunity for government to hear directly from those who understand the issues and to consider their advice when determining priorities and developing responses.

I do not expect everyone to agree with me. I welcome constructive feedback, different perspectives and conversations that challenge existing approaches. Meaningful consultation means creating opportunities for people to influence decisions, not simply informing them once decisions have been made. These councils provide an important connection between community priorities and government decision-making.

I am often raising outcomes of these advisory bodies in parliament. My Minister's Disability Advisory Committee is an important example. People with disability and their representative organisations have a valuable contribution to make to the decisions that affect their lives. Their experiences help us understand what barriers remain and where government action can make a practical difference.

This year we released the second Disability Strategy Action Plan under the Northern Territory Disability Strategy. The plan contains 54 actions covering rights, participation, accessibility, economic opportunities, health and wellbeing. Importantly, it has been informed by the voices and experience of people with disability and their organisations. That engagement matters because the people who experience barriers are often best placed to tell us what needs to change. We have also continued to work with Commonwealth on significant disability reforms, including the staged rollout of Thriving Kids, which commenced 1 October.

Reaching the bilateral agreement involves substantial negotiation, and we have continued to advocate for arrangements that reflect the particular circumstances of the Northern Territory. We have made it clear that what works in metropolitan Australia will not necessarily work in our regional and remote communities. That is why the Territory voices must be heard when national decisions are being made. Only last week, downstairs in the members and guests lounge, I hosted the Disability Advisory Council and heard firsthand the impact of current NDIS reform agenda by the Commonwealth Government.

I have taken these concerns directly to the federal ministers on a number of occasions. I have raised concerns through correspondence, direct ministerial discussions and meetings with national regulatory bodies. Some of these issues include NDIS pricing and the cost of delivering services in the Territory; thin markets and remote service delivery; quality safeguarding an unethical provider conduct; greater Territory representation in national decision-making; access to disability advocacy and legal representation; the impact of national NDIS legislative reforms; support for participants with high support needs; Thriving Kids and the adequacy of funding and service arrangements; and the development of First Nations disability services.

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I will continue to challenge national policy settings that fail to recognise the unique circumstances of the Northern Territory. National consistency must not come at the expense of equitable outcomes for Territorians. A policy that works in metropolitan Australia will not necessarily work in remote Australia. Our geography, demographics and service delivery challenges cannot be an afterthought in national reform. It is interesting to note that I am yet to hear a peep on these issues from the Territory Labor opposition.

There are also many members within the disability community who are aware that I will not only sit and listen but also act on their behalf and escalate these issues as needed. Here are some examples to provide some facts for the opposition.

Across my Disability portfolio alone, we have recorded 39 dedicated advocacy touchpoints, in addition to broader stakeholder engagement. My office has escalated 20 individual matters to NDIS requiring further attention. We have recorded 20 Commonwealth touchpoints, engaging directly with federal ministers, the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. A further 18 touchpoints involve local engagement, consultation and advocacy.

I have been listening to participants, families, support coordinators, disability advocates, service providers and statutory office holders. From conversations with families at the Darwin Disability Expo to hearing directly from people in remote communities, I am ensuring a diversity of Territory voices informs my advocacy. In other words, when concerns are raised with me, they do not stop at my office job.

An example is the changes that the City of Darwin made to disability car parks earlier this year. I represented the Disability Advisory Committee, the people with disability, and my seniors. The council has since informed me that that decision was reversed.

These are just a few examples that fly in the face of today's original motion brought by Labor. It would appear that this is just another stunt with a tagline and seems to be based on the offence level of the Opposition Leader, no-one else.

I move on to the Office of Youth Affairs and my Youth portfolio. Consultation means giving young Territorians the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their future.

The Youth Round Table continued its work in 2026, providing young people with an opportunity to put forward their views and recommendations directly to government. Young people deserve to be heard, not just spoken about. Their perspectives are important when we are considering the services, facilities and opportunities they need.

This year we commence construction of the northern suburbs youth hub at Leanyer Recreation Park. The facility will provide structured after-hours and school holiday activities for young people in Darwin's northern suburbs. It will complement the important work already being delivered through youth services at the Youth Shak program at Sanderson High School, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

We have also committed more than $8.39m to after-hours services, school holiday programs and youth-led initiatives during 2025–26. Those investments are supported by the knowledge and experience of the organisations working directly with young people and their families. They understand the challenges facing young people in their communities and their advice helps ensure that the programs we support are relevant and accessible.

I took part in the Youth Parliament process and have spent countless hours sitting down with young people across the Territory to hear their views.

Another important development this year was the inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Committee for the Arts (MACA). The arts and culture sector makes an enormous contribution to the identity, lifestyle and economy of the Northern Territory. Artists, cultural organisations and creative practitioners understand the opportunities and challenges that face their sector. MACA provides a forum for people with experience and knowledge of the Territory's arts and culture sector to help guide future priorities. It is an important opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the government and the sector and to ensure that the voices of those working in the arts are part of the conversation.

This year we released the first five-year action plan under the Northern Territory Arts Strategy 2034. The plan provides a roadmap for government investment and support over the next five years. It recognises the importance of investing in artists, connecting communities with culture and growing audiences for Territory artists.

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The Northern Territory Government invested $7.68m through 200 arts grants and funding allocations during 2025–26. That funding supports artists and organisations across the Territory, including those delivering cultural activities in regional and remote communities. The upgraded Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Cultural Centre in Tennant Creek was officially opened in July following a $10m investment. The centre has been handed over to Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation and provides an important cultural facility for the Barkly region.

These achievements demonstrate the value of working with organisations and communities that know their needs best. I enjoyed visiting arts centres in remote areas this year and look forward to visiting even more over the next 12 months.

Our multicultural communities are an important part of the Territory's identity. The Northern Territory. Northern Territory's strength has always come from its people and the many cultures that make up our communities. Throughout 2026 we continued working with multicultural organisations, community leaders and peak bodies to strengthen the way community voices are represented in government.

We also continued work on a new long-term multicultural strategy. That work must recognise the diversity of our communities and ensure that people from different cultural backgrounds have the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them.

Our community organisations play a vital role in bringing people together, supporting cultural identity and helping people connect with services and opportunities. Their knowledge and experience are an important part of developing effective government policy.

It was only this week, two nights ago, that I met with my advisory council. You can clearly see the importance and values that group holds in our discussions. I value the feedback and will escalate issues as they arise.

At the recent multicultural ministers' meeting of the state and territories with the federal government, many states and territories, including the Northern Territory represented by me, raised concerns about the backpacker visas and other announcements made by the federal minister responsible for migration.

VISITORS
Being Mentors

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of young people from Being Mentors, accompanied by their support staff. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to you all.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr CHARLS: I also welcome all the members to the gallery.

I was talking about another backflip announcement recently made by the federal government. It is looking to change the backpacker visas. I welcome, along with all the members of the Northern Territory Government, that decision being relooked at and changed.

Consultation is equally important when we are considering the needs of older Territorians. Our seniors helped build the communities we enjoy today, and they deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and care. This year we continued the Northern Territory Seniors Recognition Scheme, with eligible members receiving their new cards and the $550 concession.

We also released the inaugural World Elder Abuse Awareness Day grant and continued the older persons abuse grants program. These initiatives provides opportunities for organisations to raise awareness, support older people and prevent elder abuse and mistreatment.

During 2025–26, more than $500,000 was provided to seniors organisations and peak body services, including information, advocacy and elder abuse outreach. Those organisations understand the challenges facing older Territorians and are an important source of advice about how government can improve its responses.

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We also continued to work to modernise the pensioner concession scheme, replacing an ageing system that has been in place for about 30 years.

I will outline the support that we provide as cost-of-living relief measures. When it comes to the community service obligation, we pay electricity retailers so that Territorians on regulated tariffs pay less than it costs to supply their power. We have budgeted $224.7m this year, up by $58.2m from the revised $166.5m budget last year. What that means on a bill is about $2,178 for a family; $2,027 for a couple building their first home; and about $1,535 for a senior or apprentice.

Regarding the Seniors Recognition Scheme, eligible NT residents aged 65 years and over get a $550 prepaid card each financial year. Members choose how they spend it. The budget provides about $8.35m for the scheme. When it comes to the NT Concession Scheme, Territorians on qualifying benefit can also get help with bills, including electricity up to $1,200 a year; water up to $800 a year; sewerage, $486 a year; council rates up to $200 a year; vehicle registration, $154 a year; garbage collection up to $150 a year; prescription glasses, $402 every two years; and driver's licence renewal for free. They are the some of the cost-of-living measures that we provide for seniors.

For Territory families, there is a back-to-school payment of $200 per eligible student from preschool to year 12 for approved school costs. A family of two eligible students has $400 towards the school year.

Eligible urban students from transition to Year 12 can get a $200 voucher each year for sport, recreation or cultural activities in remote communities at council or provider-organised funded activities locally. Families with a child under 5 who has not started transition to school can get a $200 Learn-to-Swim voucher each year for lessons with a registered provider. There is one voucher per child, per semester across the sports and swim schemes. This government also introduced fee-free primary school swimming lessons across the Territory.

Our engagement with veterans and their families has also been an important part of the year. Through Operation Thrive and the Northern Territory's Defence Veterans Strategy, we continue to work with veteran organisations and community partners to support wellbeing, connection and recognition. I continue to engage directly with veterans and the broader veteran community to understand their experiences, challenges and priorities.

Across my Veterans Affairs portfolio, my office has escalated eight individual matters requiring further attention. Our veterans deserve a government that is accessible, responsive, and prepared to advocate on their behalf. While many matters affecting veterans fall within Commonwealth responsibility, that does not diminish our responsibility to advocate for Territory veterans. Jurisdictional boundaries should not become barriers to advocacy. I will continue to ensure the experiences of Territory veterans are represented in national conversations.

Our commitment to veterans must extend beyond commemorative occasions. It must be reflected in the work we do throughout the year. The support comes through Operation Thrive, with $850,000 supporting projects across the Territory. From that $850,000, 20 Veteran community grants have been awarded worth almost $255,000.

One of those projects was the Cor Infinitus Memorial, which was installed after listening to the community. The memorial provides a place of reflection for families and friends bereaved by veteran suicide, while raising awareness of suicide prevention. It was an important moment for the veteran community, and one that reflected the value of listening to those who understand the significance of that loss.

We celebrated the return of Veteran Games, supporting the event and helping the winning Territory team compete at the national finals.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr CHARLS: These are examples of how engagement with veteran organisations and community partners can help inform the work we undertake. I point out another backflip from the federal government who introduced a cap of $5,000 for allied health services for veterans. That was then changed and put back to how it was before, and I welcome that decision.

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Labor scrapped its proposed $5,000 cap on allied health treatments for veterans after months of sustained backlash from the veteran community, backed by strong advocacy from the Finocchiaro CLP government right here in the Territory. The cap quietly included in the federal budget was due to take effect from July next year and would have forced veterans with more complex or ongoing conditions to prove their need for care once costs exceeded $5,000 a year—a change that Veteran advocates and ex service organisation said would mean longer wait times and delayed access to essential treatment.

The decision to scrap the cap was the right outcome, but the policy should never have been considered. It initially started with the feedback from the Northern Territory Minister's Advisory Council - Veterans Affairs, then led to my direct advocacy to the federal minister.

Sport and recreation are also central to the lifestyle enjoyed by Territorians. Our sporting organisations, clubs and volunteers are part of the fabric of our communities. They understand what is needed to encourage participation, develop talented athletes and provide opportunities for people of all abilities. Throughout 2026, I continue to work with the sporting organisations and community partners to support major events participation and sporting pathways.

A total of 26,900 urban Sports Vouchers and almost 4,900 Learn to Swim Vouchers were provided during 2025–26, delivering more than $3.18m in cost-of-living support to families. We have continued working with the Northern Territory Sports Academy to support talented athletes, including those pursuing opportunities in parasports. We have also progressed improvements to community sporting facilities, including investments announced for the XE Arena, Kahlin Oval and Grey Soccer Oval. These projects reflect the important works with sporting organisation and local communities to understand their priorities and delivering facilities that meet their needs. I also point out that we have allocated funding for the lights in the Wanguri Oval, $1.1m for the Nakara Oval and improvements for the Woodroffe Oval as well, along with the Tracy Village.

The 2025–26 Annual Report provides a strong measure of the work undertaken across the portfolio. The department met or exceeded 10 of its 12 key performance indicator targets and provided more than $56.5m in grand funding to individuals and organisations across the Territory.

Those figures represent a significant amount of work happening in communities across the Northern Territory. They also reflect the contribution of the many organisations and individuals who work alongside government to deliver outcomes.

I acknowledge the department staff, community organisations, sporting bodies, cultural organisations, volunteers and individuals who have contributed to this work throughout the year. Their advice, experience and commitment are essential to what we do.

Governing in the interest of all Territorians requires us to recognise that the Northern Territory is diverse. The challenges facing a remote community may be different from those facing an urban suburb. The priorities of a young person may be different from those of an older Territorian. The needs of people with disability, veterans, artists, sporting organisations and multicultural communities must all be considered. There is no single conversation that can capture all of those perspectives. That is why the work of our advisory committees, the Youth Roundtable and our ongoing engagement with stakeholders is so important. It provides opportunities for people to contribute their knowledge and experience, and it helps ensure the government decisions are informed by the communities they affect. We will not always agree with every stakeholder or be able to deliver every request, but we have a responsibility to listen, to consider their voice provided and to explain the decisions we make. That is what responsible government looks like.

The achievements I have outlined today demonstrate the breadth of the People, Sport and Cultural portfolio and the importance of maintaining strong relationship with Territorians. As we look towards 2027, we will continue to build on that work. I will continue to work supporting people with disability, investing in young Territorians, recognising our seniors and veterans, strengthening our multicultural communities and supporting art, sports and education that contribute so much to our lifestyle.

I will commit to working with the Commonwealth, local organisations and communities to deliver practical outcomes. I will continue to ensure that the voices of Territorians are heard in the decisions that affect them because, ultimately, our responsibility is to the people we represent. The CLP government is committed to governing the interest of all Territorians. That commitment must be reflected in the way we work every day. I look forward to building on the progress made throughout 2026 and continuing to work with communities across the Territory to make the Northern Territory a place where everyone has the opportunity to participate, contribute and thrive.

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Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I too want to contribute on the call on the government to govern in the interest of all Territorians and genuinely consult with communities on decisions that affect them.

I will talk about Aboriginal Territorians who are being sidelined by many of the policies and legislation. We have seen laws and policies introduced that disproportionately impact Aboriginal people and their communities. Investment is being systematically stripped away from those Territorians for which it would improve housing, health, education and employment outcomes. We have seen Aboriginal leaders walk away from their positions or leave the Territory altogether because of the government's failure to engage with them respectfully and meaningfully.

You cannot claim to govern for the whole of the Territory while systematically dismissing the voices of Aboriginal people and their leaders, who make up 30% of the Territory's population. Genuine leadership means listening, building relationships and working together, not shutting people out when their voices are inconvenient.

Another area I will talk about is the cost-of-living pressures. The cost-of-living pressures confronting Territorians, especially in remote communities, are high. The CLP government has continued to ignore and play down just how tough Territorians, especially in the bush, are doing it at the moment. Failures include not providing cost-of living relief to families, payments under the Seniors Recognition Scheme are frozen and frozen Concession Scheme payments to help Territorians, including those with disability, to meet their daily living costs.

I will talk about renting and social housing. We are without steady and adequate housing for all Territorians. We are underdone in that aspect. We are facing a significant housing shortage in our cities, towns, regions and remote communities. Rentals and social housing are becoming scarce. Shutting down YiSSA put more vulnerable Territorians out on the street, with more than 5,000 people already on the public housing waitlist. It is becoming desperate in the communities as well, with the remote housing program being stalled. There are no steps to address the growing rental affordability crisis that many Territorians are living with.

I will touch on environmental and water failures. We want to see development, but it needs to be done sustainably to ensure we protect and preserve our beautiful environment and natural resource. We are stalwarts of the Territory. We are handing down the Territory to our children and grandchildren. We want our springs and waterholes to flow. It is not ours to sell to the highest bidder; the CLP needs to stop treating it that way.

The CLP is systematically dismantling critical environmental protections that are designed to safeguard our water, pristine landscape and areas of cultural and heritage significance as the Territory develops. There is no transparency, consultation or accountability because the CLP government knows that the that majority of Territorians want consultation to happen. We want development done sustainably and in the best interest of all Territorians. Instead, the CLP government continues to put the interests of big industry ahead of Territorians. The CLP cannot be trusted to manage our environment, and our children and grandchildren will suffer the most from its development-at-all-costs mentality.

I now turn my views to Aboriginal Territorians. Rather than investing in initiatives to reduce poverty and disadvantage, this government has consistently sought to sideline, undermine and demonise Aboriginal Territorians. In the youth justice and detention space, they have lowered the criminal responsibility age from 12 to 10. The CLP 2024 law means that children aged 10 and 11 can face criminal charges. All or most Aboriginal health and justice organisations warned against this change. They have also reintroduced spit hoods in youth detention.

The Every Child Matters Bill changed how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection works. This will lead to harder paths for kids to reunite with their families and ignores the realities of housing and other services that is limited to support families in remote communities.

Regarding health, Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations are central to culturally sensitive, safe care for all Aboriginals in the community. I have two Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations in my electorate, Red Lily Health and Mala'la Health at Maningrida. They provide primary healthcare prevention and chronic disease management to communities across the West Arnhem region. If we do not invest in community-based care, preventable illnesses continue to flow into already-overloaded hospitals such as RDH in Darwin.

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The Territory cannot build a sustainable health system simply by expanding the emergency departments in Darwin. We need to fund these community clinics and healthcare services so people stay on community, get the treatment they need on community and are not in Darwin overburdening the system.

This government does little consultation with the land councils. There is a number of Bills or reform the land councils were interested in but had little to no consultation. These include the Territory Coordinator Bill, eroding sacred sites legislation, changes to the Aboriginal water reserves, erosion of the environmental and water safeguards, water allocation planning and public housing reforms.

In regard to Aboriginal rangers, there is a walk-back on the election commitment to provide $12m in funding to Aboriginal rangers. These guys are the eyes and ears and the first point of contact in the bush in regard to weeds and feral animals. This is important, and it will save us a lot of money in the long run if we fund these programs that will contain these weeds today.

In regard to treaty and local decision-making, the CLP abolished the treaty portfolio. I will touch a bit on the local decision-making when that came in, back in 2023–24 in Maningrida. Out of that, the community created Nja-marleya, which is now an Aboriginal justice group that sit in the courts in the community. Elders are talking to judges on how to trial a youth that has done something wrong. It is a big outcome in our communities. I think that is an amazing program to look at. There is one in Ramingining too.

The Aboriginal Justice Agreement is one thing that came out of that. Obviously, there is no clarity on whether the government intends to continue this, but if we are to trial youths in the bush, where their community is, it will save a lot of money of them coming in, using and clogging up the systems in major hubs.

Regarding housing and homelands, there is no clarity on funding. The other week, the minister for Housing went on about homelands. I am looking for him to champion it going forward.

In regard to public drinking laws, a high proportion of Aboriginal people are affected as well as low-income residents and Territorians experiencing homelessness. This is introducing fines to people who are already struggling to make ends meet risks more Aboriginal people in our already overcrowded prisons and watch houses and increases the risk of further deaths in custody.

If we get things right for children from birth to age five, we lay the foundations for each child to reap their full potential to thrive into adulthood. Kids need to be engaged with their schooling, and they need to feel safe and supported in the school environment. This government wants to treat them like a number or pass judgement on them and not actually show any care for them as human beings. There are a lot of kids who do not go to school because of overcrowding and poverty. Look at those preventive measures, fund them, get social workers in and see where the issue is.

Territory Labor stand for reforms that allow essential workforce to thrive with confidence. We back a system that supports staff, protects them and upholds the integrity of their profession.

Getting back to the care and protection of children, the Minister for Child Protection claims to put children first when rejecting evidence about what keeps children safe. More than 150 submissions recommended against the CLP government changes to the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* and they were all ignored. It was an extraordinary rejection of decades of evidence and the expertise of those who work in the sector every day.

The majority of children in care are placed in purchased home-based care, not with family and not with kin, and I find that disturbing. I am a kinship carer. I have the child we adopted at five years old. She is now thriving in high school and doing very well. During Estimates, the minister could not answer how many purchased home-based carers are Aboriginal, which we were interested to hear. Hopefully she will address that soon.

With child protection workforce shortages and burnout, almost one in every two child protection worker positions is not filled. Since August 2024 many child protection positions have remained vacant for up to six months—the highest proportion in April 2025. The government is failing to attract, recruit and retain the professional workforce that meets Territory needs. The Greater Darwin Protection Unit experienced a 27% vacancy rate last year.

Now I will move on to health failures. A record budget means nothing if a patient still cannot get a bed, ambulances are unavailable, staff are burning out and regional services are under pressure. Elective surgery has gone backwards, emergency department presentation KPIs have gone backwards, preventable

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hospitalisations have increased and Aboriginal Territorians are being discharged against medical advice just to make beds available. The average length of acute mental health inpatient stay has increased. The average monthly number of acute patients in hospital is increasing.

Code yellows are being called more frequently. The health system is under immense pressure and this remains normalised even under the CLP government whose election promise was to stop code yellows occurring. There is just $8m in new health infrastructure across the Territory while the government pursues a $1bn private prison. Meanwhile, ageing hospitals, inadequate remote clinics, code yellows, ambulance pressures and workforce shortages are all big issues. The issue is not simply money; it is whether the government has a plan to turn investment into capacity. The system is struggling to provide the right care at the right time in the right place, and we see that in our Aboriginal community which has the highest number of health issues and chronic illnesses.

For Territorians in remote communities, workforce capacity means something different. It means being able to access care without leaving home every time the system is under pressure. Too many Territorians are travelling hundreds of kilometres for care, which costs a lot of money as well. If we had the services in remote communities, we would save a lot of money, and people would stay at home with their families in those times.

I will touch on the aviation access in regard to the cost of living. Airfares in the Northern Territory are expensive, especially in our remote areas in West Arnhem. The Airnorth fare from here for a single seat is about $700, and $500 to Warrawi with Fly Tiwi. It is expensive and now, with the Wet coming on, the Bodibus option will not be viable. I do not know what the cost of an emergency charter flights must be, but geez, it must cost a lot to get people out of the communities.

The last thing I will touch on in regard to the cost of living and the help that is needed in remote communities—I talked about this before—is fuel and freight. In Maningrida, fuel is nearly $4m. Everything is $1.20 to $1.50 more than in the main centres. The cheapest is Jabiru which is $2.75. We have Warrawi, Minjilang, Milikapiti, Pirlangimpi and Wurrumiyanga all over the $3 mark. If we could get some subsidy or look at our remote communities it would go a long way with our groceries. That is my contribution.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, today I talk to this motion brought by the Opposition Leader to call on the government to govern in the interests of all Territorians.

What I found interesting listening to the members opposite is time and time again they have forgotten what the word ‘all’ means. They have a hard time. I do not blame them—they advocate—but we need to look past dividing the Territory purely on race.

The Territory is made up of many diverse communities. In my electorate we have a strong Vietnamese community full of wonderful, hardworking Territorians. We have a small but strong presence in our Cambodian community with a temple in Humpty Doo. They are great members of the community, but they are also Territorians. We have Malaysians, Thais, we have Larrakia, Woolner and many different people who have made the Territory their home. Of course, we have the Greeks, the Irish, the Italians, the English, the Scots and everyone else. At the end of the day, we are all Territorians. We all want to see the Territory be the best place to live, work and play.

When I see this motion about calls to genuinely consult with communities on the decisions that affect them, I think about my own consultation. I think about 2024 when I went out to Freds Pass Reserve in my electorate and had a meeting with some representatives of the Southern Districts Football Club. I spoke with them and they told me that for nearly 10 years they had been asking for lights. They wanted lights on the oval at Freds Pass because—I have said it before, credit to them—playing AFL in the build–up is a miserable experience for the players and the spectators. By having lights on an oval enables people to have those games later in the day when it is a little cooler so that our women and our children train in the cooler parts of the build-up, instead of in the hottest part of the day where it is 40° and 140% humidity.

For 10 years they had asked the Labor government at the time. They said, ‘Please, we really want some lights out here’. They had seen lights being built at ovals in town in safe Labor seats and out in the bush in safe Labor seats. They said, ‘What about us in the rural area?’

We held a media conference and announced that, if elected, the CLP government would put $1m towards lights at their Norbuilt Oval.

Within an hour, the then Labor Chief Minister, Eva Lawler, issued a media release saying, ‘If you are making small $1m commitments, I guess we will match it’. For 10 years this club had asked. For 10 years they had

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said, ‘We want some investment in the rural area. We want a little love. We want some lights at the oval.’ For 10 years they were ignored, but when it came to an election time, all of a sudden Labor was listening. Maybe if Labor had listened to the community not just at election times, but over its eight years in government, it might still be the government. Listening just at election times is not the pathway forward.

Thank you to the Minister for People, Sport and Culture and the Minister for Essential Services for ensuring that last year we managed to get the lights operational on the oval before the first home game. Whenever I drive past Freds Pass, I look out my window and see those poles and I think that no government can ever take that away. We delivered for the people of the rural area; we listened.

I think about the grants over the years that the previous Labor government did for golf clubs and sporting clubs in town and out bush. I also think about the Humpty Doo Golf Club and the playground there that sat derelict for nearly 15 years. The CLP government listened. We asked, ‘What can we do to help make this more family friendly? How can we invest in our community groups?’ The club came up with a plan. It found some money and we contributed $100,000 towards the playground at the Humpty Doo Golf Club. Whenever I go to the pub at the golfie and see the playground, I see dozens of kids running around. In fact, I hosted my wedding reception at the golfie and that was full of children. They were very loud—it ruined some of the speeches—but they were having a great time and the playground was full. To me, that is about consulting and listening to the community.

I talk to people about what is the biggest issue in the rural area, and they tell me it is road safety. When I was on the Litchfield Council, prior to entering this place, we approached the NT Government about fixing the Bees Creek Road intersection. It is the gateway to Freds Pass Reserve, the council chambers, Bees Creek Primary School, Sattler Christian College and Veterans NT, as well as hundreds of homes in Bees Creek; it is an incredibly busy intersection. The response we got at the time was a department staff member who told us, ‘You will not get an upgrade until someone dies’.

A petition was put together with the help of the council CEO and council staff. We advocated and got some minor tweaks to that intersection, but nowhere near enough. That is why now when you drive down the Stuart Highway on your way home, you can drive past Coolalinga and see some roadworks going on. The Minister for Logistics and Infrastructure and the CLP government are listening to rural residents and are upgrading that intersection with a $1.8m spend to make it safer for rural families.

When I drive a bit further down the Stuart Highway, I come across the Sayer Road intersection, which had been plagued with a very short turning lane and people going a bit too fast. The people in that community—in the Member for Nelson’s electorate—reached out and asked, ‘Is there anything we can do to make this safer?’ This CLP government went out, looked at the problem and upgraded that intersection last year.

We continue to make sure that our rural roads are as safe as possible because these are the roads that kids travel on their way to school and families take to go to the local sporting grounds. These are the families and people in the Territory who just want to go about their day and get to work.

For too long, Territorians have been aware of our horrific road statistics. When I leave parliament tonight and drive down the Arnhem Highway to go home, I will drive past about 100 crosses on the side of the road. They are for rural kids, mums, dads and families who have passed away on our roads. Every time I see a roadwork sign and an intersection being upgraded, I am incredibly proud that we are listening to the community.

I will quickly touch on some of the comments the Member for Arafura made. He talked about how the Every Child Matters Bill this Assembly passed would make it harder for children to be reunited with their families, and that somehow this disproportionately would impact Aboriginal Territorians which is why we should not do it. We want every Territorian to be safe, and we think that every child’s life matters. The Aboriginal placement principle is still in that legislation; we just said that the most important thing is the child’s safety, above all else. I disagree with the Member for Arafura. I thought he spoke quite calmly today, but I do not see his logic that somehow the idea we are calling on every child's life to matter, that somehow we are not governing for all Territorians.

He talked about how public drinking laws disproportionately affect Aboriginal Territorians, when public drinking effects all Territorians. Our laws apply to all Territorians. The families who just want to go to the local park or the shop without being abused or stumbling over somebody. That is everyday Territorians, and viewing the lens of every Bill with race in mind is not how any government should function. We are governing for all Territorians. We are trying to ensure every Territory child has the opportunity to grow up, get a good education, get a good job, stay in the Territory, invest in the Territory and raise a family here.

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We are restoring private maternity services. That is something we listen to the community on—worked hard. It would have been nice to have a year's heads up if 2023, when the Leader of the Opposition was made aware of it, instead of the political games played. We listened, and we delivered. The next operator of the Darwin private hospital will have maternity services.

We did not take it to the election. We did not take voluntary assisted dying to the last general election, but we listened to the community. The community wanted, we got on with the job and within another 14 or 15 months from now it will be accessible in the Northern Territory.

When we pass Bills like we have this week, with the OC spray trial being permanently legislated, that is us listening to all Territorians. In Question Time today, when the Leader of the Opposition asked a question about castle law, the *NT News* has picked it up and put up a little poll. As of two minutes ago, the poll was at 94% of people saying we should get on and implement it. Perhaps we will listen to the people. There will be a process of course.

I will reiterate is the Territory is made up of many wonderful, brilliant communities. It is made up of gardeners, hunters, naturalists, twitches, the bird people. It is made up of people who love Irish dancing, love their laksa, people in Alice Springs who think Darwin is too far, and people who live in Darwin who think Berrimah is too far. The Territory is a beautiful place and we are governing in the interests of all Territorians and we will continue to consult our communities, be out and about and make sure we are accessible to our constituents.

I think it is a particular timing speech we had today from the Leader of the Opposition, because it was clear in her speech that if she is ever handed the keys—the power—to the Territory, she will not govern in the interest of all Territorians. Territorians know they cannot trust Labor, that is why the CLP government will continue.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I find it extraordinary the Labor opposition has the audacity to bring a motion into this House lecturing us about governing in the interests of all Territorians. Of all the things Labor could bring before this parliament, they choose this. You can say what you want when you are in election mode. You can promise the world to everybody. You can say what you want in opposition without any costings or commitment attached to it. What really matters is when you get into government, you deliver on the promises that you make and continue to listen, adjust, reassess and implement as you go along. I do not think there is any Territorians that could say we are not doing what we said we would do. As a government we are doing what we said we would do.

The very party that had eight years to listen to Territorians, address the crisis that was our crime issues, to strengthen our economy, to support the families and businesses who were crying out for help, to protect the Territory lifestyle we love so much—what did it leave behind? It left an economy under enormous pressure, a government carrying billions of dollars in debt, businesses struggling with crime and the cost of doing their business, families questioning whether the Territory was still the place they wanted to raise their children and communities which felt that their concerns had been ignored for far too long.

Yet here they are, standing on the other side of this Chamber, telling us how to govern for all Territorians. I find it difficult to stomach, not because the principle is wrong. Of course every government should govern for all Territorians. The Member for Goyder said it well: we are governing for all Territorians, not a select few. Because Labor's record tells a different story from the one that they are trying to sell us today, we will do what we need to do to govern for all Territorians.

As I said, Labor had eight years of opportunities, ministerial officers, departmental resources and the ability to make decisions, and to deliver a safer, stronger and more prosperous Territory that they kept promising. They cannot stand here now and pretend that all the problems that we inherited somehow appeared overnight. They cannot pretend that they played no part in the economic and community safety challenges that we were elected to address.

They can certainly not stand here and suggest that they alone understand what all Territorians need. If Labor understood Territorians so well, why did Territorians vote them out only two short years ago? That is the question they should be asking themselves. Instead, they spend their time criticising a government that has been prepared to tackle the difficult issues. We introduced reforms and they oppose them. We set out our reasons and they criticise our approach. When we talk about the problems inherited from their government, they accuse us of looking backwards. Labor cannot demand accountability from this government while refusing to accept accountability for its own record. They want the authority to lecture without the responsibility of explaining what went wrong, and Territorians deserve better than that.

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I know what people in Fannie Bay are telling me. I will tell the House what representing your community looks like. It means getting out of your office, walking through your electorate, talking to people who have real concerns and real expectations and listening even when the conversation is uncomfortable.

I am out in Fannie Bay every day. I speak to residents, business owners, sporting clubs, community organisations, volunteers and families. I visit businesses in the Parap Village. I talk to people around Fannie Bay, East Point and the Gardens. I attend sporting events, school activities, community gatherings and meetings with local organisations. I do not just turn up when the camera is on, similar to what the Member for Solomon does. He turns up when the camera is and then walks away.

I turn up because that is how you understand what is happening in your electorate. Recently I had the pleasure of taking our Chief Minister, Hon Lia Finocchiaro, into Fannie Bay. We met with local business owners and residents and heard firsthand about the things that matter to them. I can tell you that people were not holding back. They were open and direct and spoke about the challenges of operating a business, community safety and antisocial behaviour. the future of their families, the cost of living and the Territory lifestyle.

What they wanted was not complicated; they wanted to be heard. They wanted to know that their concerns were being taken seriously and they wanted a government willing to make decisions and follow through. That is why I am proud to be part of a government whose Chief Minister is prepared to get out in the community and have those conversations face-to-face with the people who matter.

I am interested to know how the opposition responds when people tell them something they do not want to hear. Do they listen? Do they reconsider? Do they offer a practical alternative, or do they simply return to this Chamber and oppose whatever the government puts forward? Governing for all Territorians requires more than announcing that you care about them; you have to demonstrate it. Labor's legacy cannot be erased by a motion.

I speak regularly with people who have lived in the Territory for decades, who remember when our economy was growing, when they were optimistic about our future and when they felt confident about their children and could build a life here. I hear their disappointment at the problems that have developed over the years, and their determination to see this Territory succeed again.

One of the most frustrating things for me is listening to the opposition speak as though the past eight years never happened. The debt figures, economic challenge, experience of crime victims and struggling business owners do not matter—but they do.

In Labor's final budget, net debt was forecast to reach approximately $11bn. That debt has consequences. It affects the Territory's financial flexibility and the decisions government must make about future services and investment.

Labor cannot demand that we can fix everything immediately without acknowledging the financial position that it left behind. You do not get to leave the problems at somebody else's door and then complain that the repairs are taking too long, and that is exactly what Labor is attempting to do. The people I speak with are not interested in their excuses. They know that rebuilding takes time, but they expect the government to get on with the job, and that is what we are doing.

Community safety is one of the most common concerns raised with me. In Parap Village, businesses have described the effects of antisocial behaviour on their staff, customers and daily operations. Residents have spoken about feeling intimidated in public spaces. I have raised concerns about public drunkenness, threatening behaviour and the need for a coordinated response from government and local authorities. These are not theoretical issues; they have a direct impact on people's lives.

When I hear the opposition criticising our community safety reforms I have to ask: what would it do instead? Would it accept the status quo and tell businesses to put up with it, like Labor did when it was in government? Would it say, 'Here, we will give you a crime grant where you can put extra shutters on your windows'? Would it tell victims that the system simply needs more time? That is not good enough.

Our government introduced stronger bail laws through Declan's law. We have strengthened penalties for assaults on frontline workers; introduced measures targeting ram raids and offenders who boast about their crimes; strengthened sentencing provisions for serious offences; worked to improve how matters progress through the courts; increased baseline Legal Aid funding; and improved arrangements for keeping victims

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informed. These reforms reflect a fundamental commitment. People who do the wrong thing must be held accountable. Victims deserve to be taken seriously.

Labor is perfectly entitled to scrutinise legislation. That is an important part of parliament, and I think we all agree on that. However, opposition must amount to more than just simply saying no to everything. If Labor disagrees with reform, it should explain clearly what it would do instead. It should explain how that alternative would make Territorians safer now, not five or 10 years down the track. What would you do now to make Territorians safer? That is the test that matters. It is not who delivers the cleverest criticism in Question Time or who can produce the most dramatic media release; but whether people feel safe in their homes, workplaces and communities.

I am not standing here pretending that the job is done; it is not. I still hear about crime and antisocial behaviour in my electorate and I will continue raising those concerns, but at least this government is prepared to confront difficult problems and be judged on the results.

Let us have a quick chat about the economy. When Labor members talk about governing for all Territorians, I want them to think about the small business owners who wake up early, work long hours and carry enormous responsibilities. They are the people who employ our young Territorians, sponsor our sporting clubs, support our local fundraisers and donate to community organisations. They are the people whose businesses are essential to the character of our neighbourhoods. These are the people whom I speak to regularly across the Fannie Bay electorate. They want economic confidence, more customers, opportunities to expand, a safe trading environment and to know that the Territory has a future.

Under this government, visitor expenditure reached $2.36bn in the year to June 2026. That is an increase of 24%. We welcomed approximately 1.23 million overnight visitors. Those visitors represent opportunities for local businesses, tourism operators, accommodation providers and hospitality workers. Our government is investing in tourism, supporting major events and working to restore investor confidence. From international cricket and major sporting events to cultural festivals and regional tourism, we are working to bring people and economic activity into the Territory. That matters to the people I represent.

When somebody visits Darwin and spends money at a local restaurant, that supports jobs. When a family chooses to stay in the Territory, that supports our local economy. When a business owner feels confident enough to invest or expand, that creates opportunities. That is how economic policy connects to everyday life.

Labor can criticise our approach, but it also needs to explain how its own eight years delivered economic confidence to the Territorians it promised.

The Territory lifestyle is not an election slogan; it is something that people live and value every day. In Fannie Bay we have beautiful places like East Point Reserve, Lake Alexander and our beautiful coastline. We have sporting clubs, community groups, markets and recreational spaces. We have volunteers who give countless hours of their time to make our community stronger, and they deserve a government that understands the importance of those things. Our government has committed to investing to improve Territory parks, visitor facilities and recreational access. We are supporting events that bring communities together and attract visitors, and we are working to rebuild the confidence needed for families and businesses to thrive.

Restoring the Territory lifestyle means getting the smaller things right. It means safe neighbourhoods, accessible community facilities, well-supported sporting clubs, clean parks and local businesses able to operate without constantly worrying about what will happen outside their doors. These are the issues that I hear about, and these are the issues that I will keep pursuing. Governing for all means representing everyone, not a select few.

That is another thing that I want Labor to understand. I do not represent only the people who voted for me. I represent every resident in Fannie Bay, whether they support the CLP, Labor, an Independent or nobody at all. Whether they agree with my decisions or disagree with every one, I listen to people with different views. I respond to everyone's concerns, and I advocate for all residents, even when their opinions are different from mine, because that is what being a good local member means.

I am not suggesting that every person agrees with the decisions that this government makes. Of course they do not, but having disagreements does not excuse any of us from listening. Listening does not always mean agreeing; it means taking people seriously and being prepared to explain your position. That is why I find this this motion so frustrating.

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The opposition wants to claim the high ground on representing Territorians, but it must also demonstrate that it listens to the people who support the changes it opposes. People concerned about crime, people who want stronger accountability, people who want economic growth, people who want jobs and opportunities—those Territorians deserve to be heard as well, and Labor cannot simply dismiss their concerns because it disagrees with the government's policy response.

I would like the opposition to answer one simple question: after eight years in government, what gives Labor the authority to lecture us about listening to Territorians, without first accounting for the outcomes of its own decisions? Labor members had their chance; they had the power and the opportunity to make the Territory safer and more prosperous. In 2024 Territorians made it clear that they wanted a different direction; now Labor wants to tell this government how it should govern. I think Labor members should start by listening to the people who voted for change. They should listen to the business owners who want a safer environment; the victims who want a justice system that takes their experiences seriously; the families who want confidence in their children's future; and the Territorians who want our economy and lifestyle restored, because those voices count too.

I know whose interests I am here to represent because I speak to them every day. They are the residents who stop me for a chat, the business owners who invite me into their shops, the sporting clubs that ask for support, the volunteers who quietly get on with the job and the families who want to see this Territory succeed. I do not need Labor to lecture me about the importance of listening to those people.

I listen to them because it is my responsibility as the Member for Fannie Bay. It is my privilege and the very reason that I am in this Chamber, so I say to the opposition: before you stand in this House and tell us how to govern for all Territorians, take a serious look at your own record. Take responsibility for the decisions you made, explain alternatives for what you are offering and stop treating opposition to government policy as a substitute for a vision for this Territory. Territorians deserve more than lectures from the party they voted out of office. They deserve action, accountability and a government committed to rebuilding the Territory.

Labor can bring in all the motions it likes, but it cannot rewrite eight years of history simply by changing sides of the Chamber.

Mr SMELT (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I support the motion that calls on the CLP government to govern in the interests of all Territorians and to genuinely consult with communities on decisions that affect them.

Time and again we have seen the CLP government bring legislation to this House. Whether it is about the environment, alcohol policy, justice or planning, almost every Bill brought to this House involves watering down protections and removing opportunities for Territorians and community organisations to have a say. The opportunity for Territorians to have their voices heard and for that to be taken on board and make changes is being removed.

We also see this in the way that the CLP government makes decisions about legislation, budgets and the future of the Territory. Far too often it is about decisions first and explanations later. Territorians expect their government to govern for everyone, not just those who agree with it, support it and live in the major centres. From Nhulunbuy to Newcastle Waters to Nightcliff, every Territorian deserves to be heard, every Territorian deserves to be respected and everyone deserves to be represented, regardless of where they live.

I will take you through a couple of topics where the CLP government time and again has demonstrated that it is not listening to the community and is not governing for all Territorians.

I will start with housing. Territory Labor believes that decent, safe and affordable housing is a fundamental human right, but under this CLP government those rights are not extended to everyone. Across the housing continuum, from short-stay accommodation, transitional accommodation, rentals and social and affordable housing through to homes in private ownership, there are always elements that the CLP leaves out. This was shown to great effect with the decision-making about the YiSSA short-stay accommodation.

You cannot take 400 beds out of the Darwin community and not see that impact on people, particularly people travelling to Darwin from remote locations. We are seeing the impact of that already. In my electorate of Nightcliff it is apparent that there are more people sleeping rough and under the eaves of businesses, in parks and on the foreshore. There is no doubt that is a direct result of removing those 400 beds from the Darwin community.

It also goes to the supply of housing in the Northern Territory. As we have seen, and it was discussed earlier, there has not been a single new headworks design project released under this CLP government. All the

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current housing projects were planned, initiated and prepared under the previous Labor government. If the CLP government is serious about governing for all Territorians, it should be providing housing for everyone, no matter where they live or the size of their pay packet. Every Territorian must have access to safe and affordable housing.

We see this every day in the significant housing shortages across the Territory. We have seen double-digit growth in costs for our renters. Now in the Northern Territory, and particularly my electorate of Nightcliff, more than 50% of people are renters. The CLP government has dropped the ball when it comes to providing support for people who rent. There are lots of opportunities for the design and construction of more affordable housing that will support more people who rent.

We have also heard from the construction industry and through the development of the housing discussion paper how much the CLP is failing to plan and provide that pipeline of titled blocks that we hear so much about. Indeed, as the Leader of the Opposition talked about, we saw the article in the paper today from the Master Builders CEO asking the pertinent question: where will we house the people we want to attract with the new opportunities in the Northern Territory? We need serviced land and a dependable pipeline of projects. We have seen that across Darwin and in Central Australia where the opportunity to meet with industry members with the Member for Gwoja, the feedback is consistent. We need that pipeline of titled lots, housing development and opportunities, and it must be ready for the future.

This is not just about what blocks we can turn on today or tomorrow, but where is that future land coming from? We know there is development and that there are projects coming, but this government is not focused on the housing projects; it is coasting on the back of the projects already underway and that were initiated under Labor.

We also saw with the so-called housing strategy that did a great job of articulating the problems but failed when it came to solutions. The Minister for Housing still cannot confirm whether there is a housing target. He had half a dozen numbers in there pointing to the deficit of housing and to the future houses that will have to be built in the Northern Territory to meet our population and expected economic growth, but there is still no target. He cannot confirm if there is a target under this government.

Businesses also talk about certainty when it comes to housing. This is what we mean when governing for all Territorians. There seems to be a complete aversion to social and affordable housing under this government. If the CLP was serious about governing for all Territorians, it would invest in more social and affordable housing. It would create a clear pipeline of titled land and provide housing options for everyone, regardless of how much they earn. The clearest example of this is when it comes to accessing federal funding. There are hundreds of millions of dollars on the table from the Commonwealth to build more social and affordable housing. Despite having access to these funds, we see time and time again this CLP government not make applications to the Housing Australia Future Fund, despite the great need that we have for this type of housing.

As I mentioned before, closing a facility like YiSSA and not providing anything in its place in the Darwin urban area compounds the already extreme rates we have of homelessness and rough sleeping in Darwin and other parts of the Northern Territory. We also know that the housing waiting list is sitting at over 5,000 applications. Even people who are on a priority housing waitlist are having to wait years for the opportunity to get a permanent roof over their head. Most categories of access to public and social housing are for over eight or more years.

I have written to the Minister for Housing—I do not know how many times since I have been elected—from people who are desperate to access housing in the Northern Territory. One example is when someone who was renting in the private market came to see me, and the owner decided to sell that property—which they are most entitled to do—and this person looked out to see what alternative housing they could rent. They discovered there were very little options for them. There was another individual who came to see me, and she expressed how she was on a very low income and did not have any additional assets, and that was what was keeping a roof over her head. Without the opportunity to have this house, and the very generous offer that the landlord gave to her, she was effectively homeless overnight. She is on the housing waiting list along with those 5,000 other applications.

The CLP government has an opportunity here. If the CLP genuinely believes that it is governing for all Territorians, its members can go and sit down with the Commonwealth and advocate to access the hundreds of millions of dollars available under the Housing Australia Future Fund. We have also seen the remote housing program stall on the CLP government's watch. If the CLP government is genuine about governing for all, that would include the many remote Territorians in 73 major communities and the hundreds of

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homelands and outstations that are covered by this remote housing program. If it wanted to, it could sit down with the Commonwealth, sort out those differences and get those projects moving.

In my electorate of Nightcliff, there is still a lot of work to be done in regard to social and affordable housing, particularly in Litchfield Court. We found out that a number of the YiSSA residents were being moved to that location. At the same time, many people are trying to move out of that location due to many of the social challenges in that space. I implore the CLP government again, if it cares about the residents at Litchfield Court, to provide that extra support. There is some support from Mission Australia on that site. I know that the Minister for Children and Families is aware of that, but we need more support in that facility to help look after that cohort of people.

Another area where the CLP government is failing to govern for all Territorians is climate change and renewable energy. If the CLP was serious about reducing electricity bills and supporting Territorians with access to solar, battery and other practical energy-saving ideas, it would provide the funding and services. However, instead of supporting this renewable energy transition—a journey that we are all on around Australia to access lower cost energy that is reliable and affordable—we have seen this government fail to extend its home and battery subsidy. This has denied hundreds of Territorians being able to access that program. It was a good program, but the CLP government has failed to continue funding it.

It also scrapped the renewable energy target and has put nothing in its place. This is a government that talks about business, supporting industry and economic development and the importance of certainty. It is one of its little catchphrases. It has delivered uncertainty when it comes to renewable energy. It has removed that target, put nothing in its place and is providing no clear direction to the community or industry about where that will go. Renewable energy is a critical part of the future for the Northern Territory. We have abundant sunshine and we should capture that to power our homes, businesses and the future of the Northern Territory.

This is all about the transition. It is about bringing that new generation and new storage online, but that has to be done in a managed way. It is also about reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. I was pleased to hear from the minister for Environment today, who talked about reducing gas usage. It is pleasing to hear that will occur under this CLP government. However, we need to see the evidence of it. We need to see the projects, the policy frameworks and that commitment in action. I am warmed by the minister for Environment making that pledge in Question Time, but I want to see that turn into action. That is another way that the CLP can govern for all Territorians.

As I said, we fail to see the outputs, how that critical work is being done and how the future sustainable Territory will be built. One example is when it comes to the renewable energy hub—a project started under the previous Labor government to help achieve that 50% renewable energy target by 2030 that the CLP government has scrapped. The work has been done. The CLP government even progressed some of that consultation as part of that project. Now we hear nothing; we hear crickets. There are multiple people waiting in the wings keen to understand what this government's renewable energy policy is. They are standing there ready with funds to invest. They want to invest. There are even groups of private landowners and proponents in the rural areas who are keen to build large-scale solar farms. There are people who have the ideas, know-how, ingenuity and funding to get on with this renewable energy transition, but it falls on deaf ears with this CLP government.

They are failing to do their part in this renewable energy transition, and Territorians will continue to pay the price. There was a 5.3% rise in energy prices this year, and who knows what the increase will be next year. The Treasurer failed to rule that out today. We will expect to see something in the next budget. It is because the CLP government is not investing in renewable technology; it is not investing in the projects it has the ability to turn on and support.

The third topic I will raise this evening is local government and community development. This is another sector the CLP government fails to engage with and support. We are hearing disappointment, frustration and concern about how they are being treated, and not being consulted. We have seen that with the legislation that came in the previous sittings about removing councils, their dedicated opportunity to have a say, be consulted, brought into briefings with the department when changes are made that affect them and their communities.

We hear when it comes to local government—I note the Member for Karama is often very vocal on local government issues. I think he has taken on the mantle as being the shadow minister for the City of Darwin, it would seem, in his commentary in the public. What he could be doing is engaging with councils and building them up—working together with local government. We have seen utter failure on the progress of de-amalgamation when it comes to local government.

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We have seen when it comes to the minister's own patch in the Barkly. As a former mayor of the Barkly Regional Council, where is the funding to deliver on his de-amalgamation commitment he has talked about so much? We have seen the costings, the reporting in the media. Where is that $60m coming from that he wants to enact the de-amalgamation of the Barkly Regional Council? It just is not going to happen.

This is making big promises to communities and the electorates and then not following through on it. In fact, you could say that is one of the very few forms of renewable energy being developed by the CLP government. Sometimes it would seem the only form of renewable energy we see is the minister getting rolled in Cabinet when he keeps putting up his plans for de-amalgamation. That is about all the renewable energy we can see every time the minister tries to get funding for his de amalgamation plans.

We have seen power prices being raised by 30% for councils, leaving them to make difficult decisions about how they pass on those costs. What services do they pull back on, what projects do they scrap, what lighting do they turn off in order to balance the books? They are passing that on to ratepayers and they are carrying the can for the decisions of this CLP government.

My final point in terms of governing for all Territorians comes back to one of the biggest concerns in my electorate of Nightcliff. People are constantly coming to me because they have big concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour. The CLP government talks a big game. They say they were elected on a platform to fix crime, but crime is not fixed. It is certainly not a priority when it comes to my electorate of Nightcliff.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr SMELT: I have a quick short run-down of some of the major incidents that have occurred in my electorate of Nightcliff. In March and April this year there were reports of an edged weapon used in assaults at Litchfield Court in Coconut Grove. In June we sadly had the report of a violent stabbing, again in Coconut Grove. In August we had reports of men with machetes attempting break-ins in homes.

In September we had up to 20 people involved in fighting and the ramming of vehicles in O'Keefe Place in Rapid Creek, which is incredibly frightening to residents in that area—thankfully no-one was killed, although that must have been a small miracle.

Also in September, we had stolen vehicles driven at police in Nightcliff. We also had up to 30 people who witnessed fighting and violence committed on Progress Drive in Nightcliff. Again, it was an incredibly scary situation for many businesses and residents in my electorate.

In October there was an incident at the Nightcliff shopping centre where up to 15 people were involved in fighting and harassing staff. Also in November we had a stabbing and a theft on Progress Drive at the bus stop.

These are all major concerns and issues in my electorate, and I have been unable to get the Minister for Police to engage with them. I have raised them in the parliament and have been dismissed as being new to parliament and not knowing how these things work. These are real issues. I think if it was true that the CLP government were interested in governing for all Territorians, the Minister for Police would come out to Nightcliff and listen to the residents and the issues that they are raising with me.

It is getting so bad it has even been suggested to me by constituents that we should form our own private security in Nightcliff. People have come to me and suggested, 'We know the police are doing the best job they can. We know that they are overstretched, so maybe we should fund our own security service in Nightcliff.' That is the situation we have got to.

People are worried for their safety. The police station was shut earlier this year, again without any consultation or notice. It was just announced on Facebook, and it happened within a couple of weeks. This says volumes to the people in my electorate about what this government thinks and how it prioritises safety across the Northern Territory.

People in my electorate want solutions. They do not want statistics or press releases; they just want a service that they can rely on and know that this CLP government is interested in them and their security and safety.

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This was evidenced most recently in the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research report, 'Tough on crime': Interpreting crime and justice data in the NT. This report found that the CLP government's reliance on police recorded crime statistics is giving Territorians an inaccurate, incomplete and misleading picture of crime. The report also noted that many of the claims made by the CLP government do not account for regional variations.

When the CLP put out a headline and say, 'Crime is down, you can all relax. Everything is fine. There is nothing to see here', we know that if you dig into the data, you will see that crime is up in Katherine, Alice Springs and other places around the Territory.

We also never hear about the fact that there were major changes in how offences were classified for that data. This was to align with national reporting standards and that changed how many numbers were treated—I think, particularly around assaults and other things. That changes the numbers.

A third aspect, and one of the most significant ones that again gets overlooked and is never mentioned in the press releases, is the system change in November 2023 when the SerPro case management system replaced the PROMIS system.

These three things need to be considered to provide an accurate picture of what crime data is telling us. We also know, again not mentioned in the press releases, that it can take up to five months for the data to be finalised in the new system as matters work their way through the courts. These are all critical issues because we cannot diagnose and solve these major challenges in our community if we do not have a common understanding and baseline of what the problems are. This report shines a big spotlight on that issue. I welcome those conclusions and I hope the CLP government might review it and have another look at the recommendations in it.

Why is this important? People will not invest in the Northern Territory, and the population will not grow. We will not have the economic growth that the CLP government is predicting if we do not get a handle on community safety. It is critical that we address this across the whole territory, not just in some places. It needs to be a whole of territory effort.

Without making this happen, parents will not let their kids go to the shops and enjoy the opportunity for adventure and independence. People who are already suffering in a cost-of-living crisis are having to spend more on their own personal and private security, again leaving them without funding to invest in other aspects or just to pay for the bare necessities.

We know from the latest Productivity Commission report that it costs $80,000 to $120,000 to have someone incarcerated in prison—the costs to our society are huge. If the CLP government was interested in investing in health, education and housing—key issues that will actually make a difference to community safety and make a long-term impact—we could save hundreds, millions, tens of millions, or probably hundreds of millions of dollars in terms of the bill for prisons.

The real danger of this CLP approach is that by neglecting prevention, rehabilitation and opportunities for young people to turn their lives around, they risk making a situation where violent offenders develop. People need opportunities to turn their lives around.

There are a lot of opportunities for this CLP government to do things differently, and we touched on many of them today. We talked about housing and many other things; there were over 20 different initiatives and new ideas in our housing discussion paper. We talked about developing a housing construction authority, providing Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to have the governance, operations and maintenance to manage their own housing portfolio. There are opportunities to reboot the remote housing program.

When it comes to the health discussion paper, the Member for Gwoja has talked a lot about the opportunities for funding and servicing remote clinics and for getting on with the job of developing the new Royal Darwin Hospital—we are very clear on this side of the House that we will get on with that work. The CLP government and the Minister for Health can keep saying that they cannot rule it in, and they cannot rule it out. They are not listening, and they are not governing for all Territorians.

We have also got an education discussion paper coming out soon, and that will have another round of ideas and initiatives that the CLP government can take up and run with. I hope that they look forward to that.

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It is clear that this government is not governing for all Territorians. There are hundreds of opportunities for them to step up across all these key areas, whether it is health, housing or education. If they are fair dinkum about that, we have a lot of ideas. We will be the first—again, I say this every time—to congratulate them if they take up these ideas.

They are not our ideas, we get them from industry, from the community and from people who work in these sectors. They are not just from us. These are the things that can be done and should be done, and I commend them all to the CLP government to govern in the interests of all Territorians.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I thank the Opposition Leader for bringing this important motion before the Assembly, which calls on the government to govern in the interest of all Territorians and to genuinely consult with communities on decisions that affect them.

Over the last two years, since the CLP government came to power in the Northern Territory, we have seen many decisions made without any consultation with our communities. I can point to a number of projects that have been proposed by the CLP government that will impact communities in the Northern Territory.

We only have to go back as far as a few months ago in the last Wet Season when we saw the CLP government refuse to consult with residents in Batchelor when it came to moving people who had been affected by the flood from Foskey Pavilion in Darwin to Batchelor. It did not even consult the people who were affected by the floods and staying in Foskey Pavilion. I received phone calls that night saying that they would be moved the next day and had just found out that evening.

We know there are other projects it has not consulted on, particularly within rural communities. We just heard the CLP government announce a hyperscale AI data centre to be put near Berry Springs along Finn Road. On 22 July the CLP minister for Environment, alongside the Member for Nelson signed an agreement setting aside 185 hectares of land with Beetaloo Energy for a proposed $40bn AI hyperscale data centre in the heart of our rural community. That same day, our office was inundated with people concerned about that announcement. The government refused to do the work with rural residents to put this proposal forward and understand the impact that this would have on our community.

On 1 September, I held an information session at the Berry Springs Recreational Reserve with the Environmental Defenders Office. I note that the Member for Johnston came along. I even think we had the Member for Goyder's electorate officer come along to listen to the people who showed up. More than 100 people from Berry Springs and surrounding rural communities showed up, raising their concerns about water and energy use and, more broadly, the impact that this would have on the community if it was to go ahead.

What did we hear only a few days later? It was revealed by the ABC on 8 September that the Member for Nelson had a family member working at Beetaloo Digital and that he had not made it public. I am not suggesting that the Member for Nelson has done anything wrong because he said that he alerted his Cabinet colleagues; however, it brings in the mistrust of the public when there is a perceived conflict of interest and he does not make that public.

Then he went on radio the following day trying to justify why he did not make it public that he had a family member working for Beetaloo Energy. When he was asked whether he removed himself from the Cabinet decision to grant 185 hectares of land to Beetaloo Energy to build a hyperscale AI data centre, he refused to answer the question and could not confirm whether he removed himself from that process.

Then we get to 21 October. The CLP minister for Environment introduced the Environment and Water Legislation Amendment Bill which will be debated and possibly passed tomorrow. What is proposed in this Bill that may pass tomorrow? The CLP government is proposing to weaken the water allocation plans in the Northern Territory. That means a minister can allocate a certain amount of water for an area of the Northern Territory. In other words, if an industry, like Beetaloo Energy, lobbies the minister to say, 'This is how much water we need for this industry', such as the hyperscale AI data centre near Berry Springs, the minister or water controller can then sign off the amount of water that industry would need without any scientific evidence to back that in. Putting our precious resource of water and our environment in danger and completely disregarding the scientific evidence that comes with that.

On 13 November, at the Palmerston markets, we see three CLP members standing under the Beetaloo Energy tent, promoting their industry. We also saw, one of those CLP members was the Member for Nelson, Gerard Maley, promoting the industry for a hyperscale AI data centre right next to Berry Springs. We can already see the direction this CLP government are going and disregarding the concerns of rural

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residents in the Northern Territory. You must ask yourself: where are the so-called rural members of the CLP government, the Member for Goyder, Andrew Mackay, and the Member for Nelson Gerard Maley, that are actively promoting themselves to keep rural, rural?

They are not doing that now; I will tell you what. They have gone completely missing and are not listening to the rural constituents raising these real concerns across the Northern Territory, in particular near Berry Springs for this hyperscale AI data centre.

Moving on, in 2024 we saw the Treasurer put a budget out. I was looking through the budget papers and what do I see? I saw the removal of funding for the Port Keats Road to seal it between Wadeye and Palumpa. I had many residents raise concerns with myself about the CLP government removing the funding, which by the way, had been allocated 80% of that funding from the Commonwealth Government to build that road. The CLP government completely removed that from their budget papers. What did we see? We saw hundreds of people from Wadeye sign a petition and hand it to me in Parliament House because they were concerned the CLP government had taken that funding.

Hundreds of people handed that petition over so they would not lose the road that is supposed to be built for them over the last couple of years. It should have already started, but the CLP government have completely delayed that project. Now they have to backtrack because we have seen the people of Wadeye, of the Thamarrurr region, homelands of that area, people from Palumpa, sign that petition calling on the CLP government to put back the funding to ensure we see the sealed road.

It is not just a road. That section of the road can shut off from four to six months of the year. I have spoken about this many times in this Chamber, the implications of not having that sealed road and what that means for traditional owners of that region. Having a sealed road in that region means people will have access to their country and homelands. It means service providers are able to get to Wadeye all year round without being cut off four to six months a year. It means we can see options for kids living in Wadeye go to school in Palumpa. Currently, we only have one school in Wadeye. There are many students and people who live in Wadeye because most of the activity happens there such as the workforce. I have spoken to many families from Wadeye whose traditional lands are near or around Palumpa and they would like to see their students have a choice to go to school in Palumpa and have access to that year round.

We have also seen this CLP government backtrack on local decision-making agreements, something crucial that our government worked on. We know that these take time because you are working with communities to understand their aspirations and the priorities for their communities.

I go back to the Mulyung Aboriginal Corporation Local Decision Making Agreement 2022–2026. Now that has lapsed under the current CLP Aboriginal Affairs minister, Steve Edgington. He did not extend that agreement, and I know people from that homeland are disappointed that there has been no further work with them to look at their aspirations and long-term plans for their homelands and to ensure that kids get a good education and their community can grow and build new houses.

Under our agreement we saw four new houses built at Emu Point. We have seen all the other houses upgraded with repairs and maintenance. A lot of those works had not been done since the early 1990s, and we were able to go out there. I remember it clearly. We had a Community Cabinet with all the ministers and the Chief Minister who went to Emu Point. We went there and could see and listen to the community to understand their priorities, then we came back and sat upstairs as a Caucus and went through what could be agreed to. We decided we would put it into a longer-term local decision-making agreement off the back of the aspirations of the Emu Point community.

As I said, we saw houses that were overcrowded and we could upgrade those houses and build four new houses that families from Emu Point moved into. We also saw the priority with the transition of early education with the childcare services out there, looking at transitioning from Murin to Mulyung to the newly established Aboriginal Corporation out there. We also saw the school itself have additional education facilities—it has a new classroom and new basketball court. We also saw the establishment of a new school council in Emu Point itself.

It is disappointing that the CLP government has not continued those agreements. It turned its back on community members from Emu Point who worked very hard over time in good faith to work with government to understand their aspirations. They have not come from me or the Labor Party themselves; they came directly from the community and it was put into an agreement on good faith that the Northern Territory Government, no matter who was in power, no matter who won the next election, would continue. We have seen this CLP government dismiss that this evening.

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I also pick up from the budget paper this year that another commitment dropped by this CLP government was for the dialysis chairs earmarked for Wadeye. We know that it takes a lot of work to get the right infrastructure in place for dialysis to ensure that you have clean water to be used in the clinic and the right design to hold those chairs for the dialysis centre. This CLP government has ripped that out from the community of Wadeye. What do we now see? We see people having to leave their country and community and come into Darwin to access dialysis. That was a practical and good infrastructure project that we should have seen through, but instead the CLP government has taken it out.

I could go on with the number of commitments that the CLP government has removed, but it has been broadly covered by my colleagues.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, this motion from the Leader of the Opposition is that the Assembly calls on the CLP government to govern in the interests of all Territorians and to genuinely consult with communities on decisions that affect them. I am proud to speak on this because, as a local member for Alice Springs, I remember what happens when you do not consult with the locals. I had seen it for quite some time and it was frustrating. When we talk about consultation we are obviously talking about speaking with the community about things that matter to them. Having been in opposition for four years and watching the Labor government do things that were not important to the community, this is something that I am passionate about.

In my home town of Alice Springs—I heard the Member for Nightcliff speak about crime—we saw crime reach record levels that genuinely impacted everyday Territorians; we have spoken about it in this Chamber many times. There are figures that literally are burnt into my brain, such as 8,800 property offences in one year under the former Labor government. I had my house broken into and my car smashed. These are things that, having lived in the town for 37 years, I had never experienced, but we saw this under the Labor government because of the policies that were enacted and it did not listen to or consult with the views of the community.

In 2023 we saw the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* lapse. I sat in this parliament when we warned the government—as did many health organisations—about the risks of lifting those restrictions that limited the amount of alcohol allowed into areas where the most vulnerable in our communities were women and children. The then Labor government failed to consult and listen, and we saw a wave of grog-fuelled violence across our community. It led to the Prime Minister of our country, Anthony Albanese, having to fly into Alice Springs to remind the Labor government how to do its job and consult and listen when making decisions that would ultimately affect Territorians in their lives.

Since coming the government we have listened, consulted widely and acted appropriately. During the last two years we have seen crime reduce in my home town of Alice Springs. I know there has been much conjecture about crime stats, but when I speak to locals, I hear repeatedly that things are better; they are not as bad as they were.

It fills my heart with pride that I am a part of the government that has listened, consulted widely and acted to implement laws like Declan's law, to strengthen bail and introduce OC spray for people who might feel threatened when they leave their place of work late at night. We have not solved all the crime issues, and we acknowledge that. We want to give Territorians a defensive option should they find themselves in a situation so that they do not have to enter into hand-to-hand combat with someone who seeks to harm them. Having been a young person who worked at the Alice Springs Cinema and getting out at midnight after many late sessions, I understand how some parents would want their young people to avail themselves of that OC spray.

When we look at what we have done over our two years and the consultation which has occurred, Gillen Oval is one that springs to mind. For a long time in our community, we would often speak to sporting organisations and one of the big things they would always raise with us is that we did not have enough ovals. It is something former Mayor Paterson often spoke about when we would have this argy-bargy about Traeger Park being offline for five to six weeks. For those in the Top End—you might not be aware of this—our major sporting oval in Alice Springs cannot be used for five to six weeks of the year due to the AFL match. We love the AFL match that comes to our town, and that is supported by many in the community. That is why we continue to support it because of the consultation and the feedback that we get from the community. We also get the same feedback that to have our premier sporting oval out of action for five to six weeks every year—and that is just if there is an AFL game; we have been fortunate in the past to have cricket games which have meant it has been offline for other periods.

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Our government has listened, and we are investing $15m in the Gillen sporting oval. That will mean more sporting organisations across our town will be able to play sports and expand the offerings that they have, and soccer is one of those organisations that I have consulted with over a long period.

Young women are increasingly wanting to play soccer in our town of Alice Springs due to the success that the Matildas have had globally. I am one of those people that has a couple of young women in my family that are playing soccer and it makes me happy to see them on a Saturday morning, get down there and get in. I understand the real issues that we face into the future as those young ladies will grow up and many young people in our town face. There are only so many sporting fields, and currently the ability to expand the sevens, the eights and have women's sides playing on that same Saturday weekend along with the current fixture is bursting, essentially, at the seams at the current sporting fields.

We are hoping, through having listened to the community, acting and investing in our town, we are achieving a great outcome for our community. I think when we talk about genuinely consulting with communities on decisions that affect them, I cannot think of a better example of where we have listened, consulted and enacted and invested money.

Centralian Middle School is a classic example of the of an organisation of a school that will benefit from the decisions we are making. The area that we are upgrading there has been called 'prickle park' for many years because it has been underutilised and unmaintained. People from Darwin might find this difficult to imagine. We have had this huge area right beside a school that has not been utilised because there is literally prickles all over it. You cannot not kick a soccer ball there because the soccer ball would probably fill up with prickles and burst or would slowly deflate. We are ensuring that this space can be utilised not only by those sporting clubs that I spoke about, but as we move to make Centralian Middle School the premier senior college in Alice Springs, that it has the investment it needs.

It was wonderful recently to have the Education minister, Minister Jo Hersey, come to town and listen and consult with the school committee. This is something that our town has been working towards for some time. We completely acknowledge the concerns of the families. We heard it firsthand. The minister herself travelled to town because of those community concerns, consulted with the school committee and heard them. Now, $1.9m will be invested into the upgrading of classrooms, lighting and other infrastructure at that school to ensure that we are acting on the concerns through the consultation we have had with the school committee to ensure that next year when those year 10 kids come across, they will have the facilities that they deserve and they will be able to engage meaningfully with their education. It has been wonderful to see once again the minister for Education come on down, listen, consult and act. That is what our government is all about.

I want to talk about the sacred sites Act amendments that we made earlier in our government's two-year history. It is something that I was proud to put forward. We heard lots of feedback from the community and Aboriginal people that they were concerned about some of the changes that we would make. So much so that I took the time to travel from Alice Springs to Yulara. I did not fly there in a flash plane; I got in the old Toyota, travelled down and literally listened to the concerns and took questions for more than an hour from the entire Central Land Council meeting.

It was intimidating sitting in front of close to 100 or 200 people and having them fire questions at me over the concerns that they had in regard to the sacred sites amendments that we were putting forward. One thing that I will always remember and be proud of is that after all that consultation, after listening to the concerns people had in the room and answering their questions to the best of my abilities, a woman came up to me, who lived in a remote community, and she gave me a hug. She said, 'Thank you for coming, and thank you for listening'. I understand and agree that not everyone at that meeting agreed with the changes that we were putting forward, but they felt as though their concerns had been heard. They had been consulted on the changes. Their voices had been heard. We came into this Chamber, and I believe I spoke at that time about their concerns, why we were doing these things and the benefits that we bring for Aboriginal people.

When you look at the changes that we have made across our government portfolios, you see that we seek to do this time and again. Not everyone will always agree—that is democracy, and that is why we live in a country that is so free and safe. It makes me proud, once again, to be part of a Northern Territory Government that consults with communities on decisions that affect them and acts accordingly.

The water allocation plans across the Northern Territory have been a hot topic of contention lately. I will talk about the consultation that goes into one of those water allocation plans because I think they are often misunderstood. The Alice Springs water allocation plan was recently declared and once again, I was proud to be the minister responsible for that. My department got in there and consulted with the community, and I

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am proud that after all that consultation, we had the following: 95 interactions with stakeholders; 12 written submissions; 18 online responses; and 65 direct interactions.

I am often at the Alice Springs Todd Mall Markets, which have recently moved to Council Lawns, and I put myself out there as a local member and minister who will listen to the community's concerns. I had people come up to me to raise concerns and we amended—this is important for the Chamber and everyone to hear—the draft of the Alice Springs water allocation plan based on those community concerns. We consulted, listened and made sure we were collaborating with the community on decisions that affected them every step of the way.

Through everything we do as a Northern Territory Government, we do exactly what this motion calls for. It is important to highlight that. I have spoken about the crime that occurred when those opposite were in government, and about the comments that have been made.

When I look at our two years in government compared with what the previous government did, whether it be the art gallery that it clearly did not consult on well—that angered a lot of people in our community of Alice Springs who believed we were going to lose one of our sporting grounds. I have spoken about the need for sporting grounds in Alice Springs, so it is hard to imagine that loss.

For people in Darwin, that would be like going down to Marrara Stadium, TIO Stadium or another one of the big stadiums in Darwin and being told, 'Guess what, guys? We will take that off you and build a big art gallery on top of it.' People would be rioting in the streets. The community of Alice Springs was rightly upset that it had not been consulted and that the communities had not been listened to on decisions that affect them.

As a government, we were able to listen and act. I am proud every time I go to Anzac Oval with my family. The Masters Games were there recently, which is another thing that a lot of people may not know was at real risk of disappearing. We consulted with the community on that after it did not occur under the former Labor government for six years. It forgot about the Masters Games—a premier sporting event for our town of Alice Springs.

Once again, the Tourism minister has listened to the community and brought back this amazing event. Over the years we have slowly been trying to build it back up, because it takes time to re-engage with the community and consult about how we can make sure they have the volunteers they need to bring swimming back to the Masters Games. That was a huge issue raised by the Desert Dolphins, the local Alice Springs swimming club.

They were concerned about the number of volunteers required to bring swimming back to the Masters Games. We consulted and addressed the concerns that they had. In the latest 2026 edition of the Masters Games, we were able to come together to resolve the issues that they raised. The Desert Dolphins once again competed at the Alice Springs Masters Games.

It was a win for the community, the Alice Springs Masters Games, the Tourism minister and our government to see the number of people coming to Alice Springs to partake in an event that so many people love. I raced in the triathlon. I was a little slower this year than I was two years ago, but that is what I hear happens with age. I am probably just going over the cap of the pendulum, and I need to do a lot more work to keep fit.

I will speak about the multicultural centre because I am proud of it. For a long time in the community of Alice Springs the multicultural community has come to Minister Yan and I—in our roles as local members—and said that they have real concerns about their ability to hold some of their community events throughout the year. These events are important to them; they can be religious or spiritual. In Alice Springs there is one location that suits large multicultural community gatherings and that is the old Marian Centre, which is a fantastic facility. What often happens throughout the year—the Minister for Multicultural Affairs will understand this better than anyone—is that a lot of these events occur about the same time. Only having one premier site where these events could take place, multicultural organisations were unable to celebrate their respective events.

We listened and consulted with the community and through a long process—because that is what happens when you consult with the community, it takes a while to get things right—we are now building a multicultural community centre for our community members in Alice Springs. That is something that they were so proud of, having been able to turn the sod recently, to see how happy these multicultural families were that have come to Alice Springs and want to embrace all our town has to offer. We want to make sure that once a year, whether it be for their Malayalee, Onam celebrations, Nepalese New Year or Fiji Independence Day that they

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can come together in a space that allows them to celebrate their culture and cuisine, because we all love a bit of food from overseas.

The way in which the multicultural communities enrich our own communities is something that I have become proud of. It is not something that I experienced prior to becoming a local member, because generally you do not get invited, so you may not know about the Filipino community and what they are doing. Since being in this role and being able to embrace all that the multicultural communities do in our town and the richness that they provide, especially with so many of them working in our health sector—the hospital in Alice Springs is one of the largest employers—it has been wonderful to be able to sit down, share a meal and learn more about where people have come from, why they have chosen to make Alice Springs their home and to support them in having their own space so that when large events are occurring they are not all competing for the same area.

It makes me proud to speak about what our government has done to govern in the interests of all Territorians, and to consult with the communities on the decisions that affect them. I will allow others to partake in this debate because I know there are many who want to contribute, and I thank members for listening.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I speak to this motion of governing in the interests of all Territorians. Every person in this Chamber was elected to act in the interests of the people we represent, and every minister in this government holds office on behalf of all Territorians—not just those who voted for them, not just those who agree with them; all of them.

I have heard CLP members across the Chamber today say that they listen and consult, but what actually happens? I do not need to guess because yesterday in the Chamber, I had a clear example from the Chief Minister in our debate about OC spray when she said, and I quote, 'Myself and every other hand-wringer thought the sky will fall, that everyone crowed, howled and carried on like pork chops. We stared them down.' She also said that she looked forward to the absurd and ridiculous questions I would undoubtedly ask and that I would continue to embarrass myself.

Who exactly does the Chief Minister think she is staring down? Who does she think she is here representing? Is it the Territorians who raised concerns about the risks of teenagers carrying pepper spray? Was she staring at the doctors, the legal services, the Northern Territory Police Association, the domestic violence services, the lawyers, the community organisations, the teachers and the families? These are people who are doing exactly what we want people to do in a democracy; speaking up, offering expertise and asking their elected representatives to get things right.

Good democratic governments do not stare down the people they govern for; they listen to them. If nothing anyone says can change your mind, you are not listening. You are not consulting; you are informing people of what you have already decided.

Asking questions of the government is not howling, carrying on like pork chops or embarrassing ourselves; it is our job in this Chamber. Every question that I ask in this Chamber comes from a Territorian who has asked me to bring it into this place. I am here to ask questions that they cannot ask themselves, and when the Chief Minister calls those questions absurd, she is dismissing the people who asked them.

This is not an isolated incident; it is part of a much bigger pattern because the CLP says that it governs for all Territorians, but let us look at its record over the past couple of years. Look at who it listens to, whose interests it prioritises, who it protects and who it locks up.

Today in the Chamber I was accused of being negative and down on the Northern Territory, which made a really nice change from being told that I live in fairy land. To be clear, what I am about to describe is not interpretation or opinion, it is a record of some of the decisions the CLP government has made since September 2024.

On justice and community safety, it has lowered the age of criminal responsibility to 10; removed youth diversion pathways; scrapped detention as a last resort for children; and introduced Australia's harshest bail laws, including for children. It expanded mandatory sentencing, funnelling more people into an incredibly overcrowded prison system; used emergency powers designed for extraordinary circumstances, including war and civil unrest, to push through more than a dozen major laws; and removed the requirement for human rights compatibility statements on new legislation.

It created severe overcrowding in watch houses and prisons; has driven the prison population to a record high of about 3,000 people while planning to build a privately-run prison and increase capacity to

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5,000 people; and has taken the Territory to the point where if it were a country, it would have the second highest incarceration rate in the entire world.

It refused the Yuendumu community's call for an independent investigation into the death of Kumanjayi White, a young disabled man.

It reintroduced spit hoods into children's prisons. When 45 paediatricians wrote to the Chief Minister asking her to withdraw this legislation, she told them that they had wasted their time.

It has armed transit and public safety officers with guns and made pepper spray available now to children.

It has chosen to punish families living in poverty with fines for not sending their children to school.

It has rewritten sacred site protections and Aboriginal water rights without the consent of traditional owners, land councils or custodians; walked away from treaty; has gone backwards on almost every Closing the Gap target; and had its minister for Education describe Kriol as broken English, despite it being the second most widely spoken language in the Territory.

It appointed a former gas executive as Territory Coordinator, giving him unprecedented powers to override more than 32 laws; abolished merits reviews for a range of government decisions, removing a critical avenue for Territorians to challenge decisions that affect them; weakened anti-discrimination protections; collapsed five independent oversight bodies into one so-called super integrity commission, raising serious questions about resourcing, independence and conflicts of interest; failed to apologise after the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Disability quoted Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels and said social Darwinism had shaped his thinking; appointed an NT Administrator who had publicly mocked Aboriginal people, made light of domestic violence and spoken about the use of date rape drugs; closed Australia's largest short-term emergency accommodation service in the lead-up to the Wet Season; passed child protection removal laws, despite the strong warnings of more than 120 experts and almost every child protection minister in Australia; and I could go on.

That is a substantial record for a government that says it is acting in everyone's interests. Just as revealing as the decisions themselves is what has happened to the people and institutions whose job it is to hold this government to account. In the past six months we have seen the independent voices walk away or publicly warn that they can no longer do their job and are being sidelined. Children's Commissioner Shahleena Musk resigned. She said that she had been concerned about her effective exclusion from the development of the government's child removal reforms. She said:

My role exists to provide independent advice, scrutiny and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable children and young people. Excluding or diminishing that role weakens the safeguards that Territorians rightly expect within our child protection system.

The independent Chair of the Children and Families tripartite forum, Rob McPhee, also stood down, saying:

> *Unfortunately, I no longer believe the conditions exist for the Forum to fulfil that purpose …*
>
> *Over the past two years, it has become increasingly evident that the Northern Territory Government is not committed to genuine partnership with the Forum on significant policy and legislative reform.*

Leeanne Caton, who stepped down as Chief Executive of Aboriginal Housing NT in September, advised she was leaving because:

> *… basically every piece of legislation that gets put through has a negative impact on Aboriginal people, and it's killing my spirit …*

Our colleague and my mentor Yingiya Guyula, who served in this Chamber for more than a decade, left saying:

> *I no longer feel that I can be a part of the NT Parliament and sit opposite a government who are not willing to listen or form partnerships.*

He also said:

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> *… the CLP have introduced too many laws that are dehumanising, oppressing and destroying our communities and our people.*

These are not people who have simply disagreed with a particular policy or lost a political argument; they are people whose jobs, responsibilities and life work have been to advocate for children, families, housing, justice and Aboriginal communities. When people like this say that they can no longer do their job because the government is not willing to listen, we need to ask why.

Aboriginal Territorians make up one-third of our population that this government is elected to serve. Instead, its actions over the last two years represent a sustained attack on Aboriginal people, rights, interests and communities. This is not just about Aboriginal Territorians. Look at who else is on that record: families in poverty fined for not sending their kids to school; public housing tenants whose addresses were read out in this Chamber; women living violent relationships; a Coroner who was criticised for telling the truth about their deaths; people with disability; children who can now be locked up from the age of 10; and doctors, paediatricians, lawyers and police officers who have been told they have wasted their time.

The Children's Commissioner also raised a broader warning about the state of governance in the Northern Territory:

> *More broadly, I am increasingly concerned by trends that suggest a reduced commitment to transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making in the NT. Public confidence in our institutions depends on openness, meaningful consultation and a willingness to test policy proposals against available evidence. Where these principles are diminished, the quality of decision-making and public trust are inevitably affected.*

Independent statutory officers play a vital role in ensuring good governance. They are not obstacles to reform; they are an essential mechanism that strengthens public administration, improves outcomes and safeguards the interests of vulnerable people. Undermining these institutions risks weakening the checks and balances that underpin democratic government.

Independent oversight bodies are not the enemy of government. They are not there to make ministers lives difficult. They exist because power needs to be scrutinised, decisions have consequences and the people most affected by government decisions need someone independent to speak up for them. A government that is confident that it is acting in the interests of everyone should welcome questions, independent advice and scrutiny, not try to stare it down.

There is another group this government seems to have forgotten in its rush to make decisions for the present—the people who will inherit the consequences. The babies born this week—perhaps even one born to someone in this Chamber who we hope will still be living in the Northern Territory in 2070—cannot vote in this parliament, sign a petition, come to Estimates and ask a question or tell us what they need. Every decision that we make in this Chamber is a decision about their lives and their future.

We have heard that large parts of the Territory could become unliveable by 2070. We already have among the highest per capita emissions in the world and the government's climate plan leans heavily on opening up the Beetaloo, a gas-filled basin scientists have labelled a climate bomb. Governments are entitled to support industry, but they also have an obligation to be honest about the costs, the risks and who will ultimately pay the price.

Governing for all Territorians means thinking beyond the next election. It means building safety, prosperity and opportunity for everyone over the long term, not delivering benefits to some today at the expense of others and of future generations.

That brings me to community safety, which is the theme in this parliament often and something that is of great importance to our community. The government says that it is making the Territory safer. I want the Territory to be safer; every Territorian does. No-one in this Chamber has a monopoly on caring about community safety. However, look at what this government measures: it counts prison beds, police powers and how many people it can lock up. There are about 3,000 in prison now—the plan is for that to go up to 5,000—with kids as young as 10, and for what? Crime has not gone down. If we look at the crime stats properly—we can debate about this backwards and forwards—we can see the data tells us crime has not significantly gone down. We have a recidivism rate so high that once entering prison, a person is more likely than not to end back there after release.

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What have we not counted? How many children will be safer because of CLP policies? How many families will be housed, schooled and supported because of them? How many women will be safer because domestic violence services have the resources they need? Where is the evidence that over-reliance on incarceration works?

Safety is not handing down a sentence; it is a child who is fed, in school and cared for. It is a safe home, a woman who can leave a violent relationship and know there is somewhere safe to go. It is a young person who has somewhere to turn to before they end up in the justice system. It is a community that is trusted and properly resourced to lead its own solutions. The Territory is safe when people are housed, supported and trusted. It is not safe just because the government says so based on statistics which, when read properly, do not show any meaningful reduction in crime rates.

The CLP does not listen to those their laws affect most, and they avoid scrutiny that would actually make their laws better. They cannot show that needs-based funding is being spent where it should actually be meeting that need. They are selling off the future of the Territory to pay for the present. They have confused punishment with safety, and we will all pay the price. The Territory is small. We all know each other, share the same roads, the same Wet Season, the same hospitals and the same hopes for our children.

The Territory does not belong to the CLP or any of us in this Chamber. We are here as its caretakers. Our responsibility is to leave it in better shape for our children and our children's children. The government is here to govern for the families in Millner and Milingimbi. For those who voted for them and those who did not, those here today and those who come after. They are here to properly listen, consult and take on board what people tell them will make a difference in their lives.

I ask the government a simple question: who are you listening to? Who are you staring down? Whose future are you governing for?

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, governing in the interest of all Territorians—we all agree with that. It is a no-brainer; everyone agrees with that. I pick up on a couple of comments from the Members for Nightcliff and Johnston before I get into it. The Member for Nightcliff made a funny statement. He got up saying that I should be the shadow minister of the Local Government.

Mr Smelt: City of Darwin.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Oh, shadow minister for City of Darwin—that is okay. What he does not understand is shadow ministries belong in opposition. He better get used to it because he will probably be a shadow minister for a long time. I have no ambitions to go into opposition. I do not want any shadow ministry. I am happy to be the assistant minister for Housing and for the portfolios of the Attorney-General. It is really good and positive; we are making the future of the Territory go. I correct the Member for Nightcliff on that.

The Member for Johnston loves coming back—I know some of her Labor colleagues do the same thing. They like to criticise me for a speech I made because they said I was identifying public housing tenancies. I identified addresses, but as I said before, if you look at what is physically available on the complexes—I tried to table this before, but the Member for Gwoja would not let me, so I will not even try again. This picture shows 6 Hauser Court—units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6—and there is a huge sign put up by the department of Housing, saying, 'Public housing property—no trespassing'. That is a public sign on the complex. I can tell you, if you go around the complexes in Malak, down Hauser Court and Tabletop Place, you see multiple of those signs. It is easy to identify where the public housing tenancies are. It is already advertised. I had no intention at all of identifying the tenants. I was trying to discuss the issue of density and that there is an over density of public housing in my electorate. That is where I was coming from. I am correcting people who do not think I went there. It is public knowledge. It is there. You drive around and see big signs saying, 'Public housing property'. That is not by me.

Let us go back to a couple other things. We keep saying they have to listen. We really want them to listen. It is a contrast. We have got this united CLP team, which I am privileged to be part of. We are focused on the future, versus a rabble of an opposition, who flip, flop and flap. They are a disunited party. One thing we have got to understand is they are too focused on that they have got too much internal turmoil going on within.

They come out with the words and nice ideas about discussion papers. Behind the scenes, they are fighting. You have got no trust. You cannot trust Labor. They are eating themselves. Let me give you some examples, and I will go back to some quotes out of the NT Independent. You might remember when there was the debate about Labor Party doing a review of itself. I will quote some of these:

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Despite previously committing to releasing a review undertaken by national party executive members into Labor's 2024 election loss, Ms Uibo recently backflipped …

She must have known the Member for Nightcliff. She told the NT Independent she would not be making the review public. How can you trust this? I continue:

Party members have quietly called for the release of the review so that lessons can be learned and the party can move forward without the residual baggage of the dysfunctional Gunner-Fyles-Manison years.

They were dysfunctional. Does the current Labor opposition even want to look at it or try to correct anything? No, they do not. They are not transparent. They cannot be trusted.

I will go on a little further:

Ms Uibo appeared on ABC Radio Darwin on Wednesday morning to take more questions about the Brown scandal …

We all know about that one. Having said that, can I also thank the Member for Arafura, because I know he is going through some remediation processes. His car space is vacant, and it makes it much easier for the Member for Karama to turn in and reverse back in. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

It then goes on:

Despite the lies and information being withheld from her, Ms Uibo said 'I do trust Manuel Brown', before deflecting to other MLAs' travel allowance claims.

She also responded to a question about her leadership by stating 'nothing is safe in politics' …

She is correct in that. I continue:

… adding she takes the role of leader 'very seriously'.

One of her federal colleagues, who she likes to quote, said:

Territory Labor Leader Selena Uibo needs to show leadership and end the long-running Manuel Brown scandal by taking decisive action and being 'upfront and honest' with Territorians, federal Member for Lingiari Marion Scrymgour has said, adding the ongoing scandal is 'not good for the Australian Labor Party' or the Northern Territory.

She is right. Can they do a discussion paper on their own performance? They should. Would they share it with anyone? No.

Madam SPEAKER: We are just on 7 o'clock, if you would like to round it off.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: They did not want to do that. They do not want to share anything. They did not want to do the reflection of their own performance. Yet, they get up on their high horse saying, 'You have got to do this'. 'We know'. That is why we got elected to government. People trust us; they do not trust the facade of Labor. We have to get past this flip, flop, flap carry-on.

They have so much internal debate going on. There were other discussions about how she dumped the Member for Daly. I think he lost the deputy leadership vote, and he was not happy.

What are we up to? It is about the ninth reshuffle, I think. I do not know what the Member for Gwoja is because the Leader of the Opposition criticised the Member for Brennan for being the Attorney-General, trying to suggest that the Member for Barkly be that. She has dumped the Member for Gwoja as Attorney-General …

Mr SMELT: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance, and the time, I believe, has expired.

Madam SPEAKER: You are right. The time has expired for General Business.

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PAPERS TABLED

Auditor-General's Report No 3 of 2026 – Audit of the Treasurer's Annual Financial Report
Auditor-General's Report No 4 of 2026 – Transparency and Reporting of Interests in Government

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Auditor-General's Report No 3 of 2026: Audit of the Treasurer's Annual Financial Report; and the Auditor-General's Report No 4 of 2026: Transparency and Reporting of Interests in Government.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Country Liberal Party government and all Territorians, I acknowledge the passing of Stefan Koser on 11 September this year, and place on the record our gratitude for his life of contribution and service to his cherished suburb of Nightcliff, Darwin and, of course, the Northern Territory.

I welcome and acknowledge the family and friends who are in the gallery with us this evening. Thank you very much for being able to join us. Our sincerest condolences go to his beloved wife, Dianne, his son Richard and their daughter Rebecca. We are sorry for your loss and we send our deepest condolences and love to everyone.

Stefan was born in Germany and his long-time business partner, Greg Thompson, recounted that Stefan escaped from the Russian side of the Berlin Wall by crawling through the sewers, no doubt inspiration for Andy Dufresne in the *Shawshank Redemption*.

Stefan made the Territory home in 1972 with his beloved wife, Dianne, working on the early stages of Casuarina Shopping Centre. Stefan and Dianne chose to raise their young family here because they valued everything that makes the Territory special, including our pristine natural environment, the great outdoors and the wonderful people who call the Territory home.

The Kosers endured Cyclone Tracy in 1974 and Stefan's story became part of the city's resilience and development as the new Darwin took shape, where he worked on building Tiwi and Wanguri schools, with Wanguri Primary celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. I had the privilege of joining the Member for Wanguri at those 50th anniversary celebrations. It is still a beautiful school to this day.

Trained as an engineer, Stefan worked at Lendlease Construction where he met Greg Thompson, with whom he went on to form a long and successful business partnership and, indeed, a friendship. Together they founded Norbuilt in 1987 which, over the past four decades, has grown into a major construction company operating across the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia. Greg noted how Stefan was highly skilled as an engineer and a builder but, most importantly, that he was honest and trustworthy, and a man of great character. Today, Norbuilt employs more than 30 full-time employees and specialises in resilient and sustainable building and design projects.

While Stefan left Norbuilt in 2000 and retired in 2022 due to his health, his legacy continues to be felt each day through his contributions to our communities and the built environment. Both Stefan and Norbuilt played a major role in building the Territory with some of their major community projects, including the Marrara Grandstand, the Palmerston Sports Club and Casuarina Leisure Centre.

Whether it is a Troppo house built for the humidity and torrential rain of our beautiful Top End, or desert-adapted architecture for our arid Red Centre, our unique and distinctive Territory building heritage is something we should celebrate. This commitment to ecofriendly and resilient building was something that both Stefan and Dianne lived out personally. Shaped by Darwin's experience in Cyclone Tracy, the home Stefan and Di built in Nightcliff in the early 2000s combines sustainable living with disaster resilience and, of course, featured plenty of greenery, vegies and a chicken coop.

We can also be grateful for Stefan's work to get Darwin's famous Deckchair Cinema started, with the original building works, including the design of the iconic chairs. Greg noted that Stefan was an avid reader with an extensive library of Australian history which he was forever adding to. He was also an expert in brewing a warm toddy by the barbecue.

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This evening we pay tribute to beloved Territorian and a good man. On behalf of the Assembly, I extend our sincerest and deepest condolences to Stefan's family, friends and the many Territorians who knew and loved him and who will always fondly remember him.

May he rest in eternal peace.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister for those words. I know that they will be very much appreciated by the family.

I express my condolences to the family of Stefan Koser and acknowledge his wife, Di, and son Richard here in the gallery, friends and other people who will be listening in tonight.

On 11 September this year, while the world marked a significant event that occurred 25 years ago in New York, here in Darwin we lost a man who contributed much to the fabric of this city he helped rebuild after its destruction in 1974.

Stefan Koser was born in Berlin in 1940. His early life was marked by trauma, with the family bombed out of their apartment during the war, which led to a lot of moving around to avoid the fighting. When the war ended and the city was divided amongst the victors, the family was living in the part under Russian control. By his teenage years, many people were leaving the Russian sector and, as a consequence, on the night of 13 August 1961, the Berlin Wall was erected. Two of Stefan's siblings escaped on the first day with fake passports, but Stefan was unable to leave at that time. He eventually made the decision to leave his mother and younger sister in October 1961, escaping, as we have heard, by a long and dangerous route through the sewers.

In 1968 travel was much simpler than it is today. Many young people set out with just a backpack containing all their goods needed for months to travel the world. Stefan had set out from West Berlin and Di was travelling with her sister to Scotland, also hitchhiking. The first meeting at a youth hostel in Scotland must have made an impression on both of them, because when they met again, by chance a week later, at another youth hostel in London, they realised they were meant to be together. That was the beginning of a wonderful lifetime partnership.

After two years in Berlin, they travelled to Australia, starting off in Sydney, where Stefan was project engineer on the airport's third runway. He was then offered a job in Darwin in 1972 as site engineer on stage 1 of Casuarina Shopping Centre, at the beginning of that place we all know so well. At that stage there was just one supermarket and 30 specialty shops.

After Cyclone Tracy, Stefan was construction manager on much of the rebuilding, including Tiwi and Wanguri schools and, again Casuarina Shopping Square. This connection he maintained throughout his working life, working on the subsequent expansions, along with many other building projects in Darwin and other parts of the Top End until his retirement in 2002. He was employed by construction firms, then in 1987 he and his friend Greg Thompson established their own firm, Norbuilt.

Stefan was involved in the construction or refurbishment of many schools, offices, clinics, houses and units around Darwin and various communities across the Top End. The units Norbuilt were responsible for in design and construction were sympathetic to the tropical climate, with passive cooling due to banks of louvred windows being a key feature, as well as a storeroom for each resident to store their important camping and fishing gear. He took great pride in having added 99 houses and unit complexes to the NT's housing stock.

Stefan also had a great love of cinema. Following a visit to Sun Pictures in Broome, he and I, along with other members of the Darwin Film Society, brought to life the long-discussed dream of many locals to have an open-air cinema in Darwin. He facilitated the design of the first Deckchair Cinema in 1994, volunteering his time and expertise to manage the construction of the original Deckchair, as well as the current one built in 2003.

Stefan loved life in the Territory, appreciating the visible and unique Aboriginal presence as well as the contribution other migrants made to the fabric of our society. He was a regular at the weekend markets and loved sharing them with visitors to town. He found great pleasure in camping and fishing, spending many nights at Annaburroo Station where he removed feral animals and undertook a one-man mimosa eradication campaign. He loved the Territory's unique environment and was a long-term friend of the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory. He had enormous energy. He would think nothing of waking at 5 am, driving to Annaburroo, spending the day catching barra, hunting feral animals or clearing weeds before driving back to Darwin for dinner and to distribute barramundi, wild boar or buffalo to his lucky network of friends and family.

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As a passionate student of history, Stefan also spent countless hours and days with his extensive collection of antique history books, housed in an incredible room that he specially designed in Di and Stefan's amazing house to preserve them from the Darwin humidity.

Stefan was cherished by family, including his wife, Dianne; his son, Richard; his daughter, Rebecca; all of his extended family and friends; and, of course, his various beloved dogs, who never failed to bring a smile to his face over the years. He was a man of integrity, strength and humour who leaves behind a generous and enduring legacy, and this town is greatly better for having had him here.

Vale, Stefan.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: On behalf of the Assembly, I extend condolences to the family and friends of Stefan Koser. I ask people to stand for a moment in silence and respect. Please stand if you can.

Vale, Stefan Koser.

Members stood in silence as a sign of respect.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, as we approach the end of another busy year, I recognise the incredible organisations, community groups, volunteers and individuals who work tirelessly to make Sanderson such a wonderful place to live.

One of the greatest privileges of representing Sanderson is the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life, who give so generously of their time, energy and compassion to others. Whether supporting families through difficult circumstances, creating opportunities for young people, celebrating cultural diversity, promoting sport and recreation, supporting education or simply bringing neighbours together, these people are the backbone of our community. Throughout 2026 my electorate office has been proud to support a broad range of not-for-profit organisations, sporting clubs, multicultural groups, schools and community initiatives.

First, I thank my electorate officer, Suzi, and assistant electorate officers, Megan, Kiara, Molly and Christiana for all the work that you do in my electorate office of Sanderson. Although the assistance we provide may sometimes be modest, I know it can make a meaningful difference to the volunteers and organisations working hard to deliver these important activities.

I acknowledge several individuals whose dedication, generosity and community spirit deserve recognition.

Firstly, I acknowledge Katy from Amber NT, who continues to work tirelessly supporting women and families who have experienced unimaginable loss. The compassion, commitment and support provided by Amber NT to families navigating life's most difficult circumstances is invaluable. The work they do is incredibly important and I am proud that our office has been able to support this wonderful organisation in its ongoing work across the Territory.

I also acknowledge Sanderson constituent Paul Burgess, who, together with his family, opens his home every Halloween to welcome those with keen enthusiasm for the scarier side of things. What started as a wonderful community tradition has also become an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for Amber NT. It is a fantastic example of how an individual and his family can turn a little fun, creativity and generosity into something that makes a real difference to others. Thank you, Paul and your family, for continuing this wonderful tradition and using it to support such an important cause.

I recognise Ron Roberts who recently collected a raffle prize on behalf of the Darwin Brass Band. Ron is a proud veteran with a genuine passion for music and, importantly, a willingness to give back to his community by teaching and sharing his musical knowledge with others. His commitment to keeping music alive and accessible for future generations is worth celebrating.

Another familiar face around our electorate office is Yvonne Corby, a passionate advocate for people with additional needs and a dedicated supporter of the NT Special Olympics. Yvonne is also proud mum to Warren, who partnered with City of Palmerston Mayor Athina Pascoe-Bell in this year's Dancing with the Celebrities. It was wonderful to see Warren participate in such a fantastic event, demonstrating confidence, inclusion and community spirit. Congratulations to Warren and Yvonne for being such wonderful ambassadors for inclusion and reminding us of the importance of creating opportunities for everyone to participate.

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These are just a few examples of the many wonderful people who contribute so much to our community, often without even seeking recognition.

Supporting our community organisations during the last quarter, our office has been pleased to support an extensive range of community initiatives, fundraising activities and sporting events. These have included the Variety NT Santa Fun Run; National Seniors Australia Annual Race Day; Pint Cricket Club with junior fundraising; Darwin Ice Skating with junior fundraising; Carpentaria NT Staff Awards; Nightcliff Orchid Society with the Annual Orchid Spectacular; NT Special Olympics, supporting inclusive sporting opportunities; Super 8 Competition, supporting local sporting participation; Under-14 Territory Stingers Hockey Team with meal assistance for their national championships campaign; Nightcliff Probus, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Probus nationally; Keltikka Dance Group with sponsorship towards its 20th anniversary celebrations; Autism NT with fundraising for its annual gala; Tara Irish Dancers with fundraising to support competition opportunities; Wanderers Football Club, supporting its Bunnings barbecue fundraiser for juniors and women's programs; NT Legacy with Christmas party lucky door prizes; and the Darwin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Shelter with Christmas hamper support.

We have also been proud to support our six local schools and six early learning centres through various awards, activities and community initiatives throughout the year. Each of these organisations play an important role in strengthening our community and I thank their committees, volunteers and supporters for the work they do.

I congratulate five Sanderson educators who were recognised at the World Teachers' Day Excellence Awards on 30 October. Olivia Billows from Sanderson High School took out the Darwin Region Secondary Teacher of the Year award. Kerrie O'Connell from Wulagi Primary School was named Darwin Region Primary Teacher of the Year, while Rachel Kuhl from Wagaman Primary School was recognised as the Darwin Region Early Childhood Teacher of the Year. These are wonderful achievements and a testament to the dedication, professionalism and passion these educators bring to their classrooms every day.

Also recognised that evening where two educators, those whose decades of service demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to the teaching profession. Brian Hyke, Principal of Anula Primary School, was recognised for 20 years of service, while Justina Cross from Wulagi Primary School was acknowledged for an incredible 40-year career. Forty years in the teaching profession is an extraordinary achievement. Justina's boundless energy no doubt has something to do with her daily 6 am gym sessions.

I have seen firsthand the impact these individuals have on their students, colleagues and wider school communities. Sanderson is incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated educators, and their longevity and commitment to the profession are truly inspirational. I acknowledge Rob McIntosh and Amy Radcliffe from Sanderson High School. They were also the finalists for the awards. To Olivia, Kerrie, Rachel, Brian, Justina, Rob and Amy, congratulations. Thank you for the difference you make in the lives of our young people.

I acknowledge an outstanding educator, mentor and leader, Mandy McKinnon, as she enters well-deserved retirement. Having seen firsthand the positive impact Mandy has had on her school community, I sincerely thank her for the dedication, leadership and passion she has brought to education throughout her career. Named Northern Territory Primary Teacher of the Year in 2014 while teaching at Alawa Primary School, Mandy has continued to make an extraordinary contribution to education.

Over the past eight years, as Deputy Principal and Principal of Wagaman Primary School, she helped shape a strong school community, leaving a legacy that will continue to benefit students, staff and families for years to come. Her leadership has also been reflected in the school's academic achievements. In 2025 Wagaman Primary School recorded NAPLAN results well above the Territory average across all subject areas. Mandy attributed this achievement, in part, to the school's strong focus on explicit teaching and supporting students to reach their full potential.

Mandy, thank you for everything you have given to Wagaman Primary School and the wider community. Your influence reaches well beyond the classroom, and your contribution will not be forgotten. I wish you a wonderful, happy and fulfilling retirement. You have certainly earned it.

It is that time of year when schools celebrate their end-of-year achievements. I have had the pleasure of sponsoring numerous awards and meeting some very deserving recipients across Sanderson. One particular highlight was attending the Clontarf End of Year Awards at Sanderson High School. Once again, the evening was professionally hosted by Anthony Busch, affectionately known as Foggy, and his dedicated team. However, this year's master of ceremonies, Jackson Delaney, was an absolute standout. As this year's first apprentice, Jackson spoke with eloquence and confidence. Watching him take on that responsibility was a

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wonderful demonstration of the confidence, leadership and personal development that the Clontarf Academy works so hard to foster.

I congratulate the following award recipients:

- Year 7—Kingsley Van Den Berg Hammer, Top Trainer
- Year 7—Bradley Richardson, Attendance
- Year 8—Nate Dash, Clontarf Spirit Award
- Year 9—Jordan Scott, Academic Award
- Year 10—Edward McDowall, Top Bloke Award.

Congratulations to each of these young men.

I acknowledge the families, teachers and mentors who continue to encourage these young people to set goals, develop positive relationships and realise their potential.

These programs make a genuine difference. It is wonderful to see the outcomes being celebrated within our local school community.

Before I close tonight, I had the opportunity to attend the Sanderson High School Awards night along with the minister for Education and the Member for Karama.

I was proud to sponsor the Jinson Charls Resilience Award. This year's award winner is Erin Simmons. I congratulation Erin on this achievement and all the students who have putting in a lot of effort this school year.

I wish everyone a happy Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, Merry Christmas to everyone on a safe New Year.

In my role as Deputy Speaker, I have been able to observe some extraordinary parliamentary performances over the year. I will trial now the Deputy Speaker's awards for some of those performances. I only have four for tonight. I thought it requires a bit of recognition of the skill, the tenacity, the brilliant conversation and oratory skills that we have here.

The first award is the 'filibuster of the year'. This is highly contended. We have some professionals in our midst. The Member for Fong Lim is a ripper, the Member for Gwoja is straight up there, the Deputy Chief Minister is no slouch either, and even the Member for Goyder comes in really hard. It became hard to choose one. Even though we have some professionals, you never know, the dark horse gets up.

I have to say that today's 'filibuster of the year' goes to the Member for Drysdale. Who could forget the discussion on Territory roads? We got in about seven-eighths of the way through, and we are still coming in the Roman history about roads. Unbelievable. The skill—he went right through. It was getting into Romulus and Remus and everything else. It was magnificent.

The Member for Drysdale is the 'filibuster of the year'. Well done, sir.

Mr Howe: I was not filibustering. It is a great job.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: The second award was really competitive. The 'interjector of the year' …

Members interjecting.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: No, the Deputy Chief Minister was up there a number of time. The Leader of the Opposition was right there too. The Member for Barkly is a bit of a dark horse; he keeps coming through. The Member for Daly, when he is around. In this race, it was a photo finish. Coming up to midday today it was a dead heat.

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Then there was someone who was so keen to win it, he had to come in again. The Member for Gwoja. Yes, fantastic. I will give him the award later.

You can there were a couple of highly competitive ones.

There were two awards that go down as a lay-down misere. There is only one nominee because it was so obvious who would win this. This one is the 'consideration in detail contributor of the year'. I have the pleasure in rewarding the most persistent person who has put up the most amendments I have ever seen in my life. It goes to the Member for Johnston. She has done it with great effort. You all have to admire the tenacity there—does it all the time. This was based on volume, not on how many amendments got through. Having said that, you are a clear winner. You are there fighting for your principles and totally deserved it, Member for Johnston.

The final one is for the most concise speech of the year. Member for Fong Lim, you were not in it. Member of Gwoja, you were not in it; sorry, a lot of you are not in it. I was trying to figure out who was in it, and I had to go back to the second reading speech of the voluntary assistant dying. Everyone was there; they were doing their best, and the shortest speech was three minutes by the Member for Karama. I thought, 'Why not? Thank you very much.' That is the start of these awards, and I have no doubt these will probably become the most sought-after rewards in the parliament going forward. We may get some different categories, but that was to give you a taste of it. As Deputy Speaker, I wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas.

Mr McGRATH (Mulka): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I thank those who have put their trust in me as the Member for Mulka. While I am here, merry Christmas to everyone in the parliament.

The electorate of Mulka in East Arnhem includes the traditional Yolngu regions of Miwatj, (inaudible) and Laynha. Over the last months, I have spent time in homelands of Mulka, not only hearing from people about the challenges they face, but also the great pride, resilience and strength of our culture. In Ramingining, I spent time with the community listening to their concerns about housing, youth programs and legislation that impacts their lives. My time was not all spent hearing about the challenges they faced, but also solutions that will lead to better outcomes within the community.

Many of us in this chamber will never truly understand or will ever experience these challenges, but it is our responsibility to listen. I also acknowledge and thank the people of Nhulunbuy, balanda and Yolngu, for embracing me and my daughters while we have been settling in after our move from Galiwinku. I thank you for welcoming us into the community, it has been amazing to see the spirit that makes our corner of the Northern Territory a welcoming community to be part of.

I will take a moment to highlight a few of these amazing people, groups and organisations that I have spent time with over the last month. To all the workers on the ground who support the youth, the elderly and the wider East Arnhem community; your work often goes unnoticed. I see the work that you do, and the community appreciate your efforts. The Clontarf academies of Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala, it was an honour to speak at the 2026 graduation ceremony where six Yolngu men graduated Year 12. I spoke with you about the importance of education, whether it is embracing the balanda and Yolngu or both; I hope you all continue to thrive. Watching you speak on the stage and thank those who have supported you on your journey shows the strong men that you have become.

To David Outen, known to many as X-Ray Dave, your 24 years of service as a sonographer at GDH Gove District Hospital is a credit to you and your family. You have played a role in many of the births in East Arnhem, and you have been there when people are at their most vulnerable. I thank you and I wish you all the best in your future adventures as you depart Nhulunbuy.

To the Gove RSL sub-branch, your commitment to organising a Remembrance Day service that honours the service personnel who sacrificed to fight oppression and the injustice of war is a tradition that continues to remain relevant and needed today. I also acknowledge my new staff members that I have recruited, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and it continues in my region. The motto in Yolngu Matha we say, *dharra rrambaŋi*, which means 'standing together' in English.

In my first speech in this Chamber I shared that I have lived the challenges and injustices that many people within the Northern Territory face which I feel gives me a unique perspective into the solutions required to make positive change for all. I look forward to working with you—Indigenous, non-Indigenous, Yolngu, Balanda—to achieve better outcomes for you and the wider Territory.

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I wish *bukmak* (everyone) a merry Christmas. Enjoy your time with your family and loved ones. I look forward next year to spending more time with you. Happy new year and merry Christmas.

Mr MALEY (Nelson): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I congratulate five Territorians recognised at the 2027 Northern Territory Australian of the Year Awards.

I congratulate Ms Helen Lamech who was named Northern Territory Australian of the Year, recognising more than 30 years of improving healthcare in Central Australia. Helen established Central Australia's first Nurse Type 1 Diabetes clinic, making it easier for people to access specialists care closer to home. She has also built a support network of more than 100 families and trained hundreds of health professionals, helping them improve diabetics care throughout the region. Her contribution has also earned her the 2025 Territory Leader of the Year and the National 2026 HESTA Nurse of the Year award.

I also want to congratulate Patricia King who was named Senior Australian of the Year, recognising more than five decades of service to Territorians. As a St John Ambulance volunteer during Cyclone Tracy, Patricia worked for three days straight helping the injured and supporting evacuations. Today she continues to serve as a volunteer chaplain, providing support to police officers facing difficult and traumatic circumstances.

Congratulations to Taitt Green from Katherine who was named Young Australian of the Year. At just 18, Taitt has already spent a decade volunteering with emergency services. In late 2025 Taitt risked his life to help fight a major hay fire in Katherine that was threatening nearby gas tanks. In the 2026 floods he waded into waist-deep water to assist a woman to safety. If that was not enough, he missed his own birthday celebrations to assist the cleanup after severe Tropical Cyclone Neville.

Congratulations to Salvation Army Majors Michelle and Niall Gibson, who were named the Northern Territory Local Heroes. Through the Salvation Army Flying Padre they travelled thousands of kilometres to remote cattle stations and communities, providing practical help and support to Territorians living and working in some of our most isolated regions.

Those five Territorians each made a remarkable contribution to the community and I congratulate them on the well-deserved recognition and wish them success as they represent the Northern Territory at the national Australian of the Year Awards in January.

I also congratulate the winners of the 2026 NT News Territory Leader of the Year Awards which recognise outstanding leadership and contributions across the Northern Territory. I congratulate Matthew Jacques, Corporate Leader of the Year; Noelene Armstrong, Health and Wellbeing Leader of the Year; Brendan Pringle and Andrew Billsborrow, Small Business Leaders of the Year; William Bright, Trade and Resources Leader of the Year; Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi, First Nations Leader of the Year; and Emily Gault, Leader of the Year.

I particularly acknowledge those Territorians who received two awards on the night, Jodie Summers and Ray Bail.

Jodie was named the overall 2026 Leader of the Year as well as Community Leader of the Year, recognising her significant contribution to Central Australia. Jodie has called Alice Springs home for 25 years and is actively involved in her community. As Associate Vice-Chancellor for Central Australia and Barkly at CDU, Jodie plays an important role in supporting education and training opportunities. She is also President of the Central Australian Rugby Union and is a longstanding supporter of the Dingo Cubs Rugby Union Football Club. Jodie sits on the board for Tourism Central Australia, supporting major local events, and she chaired the judging panel for the recent Brolga Awards. Jodie also spent many years giving back to Central Australia through her professional work and involvement in local community.

Ray Bail who was named the 2026 People's Choice Leader of the Year and inducted into the Hall of Fame, recognising almost six decades of service to the Northern Territory. Ray is a respected businessman and community leader. Following Cyclone Tracy, he helped Darwin families rebuild their homes before going on to establish Alice Precast in 1984 and All Cast in 1993.

Ray contributed to major Territory projects, including Parliament House. For more than 50 years, Ray has been a driving force behind the Palmerston Magpies as a player, coach, volunteer and life member. He also chaired the Cullen Bay management committee for 21 years and continues to give his time to the Darwin Turf Club.

These awards recognise many Territorians who contribute to their communities. I congratulate all the 2026 award recipients and thank them for their continued contributions to the Northern Territory.

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The Member for Goyder and I went to the Southern Districts Cricket Club AGM on 15 November where we sat and talked to the committee members. I congratulate the new committee, President Tory St Clair; Vice President Craig Johnston; Secretary Alison Jenkins; Registrar Heidi Mylius; Senior Coordinator Andrew Harvey; Junior Coordinator Mick Courtney; and general committee members, Stu Baker, Scott Willington, Brett Whelan, Rod Cremona and Peter Bellis.

I also give a special thank you to the outgoing president, Clint Hayward, who led the Crocs for the past four seasons. That club went from strength to strength, winning many club championships under his stewardship. There has been a lot of effort from him, and he has done a lot for the club and the rural area in general. I give a big shout-out to Clinton. I know him; he is a good bloke, and he puts in a lot of effort. After seeing the club grow and thrive for many years, he now has some time for himself to enjoy his cricket and the rural area.

I thank the cricket club for doing what they do in the rural area—cricket is a big sport at Freds Pass.

I wish the best of luck to the new committee and thank them for making sure the cricket club goes from strength to strength.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, today marks the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is an opportunity for all of us to stand together and say that violence has no place in our homes, our communities or our territory. Every woman and child deserves to feel safe, be respected and live a life free of violence.

In the Northern Territory we know that domestic, family and sexual violence continues to have a devastating impact on our families and communities. Behind every statistic is a person, a family and a story.

Today I acknowledge the strength and courage of victim–survivors. I acknowledge those who have shared their stories with us, those who are healing and those who we are no longer able to hear from.

I thank our frontline workers, our women's shelters, our Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and the community sector whose work and tireless advocacy to keep people safe has a real impact.

Ending violence is a responsibility we all share. To all the men across the Territory, we have an important role to play. We need to continue to call out disrespectful behaviour, change harmful attitudes and have difficult conversations. We must teach our young fellas that strength comes from kindness, respect and accountability.

We must also recognise the importance of community-led solutions, culturally safe services and sustained investment in prevention and early intervention. These 16 days cannot simply be about wearing orange, attending events and making speeches. It is about action, and that action must continue each and every day.

To every victim–survivor across the Northern Territory, I want you to know that your voice matters, your safety matters and you deserve to be heard. Let us stand up, speak up and walk towards a Territory where we can all live safe and free from violence.

I also acknowledge the outstanding work, commitment and passion of Kaitlin Fitzpatrick, who was the lead at the Northern Territory Council of Social Service. She did incredible work coordinating the frontline services in policy and advocacy around domestic, family and sexual violence.

I acknowledge all the organisations across the Territory that have done an incredible amount of work this year and continue to do that every year. From Central Australia to the Top End and across the seas to our islands, I thank every person who works on the frontline each day, doing that hard work to make sure that we can address family, domestic and sexual violence.

Let us come together for these 16 days and continue to shine the spotlight on the horrific rates of domestic, family and sexual violence that happen in the Northern Territory. Let us all stand up together against domestic, family and sexual violence.

I also talk about a serious concern that was raised with me affecting our frontline emergency services in Central Australia, the safety of our hardworking paramedics at Alice Springs Hospital. Every day our paramedics respond to emergencies, save lives and care for Territorians in incredibly challenging circumstances. Who is looking after them? The ambulance entry point and patient drop-off area at

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Alice Springs Hospital remains exposed and readily accessible, compromising the safety of paramedics and the privacy and dignity of our patients.

Every year we have witnessed scenes outside Alice Springs Hospital where our ambulances have been damaged and our paramedics put at risk. We saw earlier this year a significant disturbance. Between January and August this year St John recorded 88 incidents of occupational violence in Alice Springs, including 33 physical assaults. This should be a wake-up call. These are the people who go to work to save lives, not risk their own.

What are they asking for? They are asking for secure fencing, privacy screening and controlled access. These are not luxuries or unreasonable demands, just basic workplace safety. I will be writing to the Minister for Health and asking for an urgent risk assessment, consultation with paramedics and funding for these improvements.

We should not have to wait for another paramedic to be seriously injured before action is taken. Our paramedics show up for Territorians every day. It is time that we show up for them.

Central Australians deserve better. Tonight I call on the Health minister to please fund the safety improvements our paramedics are asking for at Alice Springs Hospital. It is about privacy for patients and dignity and safety for our hardworking paramedics. Our frontline workers deserve safety, our families deserve dignity and our communities deserve action. Please, no more delays, no more excuses. Let us fund these urgent requests for the safety of our hardworking paramedics.

Ms CAHILL (Port Darwin): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I recognise the important contribution small and family-owned businesses make to our Territory economy and to congratulate Justin and Karinda Gill, owners of Abode New Homes, on 25 years of building homes for Territorians. On 13 November, Justin, Karinda, their team and guests gathered to celebrate this milestone with our Chief Minister, Hon Lia Finocchiaro, and I hear it was a wonderful celebration.

What began as a small carpentry and residential building operation has grown into one of the Territory's most recognised and awarded residential building companies. Over the past 25 years, Abode New Homes has built more than 700 homes, helping Territory families, including first homebuyers, achieve their dream of home ownership. In this time, they have created jobs, taken on apprentices and provided opportunities for local tradespeople, subcontractors and suppliers, helping strengthen our local construction industry. Abode's success has been recognised with more than 60 housing and business awards. In 2017 Karinda was also named Telstra NT Businesswoman of the Year.

What I admire about Justin and Karinda is that despite their success, they have remained committed to the people and community that helped them build their business. Family-owned businesses like Abode New Homes are important to the Territory. They create jobs, invest locally, support other businesses and help families put down roots and build their futures here.

Justin and Karinda, congratulations on this remarkable milestone. Thank you for believing in the Territory, investing in our people and supporting local businesses for 25 years.

It is success stories like this that make my role as the minister for Business one that is a total joy.

I recognise and congratulate some outstanding students, educators, community leaders and local businesses who continue to make a positive contribution to our Territory and most critically, the Port Darwin electorate. Firstly, I acknowledge the recipients of my Robyn Cahill Citizenship Awards from two wonderful schools in my electorate. From Larrakeyah Primary School, congratulations to our October recipients, Elouise Andallo and Zella Keating. Our November recipients Hayan Jasani and Stirling Kane. From Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, congratulations to our October recipients Wulv Lauenstein and Hanisha Yap, our November recipients, Edgar Beale and Avnoor Malhi.

These awards recognise students who demonstrate positive values, kindness, respect and a commitment to their school communities. I congratulate each of these students on their achievements and encourage them to continue being wonderful role models for their peers.

We are also blessed with some extraordinary educators in the Port Darwin electorate and none more amazing than Fathma Mauger, Principal of Larrakeyah Primary School, who was named NT Principal of the Year at the 2026 World Teachers Day NT Education Excellence Awards. This is a fantastic achievement and well-deserved recognition of Fathma's dedication, leadership and commitment to providing the very best

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educational opportunities for her students. Not only that, Larrakeyah Primary School was named Hot 100 Darwin School of the Year. An outstanding achievement and a wonderful reflection of the hard work and dedication of the entire school community. Well done to Fathma, her staff and all the students.

The NT News recently held its Leader of the Year Awards. I recognise some remarkable members of our electorate who were acknowledged in those awards. Congratulations to Ray Bail and Dominic Fracaro, who were both nominated in the Hall of Fame category, with Ray taking out the award. I also congratulate Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi, who was nominated for and went on to win the First Nations Leader category. These awards recognise individuals who demonstrate outstanding leadership and make a lasting contribution to our Territory. Congratulations to all nominees and winners as well.

In October we saw the 2026 NT Export and Business Awards, again members of the Port Darwin electorate shone. Congratulations to the Darwin Convention Centre who received the Professional Services Export Award and was also named Venue of the Year. Congratulations to the GTNT Group, recognised for Community Event of the Year for the GTNT Group Awards and the NT Cattlemen's Association which received the Business Summit Conference award.

I congratulate the Automobile Association of the Northern Territory, AANT, which was named Peak Industry Body Association Advocate of the Year. These achievements highlight the strength, innovation and dedication of our Territory businesses and organisations and the important contribution they make to our economy and community.

The, we have the 2026 Northern Territory Brolga Tourism Awards. Members and businesses in the Port Darwin electorate excelled. These prestigious awards celebrate excellence in our tourism industry and it was wonderful to see so many Darwin businesses and attractions recognised. Congratulations go to Darwin Convention Centre again, who had Business Event Venues, H on Mitchell Apartment Hotel the 4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation, Darwin Comedy Festival 2026 Festival and Events, Top End Visitor Information Centre Visitor Information Services, Darwin Waterfront Major Tourist Attractions, AAT Kings Major Tour and Transport Operators.

These awards are testament to the hard work, professionalism and dedication of the people behind these businesses and organisations. Our tourism industry plays a vital role in showcasing the best of the Territory, attracting visitors and supporting local jobs and businesses. Congratulations to all winners present in the Port Darwin electorate for their well-deserved recognition and continuing to make Darwin such a fantastic destination.

I also give a special shout-out to Prabin and his wonderful team at Duke's Cafe and Eatery for organising another fantastic event, the fourth Annual Battle of Darwin: Latte Art Smackdown 2026. This event brought together talented baristas and coffee enthusiasts who were able to showcase their incredible skills, creativity and passion with Darwin's hospitality industry.

It takes a lot to organise event like this and Prabin and his team deserve recognition for making it such a success, which was supported by our Northern Territory government through the grants program.

I give a special congratulations to Sujan, who works with Prabin and his team at Duke's Cafe and Eatery, who achieved an impressive second place in the competition. Well done to Prabin and Sujan and everyone involved. It was wonderful to see local businesses creating opportunities that bring our community together while celebrating the talent we have in Darwin.

It is always a privilege to recognise the achievements of those who make our Territory such a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. To all the students, educators, community leaders, businesses and organisations I have mentioned today, congratulations on your well-deserved recognition. You should all be incredibly proud of your achievements. I wish you all the best for a safe and happy Christmas season.

VISITORS
Palmerston Game Fishing Club

Mr ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we move on to the next speaker, I recognise the presence in the gallery of President Darrell Smart and Treasurer Peter Smart from the Palmerston Game Fishing Club. Welcome to parliament.

Members: Hear, hear!

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Mr BROWN (Arafura): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I give my thanks and my merry Christmas wishes to my electorate.

First, I acknowledge and thank the workers who fly into my region—public service workers and the police who go in and do the job, especially in difficult circumstances. I acknowledge my communities on the islands: the Milikapiti community and all the teachers and workers there; Wurrumiyanga, which is on Bathurst Island and all the teachers there; Tiwi College which went through a hard time with Cyclone Fina earlier this year; Jabiru also went through a hard time with the floods that went through as a result from coming down from Katherine; Oenpelli, Maningrida, Croker Island, Warrawi, and the 40-odd outstations in the West Arnhem region.

I thank the ranger groups that are protecting our coastlines: Djelk Rangers are at Maningrida; Arafura Swamp Rangers, which is on the border for me and the Member for Mulka; the Warddeken Rangers looking after country, taking care of the weeds and feral animals; the Cobourg Rangers at Black Point, a big area of beautiful country; the Kakadu Rangers who look after Kakadu. There are a couple of small ones there called Njanjma Rangers who look after Cahill Crossing. I move across to Tiwi Islands which has two ranger groups. We have the sea rangers who look after the ghost nets and turtles. We have the land rangers who look after the feral animals. They are always catching feral cats and dissecting them to see what mammals are being hurt from them being there.

I also take this opportunity to thank my Labor team for sticking it out with me this year.

Finally, I thank my family. Obviously I had a rough time about two or three months ago and my family and my children stuck by me, especially my daughter who absorbed it all in school at the time. Every time something come out in the paper, she was obviously shown it. She is resilient and strong. She said, 'You are helping people, dad, you keep going'. I think it is the pocket money that she is worried about, which is the thing. She is amazing. I thank my partner, Jessica, for always sticking by me.

I acknowledge all the members in the Chamber; merry Christmas and happy new year.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, before I start my adjournment, I acknowledge quickly that we had Richard and Narelle Cook, as well as Tracy and Duane in the gallery. They help the Chief Minister and the Member for Brennan; they also used to help me in Katherine and are great community people.

I rise to send thanks for what has been an incredibly busy year. The year started out with severe weather events across the Territory, let alone the flooding in Katherine coupled with an untimely operation where I left Parliament with the support of my colleagues. My media advisor, Zack, and I went and reported on the flooding in Katherine to keep our community informed. We dodged a bullet in Katherine with one lot of flooding, but the next weather event heading north of Katherine spared us all from what could have been a catastrophic event. Shout out to then-Commander Tianfang (Terry) Zhang and his team of dedicated Police, Chief Minister staff member, Thomas Manning, for his dedication, and the leadership of both of them over that time back in Katherine in March.

To the NTSES that left their families and worked tirelessly supporting our community, to the ambulance, the hospital staff that set up in the ambulance centre, and then to the critical care and trauma team that set up a makeshift hospital, which was incredible. I feel honoured that this was the first time in Australia that this has happened right here in Katherine. To my husband, Dean, that spends plenty of time keeping the home fires burning, along with my son, William, who are my greatest supporters. To my daughter Hannah, Jake and our grandson Lachie. Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, you do not have grandchildren yet, but I tell you there is no better gift than the grandchild. It gives us all the pleasure without the responsibility.

To James, Kiara and Florence our granddaughter, she brings such joy and pleasure to our lives and I can hardly believe that she will soon be one in a few weeks. These two small people that have come into our lives bring such joy in many short moments that I get to spend time with them, as this job does not allow much spare time.

To the constituents in the electorate of Katherine, thank you for entrusting me as your leader. It is a role I do not take lightly, and I enjoy the engagement and communication across the electorate. From the markets to the mobile offices, to the many school events or community events, I thank you for the conversations and concerns you have shared with me. To my electorate staff, Jen and Harriet, they have a huge task. As a regional member, time needs to be carefully divided between electorate and ministerial duties. It is a balance

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when I am not there regularly and Jenny is left running the office and attending events in my absence. To both, I say thank you.

To Harriet, who joined us from a station to be our EOA, she has been a great asset to the office. She is in the younger age bracket than Jen and I, so she keeps us in the loop of things to do with young people. Harriet is studying midwifery and is leaving us at the end of the year and will join the Katherine Hospital to get more experience as she continues her study; our loss is their game. Thank you, Harriet, for your dedication to your work and I wish you well in your career of Nursing Midwifery. To my ministerial staff, where do I start? What a team. Dynamic, funny and dedicated. Thank you all to Chrissy, Zac, Mikala, Victoria and Aymie, I could not do this without your ongoing support.

I have many schools in my electorate starting with Katherine South Primary School, where my children and husband attended. This year they celebrated 50-years of education. I would like to thank the dedicated staff that set up and got all the memorabilia up for us to enjoy. Thank you to Principal Chris Errington, and Deputy Tessa Fondacaro for their ongoing commitment. To the staff at Kintore Street School under the leadership of Sally and Anica Beckett; a group of dedicated staff caring for children with special needs. Thank you to Principal Lynelle Rankin and her team at Clyde Fenton School that took out the Haymes Paint Keep Australia Beautiful mural, which was the best in the Territory.

I would like to farewell Donna Bryant, the outgoing principal of Katherine School of the Air who is moving on to Darwin. Thank you to Jess Scraigh, who is acting in the principal's position and her team for leading in Donna's absence.

I also farewell Sunniva Antonucci, the Principal of St Josephs Catholic College, and her husband, Gino, who was the best cook of pasta in town with local business, Gino's Pasta To Go. They will be sorely missed.

Another farewell, to Nick Lovering the Principal of Katherine High School, who will be moving on to Darwin next year as well.

To Duane Von Sendon and the Clontarf team, congratulations on getting the most students to finish Year 12 NTCET this year. Congratulations to them all.

Moving on to Macfarlane Primary School to Principal Phillip Russel and his team, I give a special thank you for your hard work. I was pleased to be able to present principal Philip Russel with 35 years of service to education back in September and another congratulations to him for completing his first marathon. That is to be congratulated, as I know from experience, that is a dedicated mindset to complete the 42-kilometre run.

To the team of Renez Lamon and Nicole Gadd, thank you for your amazing energy. Congratulations to the students that qualified for the national competition in Brisbane after winning the Best Robot Design Award and coming in the top five schools at the Darwin Regional Competition. How fantastic.

Not only do I thank the schools but also the daycare centres that support families in my electorates.

I thank all the sporting clubs we support right across the Katherine region, to the committees behind them. Earlier this year, we had the Katherine Cup, which is an event not to be missed, with many people from Darwin and Kununurra coming to our town to have a fantastic day. To Mullo, Ange, Tia and the committee, thank you for putting this on. It is a lot of hard work and dedication and they do a fantastic job of getting the grounds ready, for a very small team.

Thank you to the Hansard team for collecting the history of our parliament, a special dedicated team they are. To the cleaners who work around us as we go about our work, thank you very much. They are always very kind and respectful up on the fifth floor. To the security teams that support us not only in Parliament but also when I cannot get my password sorted in my electorate office. They quite often ring me when I have left the alarm going or something. Sorry that I bother them, but thank you for checking up on our security.

I thank my sister Sam who comes up each year and supports us at the Katherine show, along with all my colleagues who support me at the Katherine show. Our CLP branch in Katherine, the committee there do an incredible job. We have a core group of great people. We all rallied together over that Katherine Show weekend, which is a massive fundraiser for us. I thank all the members of our CLP Katherine team.

To my colleagues, thank you for dedicating ourselves to a better Territory. We all give so much of ourselves to our work, a lot of time is spent away from our families. I look forward to Christmas, having my parents arrive, all my children, their partners and babies join us at home. As well as extended family around the

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Christmas table and spending some really good times together over the Christmas period. To everyone here, thank you for a great, busy year.

A huge thank you to Lia Finocchiaro, our Chief Minister, who is a great leader. She was a great leader in opposition and she is a great leader for us in government as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merry Christmas to you and merry Christmas to everyone.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Jess Carroll, the Member for Spillett's electorate officer. Welcome to Parliament House with your children. Lovely.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge a few weeks ago the Mindil Beach Surf Life Saving Club stood on the national stage and received Surf Life Saving Australia's President's Award. It is one of the organisation's highest awards and honours.

Three years ago that club faced the very real prospect of disappearing altogether. Membership had dwindled to just seven active members and the future of one of the Territory's most recognisable volunteer organisations was uncertain. Rather than accept that outcome, the members of Mindil Beach committed themselves to bringing the club back to life. They recruited new members, restarted programs for young Territorians and rebuilt their training programs from the ground up. Today there are more than 90 members in just three short years and they call Mindil Beach Surf Life Saving Club home.

The President's Award is a recognition of the hard work, determination and Territory grit that went into turning the club around. I am really proud the club is going from strength to strength. A few weeks ago I received contact from the Vice President of the Mindil Beach Surf Life Saving Club, requesting me to become patron of that club, which I was really proud to do. I am happy to work with that club and try, make it as good as possible in the future so it does not go down the same path it did. I will try my hardest to be a strong supporter of that club. I take my role as patron of now three clubs in the electorate seriously and put my everything into that, so I will work as hard as I can to do that well for them.

I congratulate the club, including the President Luke Marcroft, Vice President Geyne Feeney, Samantha Ratley, Henry Tollner, William Tollner, Marcus Chen, Katina Croft and life members Adam Traugott and Moira Wigley. To all the volunteers who go down and help members of Mindil Beach Surf Life Saving Club, I congratulate them for their well-deserved recognition. Three years ago, this club was facing closure and today it is thriving and being recognised amongst the best in the country. Territorians can be very proud of that.

I just wanted to close off by saying coming on after the Member for Katherine and her speech, we do attend a lot of events throughout the year. We are very busy; we spend a lot of time away from our home and from our families. Like the Member for Katherine, I welcomed my first granddaughter into the world just over a year and a half ago, and they are absolutely the best things that will ever, ever come into your life, so I reiterate that. I really wanted to thank my family. They do everything for me at home. They are pretty much running the house and making sure everything is coordinated, so thank you to my family, particularly my husband.

I really wanted to thank my electorate staff. They do amazing work. We have a super, super busy electorate office with a really high turnover of people coming through the door and requesting action, so the amount of correspondence we send off, the amount of different tasks that we action, plus we have a high level of events that we manage throughout the year. We have a kids community Family Day which we run. We have Halloween and lots of different events throughout the year that we consistently manage. We have our seniors Christmas party coming up, which is going to be double the size that it was last year, so thank you to my team for all the work they do in making sure those events come off very smoothly.

I would also like to congratulate all our graduating Year 12 students who have made it to the end of their schooling career. I am lucky to have a couple of primary schools and one of the biggest, well the biggest senior school in the Northern Territory being Darwin High School with 2,000 students at that school. It is a massive workload for those teachers to get those kids across the line and they work really hard.

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My son has graduated this year through an apprenticeship, so that is due to the work that the staff at Darwin High School did to make sure he got over the line. So yeah, congratulations to all the year twelves who are going through that that process. I know that they are going to be anxious. The ones who are going for an ATAR, they are going to be anxious about their ATAR scores. When I when I spoke to them at a couple of the events, I wanted to remind them that an ATAR is only one part of their journey. If they do not get the ATAR they want, it is okay. They can return as a mature age student in a few years, so it is not the end of the world, making sure they keep their head up, but I am sure they have amazing teachers, amazing staff, amazing friends and family around them, and I am sure a lot of them will get the ATAR that they want, and we will see how Darwin High School goes with their top 20 highest ATARs in the Northern Territory—we will see how they go, they always do very well.

The staff and students at Parap Primary School do an absolutely amazing job. Their calendar every day of the year is jam packed with different extracurricular activities, lots of different things that school is doing as is Ludmilla Primary School. For a small school in my electorate, Ludmilla Primary School absolutely punches above its weight for all of the program it provides those kids, and the extracurricular stuff it does. They did recently win for the second year in the row, the AFL schools competition. They got bumped up from division two last year into division one this year and still won the competition, so they did an amazing job and the staff of that school support them so well to keep doing those extracurricular activities that they absolutely love.

I have got St John's Catholic College, and I attended the graduation last week and there is another awards ceremony coming up next week which is great. Lots of students going through that school and they are so amazingly respectful and kind to everybody. The staff in all these schools are so welcoming. Every time I walk in the door I feel like I am part of the school staff, which is absolutely phenomenal.

Every Friday morning, and I will do it again—sorry, not every Friday. Every fortnight on a Friday I go and do the lollipop at Parap Primary School, and it is one of the most favourite parts of my week. I get to talk to all the kids as they cross the road as they skip across on a on a Friday afternoon looking forward to the weekend and then attend the Parap Primary School assembly, which is fun. That is one of the favourite parts of my week, and I look forward to continuing that next year.

I thank all my parliamentary colleagues on all sides of the Chamber for everything that you do for the Northern Territory. We may not always agree on what we want to do, but we will get there in the end. We hope that everything we do improves the Territory for the better. Thank you for the year 2026. It has been a crazy year. I feel like I was getting out the Christmas decorations last year and I blinked and I am doing it again already. It will be another year before we know it.

Thank you for all the work that you do. Thank you for the support that my colleagues provide me. It is amazing the conversations that I can have with people to help me ease or allay any concerns or questions that I have. Thank you for everything that you do to support me in my role.

As the Member for Katherine said, thank you to the Chief Minister. She is an amazing leader. She supports everyone of her staff and we appreciate it.

Thank you for my Darwin city colleagues, the Members for Fong Lim and Port Darwin …

Mr Kerle: What about your Palmerston colleagues?

Mrs ZIO: I am getting there. It is contentious, I tell you.

Thanks to the northern suburbs team for the support they provide and the Palmerston team. We have some amazing colleagues in our CLP government. I learn from each and every one of them every day. You cannot get much better than that for a job.

Thank you for the ministers who do the extra work that they do in relation to making sure legislation and departments are all getting what they need. I appreciate all their work and they do a good job at keeping us backbenchers informed of what is happening and answering any questions. They are receptive to that, so that is good.

I think I have covered off just about everything. I will not go too much further. Thank you for the year. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and all the staff in Parliament House. They do an amazing job keeping this big operation going, especially the committee's team. They do an amazing job. I am on three committees, Chair of one and Deputy Chair of another and a member of another. I see the work that they do and they keep those committees buzzing and flowing. That is amazing.

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Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling): Madam Speaker, I adjourn on the amazing year that was 2026 and say merry Christmas to the amazing people living in the electorate of Braitling and across the Northern Territory.

I start this evening by thanking the amazing people I serve every day. That job simply cannot occur without the amazing people supporting the electorate of Braitling and the people of Alice Springs more broadly.

Rowie Schulz, the electorate officer for the Braitling electorate office, works tirelessly to support our community and does so much work I just about need an entire adjournment to thank her for everything she does. I would like to mention just a small example of what Rowie does that makes an incredible difference to the way we support our community.

Every World Teachers' Day, I know many electorates do cakes for their schools, and the Breitling electorate has the following schools: Braitling Primary School, Alice Springs School of the Air, Ross Park Primary School, St Philip's College, Sadadeen Primary School, Acacia School, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, both Primary and Senior Schools and Centralian Senior College. That is nine schools all getting a cake.

For those who buy their cakes from a cake maker, it can get pretty expensive depending on the size of the cake. Rowie has taken to baking the cakes to ensure we can save some money and support others in our community. Rowie goes right out of her way to ask schools the flavours they would like and bakes and decorates the cakes. It is a huge effort but one I am eternally grateful for because it means we are able to support so many in the community. Our Supporting the Community wall when you first walk in the office is dotted with sports stars, sporting clubs, local community organisations and individuals we have been able to support in various ways to ensure they can compete, head interstate or represent the NT in their respective fields. Thank you, Rowie, I could not do it without you.

To Jen Waterhouse, who has been a legend in the office this year, supporting Rowie and me with the birthday cards and other various roles. It is hard to believe we deliver just about every birthday card to everyone in the electorate by hand on the back of my electric motorcycle. This saves on postage so, once again, we can support the electorate of Braitling. It is a great way to catch up with the community as I buzz around delivering various letters and cards to the community.

I will speak about the amazing schools in the Braitling electorate that I spoke about before as well. Braitling Primary School, led by Principal Donna Wright, has had a huge year. I have been attending school assemblies and have seen a huge amount of growth in that school over my six years as a member, and Donna should be proud of her efforts to grow the school community and support every single child at that school.

To Kerrie Russell at Alice Springs School of the Air, your smile every time I walk in to your school is something I look forward to. The biggest classroom in the NT, the School of the Air delivers remote education to children across the NT, and Kerrie and her team do an incredible job educating from afar, with the in weeks being something I look forward to every year.

To Ross Park Primary School led by Principal Penny Weily. It is probably the largest primary school in the electorate of Braitling. Every time I go to Ross Park something is happening. Their spooky Halloween assembly involved everyone in the school dressing up. There is nothing done by halves at Ross Park, with Penny and her incredible staff doing an incredible job educating the leaders of tomorrow with professionalism and heart that means every child that goes to Ross Park leaves the school a better person as a result of their experiences.

I thank St Philips College and principal Leslie Tilbrook, who taught me when I was at Saints. Thank you for all that you do, Leslie, and your amazing team at St Philips College.

Sadadeen Primary school with principal Anthea Frossinakis, keep up the incredible work you are doing at Sadadeen, Athina.

Acacia School with Joel Hohn who is doing an incredible job with the most recent graduation ceremony for some incredible kids in our town. It really was touching. To see kids that have been at Acacia School their whole lives leaving and the tears that were in their families' eyes because of the amount of support that Acacia provides to families. They are glad to see their young people graduating. They also know that it now means that is up to them look after those young people that attend Acacia.

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OLSH, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart led by Julia Wake. In one of the most recent storms OLSH was really badly impacted and Julia had a smile on her face through all the challenges they faced with roofs torn off, air-conditioners damaged and many trees downed. Julia has been a tower of strength at OLSH overseeing 3 campuses and many hundreds of students who all cram into the OLSH hall for their end year assemblies and award ceremonies that I really do enjoy attending. .

Centralian Senior College principal Glenda McCarthy has been working away providing leadership to the school community and supporting all her students succeed. Thank you, Glenda.

Now to my parliamentary colleagues thank you for an amazing year. It has been a huge one for legislation and achievements, and we should all be proud of what we have achieved. Genuinely, I say this and I mean this, everyone on this side of the Chamber I get on with well. I want to thank you all and it is not something I say lightly, having been with many teams over the years. It is wonderful to see the way we all take time to listen and to interact with one another throughout the year.

To Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro I want to say thank you your support. It is always appreciated as is your friendship. I never thought we would roast a chicken together but that is exactly what we did this year in a bush oven attending the Finke Desert race and it was a wonderful experience for both of our families.

To my number one exercise buddy the Member for Katherine. Thank you for your support throughout the year. Not too many people understand the job and what we go through, but the Member for Katherine has been a sounding board and confidant throughout the 2026 year. Once again, I want to thank you for your friendship.

To the staff upstairs in my office. Phil, Rachel, Ebony, Jodi and Kym-Marie. You are all amazing people who put up with me singing and carrying on throughout the year. What I am genuinely happy about, is the number of people we are able to help through that office. I do want to highlight the fact we support so many people in our offices across the NT. It is something I always say to Rowie in our electorate office. I do not care which electorate the person comes from we will attempt to help them without favour, or fear, no matter the request and we have had some strange requests.

Lastly, I thank my wife Lisa-Marie Burgoyne. The Chief Minister spoke yesterday about how she could not do the job without the support of her husband. I certainly could not do what I do without the support of my incredible wife.

This year has probably been the worst with being away from home with challenges around flooding and storms meaning, even when I was at home this year, a lot of time was spent riding my push bike to the banks of the Todd River to do a riverside update or after a storm, late evenings chain-sawing downed trees to support community members who were unable to support themselves.

Lisa-Marie does an incredible job ensuring our beautiful girls get to all their sporting, ballet and birthday events without fail and does this all while working herself, assisting the local theatre group and teaching singing.

Thank you, Lisa-Marie. I am looking forward to some time off at Christmas to see you and the girls and cook some daddy pancakes, as my little girls call them, for our family.

I cannot finish without also thanking the amazing Department of the Legislative Assembly staff; it has been a big year. I thank the Clerk and his support staff; the cleaners—who I often see when I am here late at night—and all the security guards who are always very kind. As I walk in, I am always asking what they are up to or what they are doing.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I wish everyone a merry Christmas.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, as we approach the end of another incredibly busy year, I rise this evening to do something that is important to me, and that is to thank my community, colleagues, family and friends. It is also an important opportunity to acknowledge those who have supported me throughout the year and enabled me to do what I love the most, and that is representing the wonderful people of Wanguri.

To the residents of Wanguri, Leanyer and Muirhead, thank you for your continued support, encouragement, honest conversations, and most importantly, your trust. Thank you for contacting me via either email, phone, social media, or simply dropping into the office at Hibiscus with your concerns; thank you for encouraging for me to keep going. Thank you for attending my mobile offices throughout the electorate or at the Rapid Creek

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Markets, and I am happy to be accessible for the constituents along with my northern suburb's colleagues the Member for Karama, Member for Casuarina and Member for Sanderson.

Having been born and raised in Darwin, this community is much more than an electorate; it is my home. It is where I built my lifelong friendships, have raised my family and I am proud now to represent them here in parliament. Every day I have had the privilege of representing this community and it is a reminder of why I put my hand up for this role in the first place. One of the greatest joys of being a local member is the opportunity to get out and about in our community, meeting all walks of life and listening to their stories, celebrating their achievements and sharing the occasions that are important to them.

Looking back as the year for the Member for Wanguri, I am reminded of just how much has happened in our community and how fortunate we are to have many people willing to give their time, energy and expertise to bring us together. I want to start by saying thank you to my schools: Leanyer Primary School, led by Leah Crockford; Wanguri Primary School, led by David Cluse; Good Shepherd Leanyer Campus, led by Matthew Kolacheski and Talia Amber; Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, led by Paula Sellars; and Nektaria Pikoulos, who leads Dripstone Secondary College. Thank you for your guidance and for caring for our students across the electorate. It is always a pleasure to visit the schools, celebrate the achievements of our young people and see their enthusiasm, creativity and all their potential. To the parents who volunteer at school events, help with fundraising, attend meetings and somehow manage all of this alongside work and family commitments, thank you.

I thank the community and the church organisations who extend support to many of my constituents in the electorate. Just to name a few: Dementia Australia; Connected Women Darwin Red Cross; Darwin Bridge Club; Australian China Friendship Society NT; Buddhist Society of the Northern Territory Inc along with the Buddhist Temple; Islamic Society of Darwin; Uniting Church; and Holy Spirit Catholic Church. Our community groups continue to be one of the greatest strengths of the Northern Territory.

I acknowledge the organisations and the individuals who support our seniors, the people living with disability, carers and families experiencing difficult circumstances. Our elderly residents have contributed so much to building the Territory we enjoy today, and we must never forget their contributions or take them for granted. To our carers, many of whom quietly carry enormous responsibilities every day, thank you; your dedication and love making immeasurable difference. I also want to acknowledge our supporting clubs and their incredible army of volunteers, our coaches, referees, team managers, committee members, canteen volunteers and the mums, dads and grandparents who spend their weeks transporting children to training and games. They are the backbone of our grassroots sports.

A big shout out to Tracy Village Football Club, led by Frankie Ennor, and the Casuarina Football Club, led by Scott Piper. I wish the Casuarina Football Club every success as they enter their 50th anniversary next year. You are not just teaching our children how to play a game, you are teaching them resilience, discipline, teamwork, respect and the importance of being part of a community. To our local businesses, thank you for continuing to invest in the northern suburbs, employing our local people and supporting the community organisations. Often it is our small businesses that are approached for raffle prizes, sponsorships, donations and fundraising support and despite pressures of running a business, so many continue to give generously. I encourage everyone to shop locally wherever possible and support those businesses that consistently support us across the Christmas period.

I also acknowledge a special group of people—my northern suburbs team. To the Member for Karama, Brian O'Gallagher; the Member for Sanderson, Jinson Charls; and the Member for Casuarina, Khoda Patel, thank you for your support and your tireless work on behalf of our northern suburb's residents. I am incredibly proud to work alongside you.

Between the four of us, there are not too many community functions, sporting events, markets, or multicultural celebrations that go unattended. Our electorate boundaries may be different, but our communities are interconnected, and so many of the issues that matter to our residents are shared.

Whether we are attending those community events together, meeting the residents and advocating for better facilities, or working through local issues, we understand the importance of working as a team. I know firsthand the hours you put in, the weekends you give up and the personal sacrifices you make to be there for your communities. Thank you for the laughs, the encouragement, the friendship and the shared commitment to making our northern suburbs an even better place to live.

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I thank the remainder of my team from across the CBD to Palmerston, and down the highway through to Alice Springs—and, of course, the crossbench. Thank you for your support. Thank you to the Chief for your leadership and thank you to the CLP and the North Darwin branch—all the members and volunteers there.

Thank you to the staff on the fifth floor. I give a big shout-out to Chibuzo, who looked after me when I was quite ill on a flight back from Nhulunbuy.

I thank the team aiding my work for my assistant ministry role for the Nhulunbuy transition, often working long hours. Louise, Tony, Bianca, Ainsley and I welcome back Lancaster—thank you for everything. I also acknowledge the wonderful people who work alongside me and keep the Wanguri Electorate Office going. To my staff, Shannara May, Fahim, Kim and Deja, I give my sincere and heartfelt thanks.

To the other electorate officers, Cesar, Jess, Mary Lou, Susie and Megan, thank you for working as a team with my team. Being a member of Parliament is certainly not a one-person job. There are countless phone calls, emails, appointments, community inquiries, events, correspondence and last-minute changes that need to be managed, so thank you very much. Thank you for your patience, your professionalism, your flexibility and willingness to go above and beyond. Thank you for looking after our constituents.

To the volunteers, Chris, Yanni, Sabinis, Brigitta, Elizabeth, Helen—and Guy, especially, who carries everything—Derek and Leonie, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for giving up your precious time and putting your hands up whenever I need some help.

I also thank the staff of the Department of Legislative Assembly, our parliamentary attendants, the security officers, Hansard and catering teams. I give a big shout out to Committees, who has worked really hard this year to support the work we do. Much of the work goes unseen, but it certainly has not gone unappreciated. Madam Speaker, thank you for keeping us in order and for giving me the jump when you can see me.

Finally, I thank the people who are closest to my heart—my family. To my incredible mum, thank you for your love and support. To my little brother Benhur, thank you for always being part of my support network and for the special bond that we have as a family. Thank you to all my other siblings who pick up the phone when I call.

To my amazing son, Rian, thank you for your understanding, your patience and for being such enormous source of pride and happiness. No matter what titles or responsibilities I have in this place, being your mum will always be the greatest privilege of my life.

I cannot forget our two beautiful dogs. We lost one earlier this year, but we still have Captain and Charlie. They are always happy to see me when I finally make it home. They do not care when Parliament is sitting, how many functions I attend or the challenges of my day. They are just happy that I am at home. There is something wonderful and comforting about that.

Of course, to my husband, Aaron—who is at work right now—thank you for understanding the late nights, the early mornings, the busy weekends, the missed meals and the occasions when a quick phone call turns into another hour of work. Thank you for holding things together at home, for your patience, your encouragement and for being there when I need it the most. Thank you for doing my laundry. Behind every public commitment I make, there is often a personal sacrifice that you quietly make. I see it, I appreciate it and I love you for it.

To my entire family, thank you.

As we approach Christmas and prepare to welcome another year, I encourage everyone to take a moment to appreciate the people around them. From my family to yours, I wish everyone a merry Christmas a safe, relaxing festive season and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2027.

Mr EDGINGTON (Barkly): Madam Speaker, it is hard to believe we are already at the last week of sittings for 2026. I extend my best wishes to all Territorians and especially my constituents in the Barkly.

To everyone in the Chamber, I wish you and your loved ones are safe and merry Christmas. I hope that we are all able to enjoy a break before we return to parliament in February to continue our important work serving Territorians and building a better Northern Territory.

The Barkly is a remarkable part of the Territory, and it is a privilege to serve the people who call it home. Its strength lies in the diversity of its people, the different cultures, communities and ways of life. From towns

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and remote communities to out stations, homelands, roadhouses and cattle stations, it is an electorate unlike any other in the Northern Territory.

My constituents live as far South as Aileron and the outstation of Alyuen, which is only 130 kilometres out of Alice Springs. Up the Stuart Highway in Ti Tree, Barrow Creek, Tennant Creek, Elliott, Larrimah, across the Carpentaria Highway to Borroloola, Robinson River, out near the Queensland border to Alpurrurulam, down the Sandover to Ampilatwatja, the Utopia Homelands, Ali Curung, Epenarra, Canteen Creek and Murray Downs.

Thank you to those I am elected to represent. I am proud to be your local member and proud to serve the people of the Barkly. Thank you for continuing to speak to me about what matters most to you and for sharing your experience, knowledge and perspectives. It is an immense privilege and honour to represent your interests in Parliament. Most electorates are covered by one Council, but I am fortunate to have three in my electorate. The Barkly Regional Council, the Central Desert Regional Council and also the Roper Gulf Regional Council.

All three of those councils work incredibly hard and I thank the staff and all elected members for the work they have done during 2026. Thank you to the government and non-government agencies, and many Aboriginal organisations in my electorate for the work they have done and continue to do this year. It is important we all continue to work together to improve our communities and the people we represent. I give a big shout out and thanks to the local businesspeople, small business owners in my electorate and, of course all the staff are working every day of the week for those small businesses.

Thank you for your work, keeping your doors open this year and providing an amazing service to the people of Tennant Creek and right across the Barkly region. It is tough running a small business, so thank you for the work you all do. Over the next few weeks, schools are out, the Barkly will be wrapping up for the year and celebrating their achievements. I am fortunate to have a number of schools throughout my electorate, both remote and in town. I thank all the principals, teachers and staff for the incredible work they do with the students every day.

I thank all the Legislative Assembly staff, as we all know this place would not function without the behind the scenes work you do. I pass on my thanks to all the staff for the support given to committees and work done by the Department of the Legislative Assembly, including the Clerk, Hansard, the library, the facilities team, cleaners, security staff and of course, all the staff at the Speakers cafe. In my role as Minister for Health, Mental Health, Alcohol Policy, Aboriginal Affairs, Housing, Local Government, Community Development and Essential Services, I thank all the staff working in each of those departments for the work they have done throughout the year.

Thank you to the team in my ministerial office. I have had staff during the year who have gone over and beyond what is needed to do the job. I thank them for the work that they have done. Jody, Justin, Jess, Hayley, Russell, Angus, Millie, Olivia and all the department liaison officers that have been part of my office this year continue to do an amazing job. I thank you for the assistance you have provided.

In my electorate office in Tennant Creek, I thank Aimee and Bec for the work they do engaging with constituents. It is not always easy being at the front counter, working with constituents. There are some challenging issues that come up. I thank the staff who have responded and dealt with the issues at hand.

It is particularly reassuring, being on the road quite a bit, having good, solid staff in the office makes a huge difference. I know my office is in capable hands while I am away. I thank the Barkly Branch of the CLP, our local team for the support that they continue to give me. I also thank the CLP team across the board. I also pay particular thanks to our CLP parliamentary colleagues led by our Chief Minister, Lia Finocchiaro. The work that everybody has done here over the last 12 months, working together as a team and getting the job done has been amazing. Thank you for everybody's commitment. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the work that you do. It is amazing.

I also thank all of our first responders—Police, Fire and Emergency Services personnel, our incredible health staff and St John Ambulance personnel who are on the front line 24 hours a day, seven days a week, doing the work that not many others would like to do.

Finally, I thank my family for providing the support that is needed to do the job. Politics often demands long hours away from home, time away and I simply could not do it without the encouragement, patience and understanding. Thank you for everything you do behind the scenes. Your support certainly makes my job easier every day, and I am deeply grateful for it.

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I also mention that this evening I attended the St John NT graduation ceremony in Darwin. I put on the record my congratulations to every graduate who crossed that stage. Tonight recognised three groups of people who keep our ambulance service running—graduate paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers and the vehicle maintenance team who keep the St John fleet on the road. To our new paramedics, you finished university, then you did the hard yards on the road with St John to earn your authority to practise. You will be the people Territorians see on the worst day of their lives—whether that is in a Darwin suburb or on a remote highway hours from the nearest hospital. That takes skill and courage.

To our emergency medical dispatchers, when someone rings 000, yours is the first voice that they hear. You talk people through CPR, you keep callers calm and you send the right crew to the right place. Your work starts saving lives before an ambulance has even left the station.

I also acknowledge Taleaha Dawson, who leads the Emergency Communications Centre team, for the work that she puts in developing our dispatches.

I also recognise the vehicle maintenance graduates who graduated this evening. It is quite easy to overlook, but an ambulance is only as good as the people who keep maintaining it and keep that vehicle running across the vast distances and tough conditions of the Territory. Each ambulance works hard and these graduates make sure every one of them is ready when the call comes.

The people we celebrated tonight have chosen a career of service to this community, often in difficult and demanding conditions. They deserve our ultimate respect and our thanks. I thank St John NT Chief Executive Abby Trewin AM and the board Chair Peter Carew AM for their leadership, along with the whole St John team and the families who supported these graduates through their training.

I congratulate every graduate who graduated tonight. The Territory is extremely lucky to have you on the front line, whether it is in support or maintaining vehicles, the work that you do is incredibly important for all Territorians, keeping people safe at the most difficult parts of their lives. Thank you. Keep up the great work. Have a merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, I was extremely disappointed to not receive an award from the Deputy Speaker tonight in his inaugural awards. I note, though, Deputy Speaker, that I did get a special mention. I will work harder next year so that I can win one of those four categories. Quite a classic category to choose from—which one, I do not know, but we will see.

I reflect on the year of 2026. After 10 years as the Member for Arnhem, I still remain deeply humbled every day to represent the electorate in the parliament.

To my constituents in RAAF Tindal, it is a honour to represent you as the local member. People might be aware that Tindal is home to the F-35 Lightning II fighter jet flown by some of Australia's top guns.

I acknowledge the work and leadership of 17 Squadron Wing Commander Alex Smith and the 75th Squadron Wing Commander Matt Devson for their leadership at RAAF Tindal, especially during the severe flooding events across the Big Rivers region this year and particularly in Katherine township.

I have some of the largest mango farms and cattle stations in the Territory across the Arnhem electorate. I want to acknowledge the resilience of everyone in our pastoral, agribusiness and tourism industries who have done it tough this year—particularly earlier this year—and some who are still struggling with returning to the normality of their livelihoods. This year the Arnhem electorate showed true grit and determination to get through some of the most difficult challenges with floods, fires and cyclones.

Some of the amazing businesses in the Arnhem electorate have faced some fierce challenges this year, particularly the retail and tourism businesses in Mataranka in the beautiful Never Never region. They build them tough in Arnhem and I look forward to continuing to serve my constituents with the same resilience and admiration for them that I have done in previous years, and of course, to the best of my ability covering the entire Arnhem electorate across Mulggan Town Camp; Jilkminggan; Minyerri; Urapunga; Ngukurr; Numbulwar; Milyakburra on Bickerton Island; and the communities of Alyangula, Angurugu and Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt.

I thank the people of the beautiful little homelands in my electorate of Werenbun which is near Leliyn (Edith Falls) in Nitmiluk National Park and the families and community members in the neighbouring Jodetluk homeland and the closely related communities of Manyallaluk (Eva Valley); Barunga; Wugularr (Beswick).

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Along the Central Arnhem Road I get to represent the communities of Bulman; Weemol; Gapuwiyak plus the beautiful and stunning homelands on the coastline like Baniyala; as well as Raymangirr. Also places like Donydji, Balma, Rungungala and the smaller beautiful homelands on the east Arnhem coast that I represent as the Member for Arnhem. There is much to do to continue to advocate for better infrastructure and improved services in these areas and I do look forward to continuing that important work and advocacy next year in 2027 as the local member.

Special thanks to all the stakeholders, businesses, organisations, local government of East Arnhem Regional Council, Groote Archipelago Regional Council, and Roper Gulf Regional Council and to the service providers, government and non-government, to the amazing ranger groups, the art centres and the two land councils in the Arnhem electorate of Northern Land Council and Anindilyakwa Land Council.

I thank my fellow members of parliament for the work that each and every one of you do. Although we do not always agree on what the best outcome should be and the way to get there for Northern Territorians, I still remain optimistic deep-down. I sincerely hope in my heart that we see members of parliament here for the right reasons.

I say to all members across the Chamber, I hope you have some time with your loved ones this festive season and some downtime if possible ready for a big 2027.

I also thank all the staff who make this place function. To all the Department of the Legislative Assembly staff, the office of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, the clever team in the Table Office, the brilliant Hansard team led by Annemarie. A big thanks to Mike and the HR team and Alex and the building maintenance crew, the library staff and Stephen and the events staff who always put on a good show. A special mention and continued appreciation to Diem and Camille and the rest of the finance team for being so efficient and helpful. A big thanks to the cleaners for your great work behind the scenes to keep our parliament spick and span. Also great appreciation to the IT team.

A huge, massive shout-out to the awesome security crew who are so friendly and professional in the roles here in parliament. Of course, to the cafe crew, a special mention to Flo, Maddie, Pete, Monique and the whole of the amazing Shredded Chef and Speaker's Corner Cafe team.

To the staff in my Leader of the Opposition office—Mary, Shlok, Rachael, Jarryd, Clare, Isobella, Fiona and Grace—thank you all so much for the hard work that each and every one of you do. The extra hours of work and volunteering that you all put in to support me and our Labor opposition team is greatly appreciated.

To my teammates, our Labor family has grown significantly year. I acknowledge the Member for Arafura, a calm, collected and dedicated member of our team; the Member for Daly who is observant and reflective amongst our team and in the whole parliament; the Member for Gwoja, who I have been working with now for 10 years and we have been side by side for the ups and the downs, and it is scary to think it is a decade, but I am grateful; the Member for Nightcliff who this year we were excited to have as a new edition in our team and who has taken on the huge challenge and extra responsibility to be my deputy leader and I thank him for his unwavering support and helping me to be a stronger leader for our team; and the Member for Mulka, our newest team member and it is great to have him in our team and representing your region and I look forward to supporting him further in his new role.

A big thanks goes to our Labor Party President, Hon Clare Martin, and our party secretary, Karlee Dalton, for all your support this year. I also thank and acknowledge the wider Labor family across the Northern Territory and Australia for all their support in what has been a huge year—winning two by-elections—for the Territory Labor team.

I acknowledge my amazing Arnhem electorate office crew. You mob are brilliant. Thank you to the phenomenal Jessie, my electorate office boss. Jessie is truly special to me both professionally and personally, and I trust Jessie with my life. It is awesome to have Kallum in my team as my liaison officer. If you think I can talk, you should have a yarn with Kallum. I am just joking, Kallum; thank you for taking a chance on me and the office this year. It has been great to have you on board and your excellent company, especially out bush. I give a big thanks to my electorate office assistant, Vayda, who was my liaison earlier in the year. It has worked out well this year with Vayda being split across two different roles. She flourishes in both. It is awesome to have her continued support through her work in the electorate team.

Of course, I give a huge thank you to my amazing family, particularly my dad who is often watching online. Thank you for all your support, dad. I love you and will continue to do my best to make you and our heavenly muma proud of me. Special thanks to my big sister Jocey, my humbug nieces and nephews and all my friends

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for putting up with me and often never seeing me. I give a huge thank you to all of you for your love and support no matter where I am no matter how often you do or do not see me. I give a huge thanks to my amazing in-laws for your great support; I love you heaps.

To my phenomenal husband, Corey, for all the work you do with looking after our beautiful children, Rae Rae and Phoenix, thank you. As I said last year, I know it is a lot of pressure on you to support the work that I do, which I love. It takes me away from our family more than it keeps me with you all. Maybe that is the success of a good long-term relationship! To be supported by you with so much sacrifice in the time away from our family will never be taken for granted. In that vein, I promised Corey that I will clean out the second half of our garage these holidays, which is a job that I have been putting off for the past 12 months.

On that note, I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year for 2027. I hope you get some laughs, and cheer. Please stay safe.

To all our emergency responders, thank you for the work you do; you will be away from your families to look after other families in the Territory.

Please stay safe on our roads. That is a message I say all the time. Road safety is paramount in my eyes. I look forward to everyone having a great end to 2026 and a fantastic start to 2027.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, a number of events have taken place in the rural area over the past few months.

I give a quick shout-out to the Darwin Motorcycle Club (DMCC) which held its Thundercross at Darwin River Tavern on the weekend. I was lucky enough to see some of my mates racing. It was very hot. It has been a hot season, but these men, women and children were all dressed in their full motorbike gear, competing on the track and having a great day out.

I shout out to the people who make it all happen: Jordan Firley; Tim Gwynne; Daniel Henwood; Luke Micalles; Jessyka Hansen; Christopher Roberson; and the sponsors, Darwin River Tavern, Bike You, Humpty Doo Welding and Fabrication, Park Plant Solutions, CNW Electrical, Goodfellow NT and Superior Sands. Without their support and the hardworking volunteers, these events just do not happen.

This round was a bit special, or a little bit sad. This round hosted a 30-minute enduro race named after the late, great Mr David Foster, also known as Fod. Just a week before the race, Fod passed away in his sleep. He was a mainstay of the DMCC community for a number of years. He was a life member and was always encouraging people to get out and give it a go. He was still racing in his 60s, proving that anyone can do it. Fod is best described by everybody as a top bloke.

Nina Bower of the DMCC community shared a Facebook post, which I will read out for the record:

> *Today we say goodbye to a truly special mate, David 'FOD' Foster. This afternoon, we gathered together, sharing stories and raising a glass of David's favourite drink as we remembered the incredible impact he had on so many lives. Paul Anthony Bower recalled attending a meeting with David years ago, not knowing what they were getting themselves into. That moment marked the beginning of a great friendship and partnership through Pony Express. Wendy Hogarth shared how David would often tell her what a legend she was and admired her determination to never give up. TP Heffernan Tom spoke of David as his mentor, the man who helped shape him into the rider he is today. Choco Charlton, Kurt Eade and Kane Stinton, David was so much more than a friend. Seeing the tears in Daniel Nagle's eyes was a powerful reminder of the bond they shared and the loss of one of his best mates. I'll never forget the time David took me for a ride in his buggy. I tried not to be scared, because I knew I was in good hands. That was David. He had a way of making people feel safe, welcomed and cared for. The stories shared this afternoon all carried the same message: David touched countless lives, and each of us is better for having known him. We love you, FOD. Thank you for the memories, the laughs, the adventures and the friendship. Rest in Peace, mate. You will never be forgotten.*

Fod's funeral will be held this Friday, 27 November 2026, at 3 pm at Resthaven Chapel at 121 Amy Johnson Avenue. Rest in peace, Fod, and be aware that everyone who did the 30-minutes enduro nearly died in your memory.

In October we also celebrated World Teachers' Day, shining light on the great work all our teachers do inside and outside of the classroom. The dedication, kindness, creativity and support make life-changing differences

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in everyday Territorians' kids. Thank you; your contribution to our community is invaluable. Now that we are in week 8 of Term 4, I am sure all the teachers are on a countdown for a well-deserved break.

While we are celebrating our teachers, it was terrific to see Goyder teachers featured in the nominations for the 2026 World Teachers' Day NT Excellence Awards. A massive congratulations to Carrie White, Humpty Doo Primary School, Principal of the Year; Belinda Short, Taminmin College, Secondary Educator of the Year; Kylie Forsyth, Taminmin College, Inclusion Educator of the Year; and Sarah Riches, Bees Creek Primary School, Early Childhood Educator of the Year. They are all winners in my eyes, and I thank you for the work you do for our rural kids.

I was also privileged to help sponsor some awards for this year's REACh competition. This is where a bunch of the rural area schools get together, pick students from different schools to compete in a competition, which can push the students' abilities to communicate as well as to do some research. This year's REACh theme was the marine stewardship.

With 41 students from Humpty Doo, Howard Springs, Bees Creek and Girraween primary schools participating in the challenge, the students worked in cross-school teams to research their inquiry question and present their findings to the public at Coolalinga Central on the 22 October. The teams and their inquiry questions were:

- the Blue Dolphins, who researched how our communities can develop solutions to reduce plastic pollution in the Northern Territory marine environment
- the Green Ants—how can our community reduce pollution in our local marine areas?
- the Green Guardians—how can people in the Northern Territory protect marine animals and their habitats for future generations?
- the Oompa Loompas—is it possible for the REACh Oompa Loompas to influence our community to protect our marine animals' environments?
- the Purple Panthers—how can our community reduce shipwrecks and abandoned boats in our local area?
- the Red Raptors—what influence could the Red Raptors take to educate the rural public about oil spills and what effects they have on our marine environment?
- The Sunsets—what impact does overfishing have towards marine ecosystems, communities and industries in the NT?
- The Thunder Strikers—what does good marine stewardship look like for people who use boats and ships?

I shout out and congratulate the Sunsets for winning the most informative presentation. The Green Guardians who won the best visual display and the Public Speaker Awards were Danielle, from Bees Creek Primary, and Alex from Humpty Doo Primary School. Well done to all of you.

It is incredibly impressive to see just how much research all these young people put into their projects. I note when you walked into Coolalinga Central, some very clever students discovered if you wanted to encourage people to come to your stall, you just stand at the top of the escalators and escort every person who goes in that shopping centre straight to your store. Does not matter if you are going to Kmart or the Better Butchers, you are going to their still first. They will force you to go there.

Congratulations to the winners and big thank you to the teaching staff, Dixie Blake, Jennifer Heinrich, Sam Halliday and Hayley Currington for making it all possible and going the extra mile to support and encourage the students and pulling it all together.

I shout out the Noonamah Tavern Frog Races. The Noonamah Tavern Frog Races is probably my favourite event of the year. The whole country gets together and pauses for the race that stops the nation. It is not some people running around on a track on horses, it is a big circle, wet concrete and a bucket full of frogs. Through this great tradition in the rural area a whole range of businesses and community people get together. They auction off the frogs. Half the money goes to charity and half goes to the prize pool.

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This year the rural community raised over $50,000 for charity, with Variety NT and Care Flight NT each receiving cheque for $25,000. My frog did not win, and the couch is a lovely place to sleep at night. Just quickly, big shout out to Bec and Tony from the Noonamah Tavern, you did a great job.

Chief Minister's Public Sector Awards, it was a pleasure to meet Josephine Bremner at the 2026 Chief Minister Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector Awards. Josephine, a Humpty Doo resident, was acknowledged for her tremendous contribution caring for Territorians through her 50 years of service for NT Health. Thank you for your commitment and dedication, Josephine, and congratulations on your achievements. I hope she enjoys her retirement. I know she will be spending a lot of time at the Humpty Doo Bowls Club.

I was lucky enough on 21 November to attend the Swampdogs first home game for the season for the 40th Anniversary Heritage Round and Mental Health Awareness Round. The No Swampie Stands Alone Round featured the touching tribute to Stu McLaren who recently passed away. It was a powerful reminder to keep looking after each other on and off the field. I shout out the Swampdogs Rugby Union Club's new committee, who have come together at their recent AGM in October. A big shout out to President Stacie Campbell, Vice President Mark Gillam, Secretary Josie Blake, Treasurer Alicia Querino and Public Officer Mark Gillam. Filling all the other vital roles and general committee members, Glenn Morcom, Donna Mitchell, Derek Maurice, Rhys Morcom, Tony Luchetti, Beki Van Tilburg, Gerry Bredhauer, Trevor Robinson, Tama Querino, Darcy Blyth, Dean Tinning, Nathan Everett and Melanie Henggeler

A big shout out to Dean Tinning. When I was in Year 6, he was my year five Vice Sports Captain. I was the House Captain for Kurrajong at Girraween Primary School. I might have also been the only eligible Year 6 male, but Dean was a fantastic athlete and now he coaches a bunch of the teams. He is about two foot bigger than me. I will continue tomorrow.

Mr SMELT (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I put on the record some important thankyous from World Teachers' Day, which was 30 October. We have incredible schools in my electorate of Nightcliff and I would like to mention a few of them this evening.

Firstly, Nightcliff Primary School, thank Principal Ranae Graham and all the team there who support our young Nightcliff Territorians. There has been a huge amount of work in preparing the many events, celebrations and festivals at Nightcliff Primary School, including the Nightcliff Extravaganza which was a fantastic event. The Minister of Education and Training also attended that outstanding evening. I thank the school council, the principal and all the staff and students at Nightcliff Primary School for another fantastic year.

A couple of highlights for me was seeing the new mud kitchens that were developed in partnership with the Seda School. These were built with the students doing the trade course at Seda. They built the mud kitchens for the Nightcliff Primary students—a great collaboration.

It has also been terrific to serve on the school council as a guest member. I thank all members of the council for welcoming me on the council.

Second, Nightcliff High School with the inevitable Mrs K and everything that she does for Nightcliff High School. I serve on the school council there with the Member for Johnston as well. Congratulations to Nightcliff High School on being ranked the second in public schools in the Northern Territory for 2026. A great result and that reflects the incredible hard work of Mrs K and all the leadership team.

That was demonstrated again on the recent Market Day event. This was for the Year 9s, where they all had to create a business. They had to manufacture or make something and then sell it to their fellow students. I was pleased to support that event and provide the school with a new barbecue for their future events. Congratulations to everyone at Nightcliff High School.

At The Essington School, Principal Paul Nyhuis is leading the team there. I was able to attend a couple of recent events, including their STEM in Action event. This is to get people excited and interested in taking up careers in science, technology and engineering, something that I come from and I am passionate about. I also attended their Remembrance Day event most recently. It is great to see our Australian history and the importance of service being taught to future generations.

At St Paul's Catholic Primary School, with Principal Jo Knight, I attended their World Staff Day. They have a World Staff Day a week earlier to celebrate all of their administrative and teacher assistants who work at St Paul's school.

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They are founded on their principles around faith and love in education. I am pleased to support their work.

As you have heard, we have a terrific range of schools, leaders and school communities in my electorate of Nightcliff. I am proud and pleased to support every one of them.

Thank you to everyone involved in those school councils, the leadership and the teachers for their work during 2026. They have an incredibly important job of raising the next generation of Territorians.

On a personal note, it has been a big change for me this year since March, since being elected in the Nightcliff by-election. I am grateful for the opportunity to represent the people of Nightcliff, Rapid Creek and Coconut Grove.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, and the members of parliament for making me feel welcome some of the time. Thank you to the members of the CLP and the crossbench. It has been an interesting experience. I have to say I have learned a lot about politics, policy, people and myself over the last eight months. It has been a pleasure to represent the people of Nightcliff.

As with everyone here, we cannot do it without an army behind us to do these jobs. Thank you to the Department of Legislative Assembly staff, from the staff who support our committees, Hansard, the buildings, cleaning, the Table Office and the security. We quite literally cannot do our jobs without you being here every day that we sit in parliament.

I also thank all our team on the fourth floor. You do an incredible amount of work for us. Your dedication, the motivation that you bring to the office every day help us look amazing. You provide us with the advice—sometimes the advice we are not ready to hear yet. We appreciate that you help us get out the door every day and make us be the best possible opposition that the Territory needs.

I also thank the staff in the Nightcliff electorate office. Thank you very much to Julie and Bernadette. We really have been building this plane while flying it in terms of setting up the electorate office and supporting our community. I thank you for the kindness and dedication that you show to every single member of the Nightcliff community and for supporting me so well in taking on this role.

I thank the Nightcliff Labor branch and the great Australian Labor Party for showing their faith in me to represent it, our shared values and our mission. Thank you for striving toward a better Territory and a future Labor government. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Arnhem, here tonight showing her dedicated leadership. I am inspired to support you as deputy leader. You are fearless in your leadership of our team and your fight for a better territory.

Thank you to all my other Territory Labor colleagues. We form a great team and I am really excited about what we can achieve in 2027.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. To Susanna and my boys, it has been a disruptive year for you on the home front, and I could not do the role that I do in the community and in this place without you. Susanna has taken it all on the home front, as well as working full time, and with four boys aged 10 and under, it is quite a challenge.

Tonight I need to go home and make sure the lunchboxes are emptied and ready to go tomorrow morning, but that is a very small part of what makes our family work. I am incredibly grateful for their love and support to do this job. I also thank my in-laws and extended family who contribute so much to our family to allow me to do this role.

I will finish where I began. As I said in my first speech, this job has always started and always will finish with the people of Nightcliff. They are the ones who have put me here to do a job for them. I am accountable to them, I serve them and I thank them for their support. I will be back here again in 2027 doing everything I can to be the strong local voice for Nightcliff.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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