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15th Assembly



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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Fong Lim

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

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I thank the Cancer Council for providing us all with pink ribbons for parliament today.

Members: Hear, hear!

INTEGRITY AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER BILL
Serial 46

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Bill 2025, Serial 46, and table the explanatory statement.

I move that the Bill be read a first time.

In Estimates Committee hearings this year, I indicated it was time to examine the integrity framework to determine what worked well, what did not, and how we can strengthen our integrity functions in the Territory so that Territorians can have confidence in these critical components of a healthy, well-functioning democracy now and into the future.

It is in everyone's best interests—in this Assembly, across the public sectors and in the broader community—to ensure the Northern Territory's integrity offices are highly functioning. We must also ensure they continue to serve the evolving needs of community expectations, as well as the complex demands of modern public administration.

With this in mind, in July this year I commissioned Inspector of the ICAC, Mr Bruce McClintock SC, and the Hon Graham Hiley AM, RFD, KC, Acting Supreme Court Judge of the Northern Territory, to conduct a review into the structural models for integrity offices in the Northern Territory. The vital task of the review was to consider whether the Northern Territory's integrity system—composed of the ICAC, the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner, the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner and the Auditor-General—remained fit for purpose for the Territory's unique context.

The McClintock–Hiley report concluded that while these offices perform important and valuable work, their existing structures are fragmentated, duplicative and resource constrained. The report recommended a single consolidated model to streamline integrity oversight while maintaining the statutory independence of each integrity function.

Since coming to government, we have been clear that changes are needed to restore confidence and ensure these offices can operate effectively. This Bill gives legislative effect to the government's acceptance and support of the model recommended by that review. This Bill creates a modern, coherent and sustainable integrity system that strengthens public confidence and ensures accountability across government.

Under this Bill the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner will become the Territory's principal integrity officer—concurrently holding the functions of the ICAC, Ombudsman, Information Commissioner and the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner. The Integrity and Ethics Commissioner would be supported by a new agency to be known as the Office of the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner. The Office of the IEC would be headed by a chief executive officer who would manage staffing, budget and administrative matters, while the commissioner remains responsible for all statutory integrity functions.

This separation of corporate and statutory responsibilities is one of the key structural reforms recommended by the McClintock–Hiley Report. The reviewers observed:

> *… it is very rare to find one individual who is possessed of both skill sets, that is, quasi-judicial skill in the conduct of hearings and decision-making on the one hand and employment management and administration on the other. Judges, generally, do not develop management skills to the level required to manage significant public agencies over their careers as barristers and solicitors and judges. Public service managers and administrators do not develop the quasi-judicial skills referred to over their careers.*

The reviewers' proposed possible solution to this problem is the creation of the CEO for this merged agency, a position distinct from the commissioner. The new model also provides shared corporate services to the Auditor-General, ensuring that the Auditor-General's Office benefits from administrative support while retaining its operational and statutory independence. Importantly, the substantive functions within the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017*, the *Ombudsman Act 2009*, the *Information Act 2002* and the *Health and Community Services Complaints Act 1998* would continue to remain intact and independent.

This Bill is not altering their jurisdiction or powers. This is about ensuring the continuity of functions and powers across current regimes while strengthening integrity structures across the NT. These arrangements will deliver efficiencies, strengthen governance and make the most of limited resources while preserving the independence that is central to the public's trust.

This reform is not a cost-saving measure; it is about improving the resourcing available for these important integrity functions in the Northern Territory. There are five key aspects addressed in the Bill. The first as mentioned earlier, is the establishment of the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner and the creation of the Office of the IEC, led by a CEO. The Auditor-General will benefit from shared corporate services provided by the Office of the IEC, but it would remain a standalone agency and a separate statutory office, independent in audit judgments and reports.

The second key aspect is the establishment of the Integrity Oversight Inspector. Although the role of the ICAC Inspector was excluded from the scope of the McClintock–Hiley review, government recognises the importance of having an independent oversight mechanism for the new commissioner. The inspector would have oversight of both the commissioner and the Auditor-General.

In relation to the commissioner, the inspector would evaluate performance annually and investigate complaints about the conduct of the commissioner, the Office of the IEC or any of its personnel. In relation to the Auditor-General, the inspector may evaluate matters such as timeliness of reports, use of resources, or compliance with statutory obligations, but not the Auditor-General's audit judgements or opinions. This preserves the independence enshrined in the *Audit Act 1995*. To respect existing appointment conditions of the current Auditor-General, this evaluation oversight will commence with the next appointment, including reappointment of the same person.

To avoid perceived conflicts of interest under the new shared services structure, the Bill also transfers the function of handling complaints about the conduct of the Auditor-General from the commissioner in their capacity as the ICAC to the inspector.

The third key aspect of the Bill is the built-in mechanism to manage conflicts of interest. Given that the commissioner will concurrently hold the offices of ICAC, Ombudsman, Information Commissioner and Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, conflicts of duties are inevitable. Under this Bill, if the commissioner identifies a conflict of interest they must not exercise the relevant power. They must notify the inspector, and then it is for the inspector to determine how the conflict is to be managed. This may either be through internal measures or by recommending that an Acting Integrity Officer be appointed to handle the matter. This ensures transparency and fairness in all circumstances.

The fourth key aspect of the Bill is the inclusion of transitional provisions to ensure continuity of service and a smooth handover. Existing acting appointments, such as the Acting ICAC, Acting Ombudsman, Acting Information Commissioner and Acting Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, will continue and remain in office until the appointment of the first Integrity and Ethics Commissioner. Pending matters would transition to the new structure and any investigations or complaints underway will be saved under the new legislative framework.

I acknowledge the hardworking staff across our existing integrity offices and assure you they will continue their important work during this transition. Their dedication to public service is appreciated, and this Bill provides them with a stronger, more sustainable structure for the future.

The fifth key aspect of the Bill is consequential amendments to the statute book, including across the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act*, the *Ombudsman Act*, the *Information Act*, the *Audit Act* and the *Health and Community Services Complaints Act*, to ensure legislative consistency. These amendments align terminology, transfer oversight functions to the new inspector and remove obsolete provisions that would be covered by the new Act.

This Bill is about facilitating the administrative consolidation of existing statutory integrity agencies. We are leaving the substantive provisions of each office's existing legislation largely intact.

I stress that this reform is not about saving money; it is about strengthening integrity. It is about ensuring that Territorians can continue to have confidence in the institutions that uphold honesty, accountability and transparency in government.

I am committed to restoring transparency and integrity to government. In line with contemporary public sector governance standards, the Bill promotes accountability of our integrity offices by standardising the suspension and termination provisions of the commissioner and the Auditor-General. This will reinforce public confidence that the Territory's integrity officers are subject to transparent and fair accountability measures.

The Bill represents a landmark reform in the Northern Territory's integrity landscape. It draws together lessons of past challenges and builds a future-focused model designed for a small jurisdiction, one that values efficiency, independence and trust.

By bringing together the functions of our integrity bodies under a single, well-supported commissioner and establishing an independent inspector to oversee that commissioner, the government is reinforcing the checks and balances that underpin good governance.

The Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Bill 2025 ensures that Territorians can be confident their integrity institutions are strong, independent and working together in the public interest.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, I think you have missed the call. What is your question?

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, I was seeing if there was something from the Chief Minister to follow. Under Standing Order …

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you missed the call. I am sorry. I gave the Clerk the call, you have missed the call in terms of whatever it is you want to request. I will give you the benefit of asking, but you have missed the call.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order No 252; I move the suspension of so much of standing orders and sessional orders that would prevent me from moving a motion to refer the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Bill 2025, Serial 46, to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you missed the call, I gave you the benefit of the doubt because I did not know what you were standing for. The Clerk was given the call.

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, under clarity please. There is an opportunity between the first reading motion and the first reading of the long title by the Clerk for the sponsoring minister of a Bill to then either declare the legislation urgent, refer to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee or to make the order of the day for 28 days after time has lapsed. She did not do either of those three.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, you missed the call. There was a pause in between the question being put and you missed it.

Ms UIBO: I was on my feet, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: You were not on your feet when I said the Clerk had the call.

Ms UIBO: The Integrity and Ethics Commissioner Bill is not being sent to a scrutiny committee by the government. Is that correct?

Madam SPEAKER: Sit down, Leader of the Opposition. You missed the call, I did not know exactly what you were going to ask. I presume that …

Ms UIBO: Waiting for the Chief Minister to send her own Bill to scrutiny. No scrutiny!

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, take your seat. You missed the call, I gave the call to the Clerk.

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

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled the Housing, Transport and Surveillance Devices Legislation Amendment (Police Public Safety Officers) Bill 2025, Serial 44, and table the explanatory statement.

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

This Bill contains amendments to the *Housing Act 1982*, the *Public Transport (Passenger Safety) Act 2008* and the Surveillance Devices Regulations 2008 and represents the final step in the integration of frontline police auxiliaries, including police auxiliary liquor inspectors; public housing safety officers; transit safety officers; and private security resourcing into the Northern Territory Police Force.

This Bill enables the Northern Territory Police Force to provide a centralised and highly visible response to issues impacting public safety in the Northern Territory, through the establishment of police public safety officers.

The police public safety officers were established by the *Police Administration Amendment (Police Public Safety Officers) Act 2025* and revolutionises frontline response to antisocial behaviour by consolidating separate government frontline resources into one centralised workforce. It addresses duplication across agencies, confusion around enforcement powers, and operational inefficiencies. This reform incorporates the various auxiliary and safety officer roles which have been acting independently of each other. By bringing them together we maximise resources, we increase efficiency, and we tackle antisocial behaviour head on. It is a win-win for the government and the Northern Territory.

This reform responds directly to community concerns about antisocial behaviour in and around public housing, bottle shops, shopping precincts, and on public transport. In our year of action, certainty and security, this government is overhauling community safety. The community is best served by having experienced and highly trained police focused on criminal investigations, complemented by an additional highly trained cohort of police engaged in policing support and antisocial behaviour responses.

This Bill makes the necessary amendments under the *Housing Act 1982*, the *Public Transport (Passenger Safety) Act 2008*, and the Surveillance Devices Regulations 2008 to reflect the existing powers that will be exercised by police public safety officers.

The Northern Territory Police Force will assume the functions of public housing safety officers to provide an effective community safety presence to address antisocial behaviour in and at public housing properties and complexes in a proactive and reactive manner, for example vehicle and foot patrols. Currently, a police officer is captured under the definition of a public housing safety officer and, therefore, has all the powers conferred on a public housing safety officer under the *Housing Act 1982*.

To clearly delineate the separation of powers and functions between the Northern Territory Police Force and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, the Bill will amend the *Housing Act 1982* by removing 'public housing safety officers'. Instead, the Bill will insert the ability of authorised officers to exercise the former public housing safety officer role in a more targeted way to manage social housing tenancy issues.

This Bill also introduces the ability to share information between defined information sharing entities for the purpose of providing a service, exercising a power, or performing a function under the *Housing Act 1982* or the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999*. The ability for information to be shared is paramount, as it supports the effective operation of the *Housing Act 1982* and preserves the Chief Executive Officer of Housing role as a landlord under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999*.

The Northern Territory Police Force will also assume the functions of transit officers to deal with antisocial and dangerous behaviour on our buses, and at our bus stops and bus stations. By retaining the existing provisions of the *Public Transport (Passenger Safety) Act 2008*, it allows for the Northern Territory Police Force to take over the function in their ex officio capacity.

In their ex officio capacity, the Northern Territory Police Force fundamentally has the same powers as a transit officer. However, currently only authorised transit officers can issue notices to ban people who engage in antisocial behaviour from using public bus services. This Bill makes amendments to provide that a member of the police force, such as a police public safety officer, also has the power to issue banning notices.

Further, to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of public transport, it is necessary to ensure information can be shared. This Bill introduces the ability to share information between defined information-sharing entities for the purpose of exercising a power or performing a function under the *Public Transport (Passenger Safety) Act 2008.*

This Bill also amends the Surveillance Devices Regulations 2008 by inserting additional permitted purposes for the sharing and use of police body-worn video for the purpose of the enforcement, variation or revocation of a banning notice issued under the *Public Transport (Passenger Safety) Act 2008*; the entering into or the investigation of a breach of an acceptable behaviour agreement under the *Housing Act 1982*; and the review of an original decision, such as a review of a direction to stop engaging in antisocial behaviour or a direction to a non-tenant to leave and not return for 12 months, under the *Housing Act 1982*.

A smooth transition is essential to maintaining public safety across the Northern Territory. These amendments allow the existing transit officers and public housing safety officers—now coined ‘authorised officers’—to deliver the range of services without disruption until the police public safety officers are operational across Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

This is an important step in the government’s efforts to target antisocial behaviour, reduce crime and enhance policing initiatives. Police public safety officers will improve efficiencies across our bus networks, public housing assets and public spaces. It will streamline operations and consolidate workflows, providing a safer and stronger Northern Territory, aligning with this government’s mandate of reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our unique Territory lifestyle.

Police public safety officers will be equipped with the same knowledge and skills through standardised training programs. This will promote uniformity in performance and delivery whilst creating a flexible workforce that can be deployed across the whole community to combat antisocial behaviour and safety concerns in a targeted and structured response.

The establishment of the police public safety officers is a key reform to reducing crime and restoring the Territory lifestyle. This is the final tranche of changes to operationalise this government’s commitment to a significant law and order reform that targets antisocial behaviour in public places, on our transport network and around public housing.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS
Refer Bill to Legislative Scrutiny Committee

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 252, I move the suspension of so much of standing orders and sessional orders which would prevent me from moving a motion now to refer the Housing, Transport and Surveillance Devices Legislation Amendment (Police and Public Safety Officers) Bill 2025, Serial 44, to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, the motion is not accepted. Sessional Order 13.5 is clear about the process for this Bill.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6	Noes 16
J Davis	Ms Boothby
Mr Guyula	Mr Burgoyne

K McNamara	Ms Cahill
Mr Paech	Mrs Carlson
Ms Uibo	Mr Charls
Mr Young	Mr Edgington
	Mrs Finocchiaro
	Mrs Hersey
	Mr Howe
	Mr Kerle
	Mr Mackay
	Mr Maley
	Mr O'Gallagher
	Mr Patel
	Mr Yan
	Mrs Zio

Motion not agreed to.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND POLICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 43

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Attorney-General and Police Legislation Amendment Bill, Serial 43, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of this Bill is to make amendments to the *Public Trustee Act 1979*, the *Police Administration Act 1978*, the *Information Act 2002* and the *Firearms Act 1997*. The purpose of this Bill is to make a number of minor amendments to various pieces of legislation. Individually, these amendments are not extensive enough to warrant their own amendment Bill.

The Bill amends the *Public Trustee Act* as follows.

Clause 16 inserts a new subsection to section 8 to allow the Administrator to set the conditions of the Public Trustee's appointment, including remuneration, when appointing a Public Trustee. Clause 16 also changes the appointment of the Deputy Public Trustee, with the minister making the appointment rather than the Administrator, and requiring that the deputy be a public sector employee.

Clause 17 provides transitional arrangements for the current Public Trustee's conditions. The present legislative arrangements for the Public Trustee position involve a convoluted process of appointment and remuneration. The *Public Trustee Act* enables the Administrator to appoint a person to the office of Public Trustee; however, it does not allow the Administrator to set the Public Trustee's remuneration as part of the appointment process.

The effect is that while the Attorney-General is responsible for advising the Administrator on the appointment itself, it falls to the Chief Minister—as minister responsible for the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006*—to advise the Administrator on remuneration. This results in the need for a joint executive council submission from both the Attorney-General and Chief Minister.

The proposed amendments seek to address this issue by inserting a provision that enables the Administrator to set the remuneration, terms and conditions of the Public Trustee's appointment at the same time, and as a singular process.

It is also unusual for the Administrator to appoint deputy office holders. The appointment of deputies is generally assigned to the responsible minister, the statutory office holder or the responsible agency's chief executive officer. This is because the role of deputy is more administrative in nature, and the exercise of their powers and functions is generally subject to the authority and oversight of the principal office holder.

In keeping with other deputy appointments, the amendments will also see the minister responsible, which is the Attorney-General, appoint the Deputy Public Trustee, rather than the Administrator.

The Bill amends the *Police Administration Act* as follows.

Clause 12 amends the definition of 'merit' to distinctively refer to appointments of members under Part II, Division 3.

Clause 13 inserts a new section 6A that establishes principles for the appointment of commissioners, deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners under Part II, Division 2. New section 6A provides the merit of a person for appointment is to be the primary but not sole consideration and is based on the person's capacity to perform the duties of the office, having regard to the specific criteria set out in subsection (2).

Clause 14 amends section 15A to clarify that this provision relates to the appointment or promotion of members under Part II, Division 3.

On 2 October 2025 the Northern Territory Government received and immediately released the Independent Review of Northern Territory Police Recruitment Processes by the Honourable Acting Justice Alan Michael Blow AO. The independent review made six recommendations as follows:

1. Establishing a written policy on recruitment and appointment processes.

2. Requiring the use of conflict of interest declarations.

3. Ensuring the decision-maker or appointer is not a member of the selection panel.

4. Amending the *Police Administration Act* to enshrine merit as the primary criterion for appointment.

5. Adopting a clear policy for acting appointments to higher ranks, including the duration and process for filling vacancies.

6. Implementing further reforms to modernise the recruitment and appointment of senior police officers.

On 7 October the Chief Minister announced that the Northern Territory Government would adopt all six recommendations from the independent review. The government has acted swiftly to implement the Honourable Acting Justice Blow's recommendations. The Bill presented to the Legislative Assembly today gives legislative effect to his recommendations, with work underway within the NT Police Force updating their guidelines, policies and recruitment processes.

The Bill amends the *Information Act* as follows.

Clause 7 omits references to parliamentary secretary in section 5(6) and replaces them with references to assistant minister. Clause 7 also inserts a new section 5(6A) that provides that any information that is created or received by, or shared exclusively between, ministers, assistant ministers or their staff is not subject to the *Information Act* where that information is not government information connected with the responsibilities of the minister's portfolio.

Clause 8 adds assistant minister to the list of entities that are set out as not being public sector organisations for the purpose of section 11.

It has been longstanding practice that correspondence between ministers and their staff is not subject to freedom of information disclosure. This is currently being challenged by the Environment Centre who are seeking access historic documentation dating back over five years to when Nicole Manison was a Labor minister looking at an issue regarding McArthur River Mine. Countless taxpayer dollars have been spent in legal fees defending this current legal challenge.

With these amendments, the era of green lawfare is over. Taxpayers are not bottomless pits that can be drawn upon. The amendments to the *Information Act* proposed give clear legal effect to the longstanding practice as appropriate.

The Bill amends the *Firearms Act* as follows.

Clause 4 amends section 35(5) to provide that the commissioner may grant a permit before the expiration of the 28-day period if the prescribed checks have been completed and the permit is for the purchase or acquisition of a category A or B firearm and the person is a holder of a licence and the owner of a registered firearm of that same category of firearm to be purchased or acquired.

Clause 5 inserts a transitional arrangement for an application for a permit that was made, but not decided, before the commencement of the Bill.

The changes to the *Firearms Act* represent delivery of yet another election commitment by the Finocchiaro CLP government. The purchase of firearms is a serious matter, and the overwhelming majority of firearms licence holders in the Northern Territory take their responsibilities very seriously.

The changes proposed represent a balance between strong regulation of firearms and removing unnecessary red tape and burden from lawful category A and B firearm licence holders who just want to live within the rules, go about their lives and enjoy a good bit of hunting on the weekend.

The present firearms legislation stipulates that the Commissioner of Police is not to issue a permit to purchase or acquire a firearm within 28 days from the date the application is made, unless the exemption applies. This Bill reduces red tape in obtaining permits under section 35 of the *Firearms Act*.

The amendments will enable the Commissioner of Police to grant a permit to purchase or acquire a category A or B firearm in less than 28 days only if the prescribed checks have been completed and the applicant holds a licence for that category of firearm and owns a registered firearm of that same category.

The same level of probity checks as are currently required under the Act will continue to be required, and the person must already have a licence and own a firearm in that category. In simple terms, this means that if you are already a category A or B licensed firearm owner with a registered category A or B firearm and all the checks are complete, you will not be forced to wait 28 days just to purchase a firearm of the same type.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Progress on the Northern Territory Crime Reduction Strategy 2025

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I deliver the ministerial report on the progress of the Northern Territory Crime Reduction Strategy 2025, notified on 22 October 2025.

This fortnight—today is the last day of two weeks of sittings—represents one year since we completed our reducing-crime package and since our first sittings of parliament, when our reducing-crime package—which, importantly, included Declan's law—was passed through this parliament in all stages. It represented a point in time of great change for the Northern Territory, an opportunity for a new CLP government to stay true to its word to the very people who put us here and show Territorians that action can be taken to make their lives better and streets, communities and businesses safer and that we would do what we promised we would. That is what one year today represents.

In that sittings of parliament we passed Declan's law, which changed the presumption around bail, tackled serious repeat offenders and gave police much better laws and powers to wand and get edged weapons out of circulation in our community, which we know cause so much harm.

No-one knows that more profoundly than Samara Laverty; no-one has had to wear the cost and consequence of these weapons in our community more than her and her daughter, Bridget, Declan's sister. To have Samara in the gallery with us one year ago this fortnight was incredibly powerful and special. It gave us an opportunity as a government, with Territorians who shared so much grief, loss and anguish, to draw a line in the sand and say that Declan will forever be remembered for the good change that he brought to the Northern Territory and to honour Samara's tireless fight and courage to work with us, despite her incredible grief, loss and all that was put in front of her to deliver something that has had a profound and enduring difference in the lives of every Territorian now and into the future.

There will be people who do not live here yet and children who are not born yet who will never know the anguish and destruction that occurred prior to Declan's law passing in this parliament.

This fortnight 12 months ago a new offence of ram raid was brought into the parliament. It was relentless, seeing news night after night of young people stealing cars and ramming through the front of shops. We stood with countless shop owners, victims who were woken up in the middle of the night to face the devastation of their shops being broken into.

We brought in the new offence of posting and boasting online because young people and offenders across the Territory had become so emboldened and above the law that they did not even care if they were posting their crimes on social media. Criminals were so brazen and emboldened by the previous government's weak, pathetic approach to community safety and law and order that they were happy to live stream it to the world, such was the lack of fear of consequences that flowed from it.

We expanded the wanding powers as part of Declan's law, making sure that those edged weapons—we gave police every opportunity they needed. If they want to wand an area, shopping centre or person, we want to make it as easy for them as possible. We did that through Declan's law.

We brought in mandatory sentencing for assaults on workers, protecting our police, retail staff, taxi drivers, paramedics and nurses. People at work are in an additionally vulnerable position and should not have to live in fear in their workplace. That mandatory sentencing was a significant step forward.

The new offence of nuisance public drinking allows police to fine, arrest and do whatever is necessary with people who are nuisance public drinkers, which had become all too prevalent and often across the Northern Territory, resulting in significant harm to our community.

We lowered the age of criminal responsibility again so that young people were not falling through the cracks. If that behaviour was happening to the point where they were committing crimes, we needed to take action and have a response. Under Labor they were falling through the cracks, left to continue to commit crimes until they were old enough that the behaviour was well and truly entrenched. Labor was prepared to let 10-year-olds commit crimes up until they were 12 and hope at that point they could maybe do something about it.

Following on from that fortnight, when all those laws were passed on urgency, delivering on our commitments—we told Territorians that if we were elected we would do that straightaway and we worked tirelessly to pull those laws together. All of our agencies—Corrections, Police, Attorney-General's and Justice—did an incredible job to pull that together.

Now is a good time to mention that last week at the Northern Territory Public Sector Chief Minister's Awards the Attorney-General's Department received the Chief Minister's Award for community safety this year for the work it did on Declan's law. One year on it received that award, which was timely and well-deserved because it has made a huge difference.

If you fast forward one year, you can see that the number of bail refusals has increased 38%, a significant number. That represents about 4,587 adults alone who were denied bail between January and September this year. It was a 38% increase in bail refusals just in the year to August. That has saved countless—we will never know how many lives that saved and how many people were not victims of crime because of that.

What the reduce in crime package and Declan's law has done is contribute to the reduction in the number of victims by 7.4% this year. That is 1,273 Territorians who last year were victims and this year were not. That is huge.

Make no mistake, there is more work to do, but it is important to reflect on where we have come from, where we have been and where we are going. We will continue to put the pressure on and remain focused and true to our community who told us that reducing crime was their number one priority.

We have done significant work on *Youth Justice Act*, sentencing, bail and traffic. There is much more work to come through the remainder of this year and into next year. Our job is not done. I was in Alice Springs a couple of weeks ago meeting with Strike Force Viper, and I left with a long list of other laws they would like done. We had a meeting about it yesterday. That is what a good government does. That is what we are working on and it is being drafted as we speak.

A lot of work has been done over the last year. The TI-GER taskforce resolved 400 matters of people on remand, meaning 400 who are now not going to court. They have been resolved early through a process involving the right people in the room to work through what needs to happen with that case. Removing 400 cases out of a court system has a profound impact. We came in and supported Legal Aid straight away; it was left to wither under Labor by recurrent under funding and significant structural issues. We have addressed those issues, and it has contributed to a more efficient justice system and a more efficient court system. Unrepresented litigants are not ideal as it causes delay which is not good for the efficiency of court processes.

We have also seen significant reduction in the time people spend on remand and the number of people on remand. That is despite the fact that all the laws we have changed have resulted in more people in prison. We have done an incredible feat. We have increased the prison population exponentially because people who commit crimes are now facing consequences for their actions, and the courts are now able to process them. We have also taken the remand number—which was more than half of all people in prison and had never had their day in court—and reduced it by 7%. We reduced the length of time they are on remand. That is significant and should not be underestimated for what it does for the benefit of Territorians and our justice system.

Domestic violence is down by 1% across the Territory; that is 34 fewer people who are victims of family and domestic violence this year compared with last year. Alice Springs—the community most heartbroken, devastated, neglected and forgotten—has had a reduction in domestic violence of 17%. This is off the back of an increase in domestic violence under two terms of Labor by 80%. We have reduced that in Alice Springs to 17% and Territory-wide to 1%, making meaningful impact in people's lives.

We have supported our police, giving them the best pay deal in 20 years. We have backed them with the laws they need that come from the front line. I met with Strike Force Viper; we are drafting laws. We meet with the teams across the Territory and, when they need something, we are moving fast on it because we know if we can make the police's job better, build more prison beds and have a better justice system, we will deliver a safer Territory.

Then there is all the work on the root causes of crime, which those opposite pretend we are not doing, but the data speaks for itself—whether it is the 100 family responsibility agreements that have been signed or that we have Circuit Breaker working with our police to make sure young people are not out on the street and that, when they find them, they not only tick their name off and drop them home but follow up with the families the next day, the day after that or however long it takes. This often results in a family responsibility agreement. This work was not being done.

The data is speaking for itself, but our measure has always been that Territorians must feel safe. The data is important to turn to because it shows us the trends and where we need to do more work, and there is always more work to be done. When house break-ins are down in Darwin and Palmerston by 36%, commercial break-ins are down by 25%, robbery is down by 30% and assaults are down by 3%, you can see that what we are doing is working.

There are big reductions in Alice Springs, with commercial break-ins decreasing by 38%; Katherine commercial break-ins are down by 35% and robbery is down by 39%; Tennant Creek house break-ins are down by 18%, commercial break-ins by 26% and robbery by 47%.

Are there still violent offenders? Absolutely. Does our assault data need more pressure applied to it? Absolutely, but we are dealing with a near-decade of people believing they are above the law and can treat people however they want, do whatever they want and destroy other people's lives. That data is not surprising to us because there is an ingrained pattern of behaviour in people who have lived under a Labor government.

Lifestyle is a significant pillar of our deliverables for Territorians. When you reduce crime, lifestyle immediately improves. When Casuarina Square reports a 93% reduction in crime, that speaks for itself. Older Territorians have told us that they never used to go and now they are happy to shop there in the morning again. Parents tell us that their teenage daughters can go there with their friends now and live their lives, like we all did at Casuarina when we were kids. We could safely catch the bus, go to Casuarina Square and grab some Macca's.

That is the freedom to live your life how you choose. That is the power of safety. Our job as a government is to set up the frameworks for people to achieve their dreams and aspirations. We do not want to be in people's living rooms, telling them how to live their live and what to do. Our job is to make sure that they have a safe community, a great lifestyle, a hospital if they need support when they get sick, that someone answers 000 and police come when they need them, a great education at school for their kids, and that when they want a good job and a good future, the economy is strong. That is our job as a government, and that is what we are focused on.

The achievements in one year, such as the crime stat data coming through, show us that things are working and moving in the right direction.

I talked earlier about Declan. This week in the paper we have seen that the matter of Sifat is back in the news and back before the courts. It was another tragic loss of life, another community grieving and a family grieving.

The Member for Sanderson spoke with Sifat's uncle yesterday to check in to see how he is going. That follows the Member for Sanderson's visit to Bangladesh to meet his parents, who now, with the money that was raised, are building a beautiful orphanage in Sifat's honour.

Following Mr Feick's death we urgently recalled parliament to further strengthen Declan's law. Declan's law was already a robust, strong law, but we took it to the next level—again with the blessing of Samara Laverty—and we are seeing those results.

There are countless victims. I shudder to think how many people were victims of crime under Labor. It had profound impacts. At one point our home and contents insurance was 456% higher than Adelaide, for example. Some people in Alice Springs could not get insurance, shops could not get insurance and people could not get car insurance. People were leaving the Territory in droves.

The previous government failed when it came to Stronger Futures. It was a government that professed to put the rights of Aboriginal people first and the rights of people in community to be safe, yet without any warning or plan it ripped out the very legislation that was barely holding it all together as it was. Domestic violence crime escalated overnight. Everyone was screaming at this government, whether it was the community-controlled health organisations, the Aboriginal-controlled organisation sector or just the community, the previous government ignored them.

For seven long months the government ignored the calls for something to be done, so badly that the Prime Minister had to fly to Alice Springs to tell Natasha Fyles how to do her job. It was the most appalling chapter in the previous failed Labor government's history. The consequences of that will be felt forever in the stories, scars and trauma of the people whose lives the Labor government left in carnage. They will forever pay the price of that incompetence.

We look forward to further opportunities to make the Territory a better place. Our 000 centre is now working in Alice Springs and going well. We have had 883 calls to the Alice Springs call centre since 1 October, so it has not been long, and 70% of those calls taken during opening hours were from the southern region, which includes the Barkly. That is excellent; it is exactly what we want, locals answering locals' calls when they need it most. We have language speakers in the call centre—I have mentioned them before—and they are delivering great results. We look forward to that trial's results.

OC spray has been rolled out and is working well; we will review that in 12 months. I have just given my speech about police public safety officer positions, which will leverage police when it comes to forward-facing, proactive policing. We have a new Police Commissioner, so we have certainty and security moving forward for our force, and he is doing an excellent job. The Blow inquiry was done, and that can move legislation through and get everything finalised in that leadership structure within Police, which is great news.

There is so much more good news to come, and my colleagues all want the opportunity to speak on it.

We are proud of staying true to what we told Territorians we would do. We acknowledge the one-year anniversary of our reducing crime package, which included Declan's law. We thank Territorians for believing in us and supporting us to see this through, because we get out of bed every day to do our job for them. We are here because of them, and we will fight every day for them. Nothing will stop us delivering on our commitments to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our beautiful lifestyle.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I note the title of this ministerial report refers to a 'crime reduction strategy'. The term 'strategy' suggests something that is long term, but what we are getting from the CLP are short-term sugar hits, which is short-sighted when we are talking about making the community safe in the medium and long term.

The CLP's short-term approach to addressing crime and antisocial behaviour in our community is, ultimately, there to create longer-term problems that our community will have to face down the track. The Chief Minister is always keen to point out the additional number of Territorians the CLP put into the justice system. That is only a small part of the story when it comes to keeping our community safe, not just today and not just tomorrow, but ongoing.

What is happening now will not cut it when we talk about long-term results and actual strategies that will support Territorians. We have seen the way the CLP cherrypicks its crime stats and then tries to accuse our Labor opposition of doing the same thing.

Let's have an honest look at the figures. The Chief Minister has highlighted the reductions of figures in Alice Springs, and that is great news for the people of Alice Springs. We support that and welcome any evidence of a reduction in crime across the Territory. The summer months are upon us, which is traditionally when we see a spike in crime in Alice Springs, so we will be watching closely. We have not seen the plan for the summer season released yet by the CLP government.

The rest of the statistics are, unfortunately, a mixed bag. For the people of Palmerston, who the Chief Minister represents, property offences have increased by nearly 8%. Remember, these statistics compare the first eight months of the year with the first eight months of last year, so this is a significant increase in the people of Palmerston experiencing crime. Similarly, assaults and other violent offences have increased in Palmerston.

Assaults and other violent crimes have also increased in Tennant Creek by more than 10%—where the Member for Barkly resides. In my home town, where the Member for Katherine lives, it is up by 4%. Outside our major population areas, property offences and assaults are also on the rise.

I do not want to make this a statistic war, but there is much more to the story. It is important that there are honest and open conversations so that Territorians understand what is really going on, not just in their communities but across the Territory, and what is likely to be the long-term impact from the short-sighted CLP government decisions.

I recently sat down with some experienced law enforcement experts from across the country. They are former senior police who worked in their roles for decades and had a wealth of experience with law and order, crime and community safety strategies. The Chief Minister likes to discredit anyone in their fields of expertise, but I am sure she has the utmost respect for police officers. I think even she could not discredit what senior police officers with decades of experience in law enforcement and crime prevention had to say about the recent so-called strategies in the Northern Territory.

We found the common theme is as follows. Any strengthening of bail laws or law and order settings in the Northern Territory must come with a commensurate strengthening of rehabilitation programs that support people who are put into the justice system to eventually find their way out of that system, make it back to the community and be law-abiding citizens. Without this type of approach and investment, particularly in rehabilitation, the CLP is simply putting people into the cycle of crime and ultimately making the community less safe down the track. That is being played out now.

The recidivism rate in the Northern Territory is rising. Currently, six out of 10 people in the Northern Territory justice system return to jail within two years of their release. Yesterday, there was an ABC online article by Joseph Hathaway-Wilson titled 'Masses of NT prison rehabilitation services cancelled as prisoner numbers surge'. I will continue to refer to this article throughout my contribution.

Without programs running in our justice system, these figures will only get worse. A person who was interviewed in the ABC report talked about having to sleep on the floor and other women doing the same. The favourite saying of the Deputy Chief Minister, Corrections minister Gerard Maley is, 'If you do the wrong thing, we have a bed for you'. He sounds like a bad car salesman. They obviously do not have a bed for people and are not worried about the programs to rehabilitate people in the justice system, let alone worry about beds. That saying needs some tweaking from your spin doctors, Deputy Chief Minister.

People cannot be locked away forever. We need to make sure the government is doing its job when any prisoners are released from jail. The government has an opportunity to address underlying causes of the offending behaviour and gain some skills to ensure that prisoners have the supports they need to re-enter the community and stay off the crime merry-go-round. That is not happening in the Northern Territory justice system, despite what the CLP tells the community in answers to the important questions we ask in this place. It is not happening because, as celebrated by the CLP, the jails are full and overcrowded, which means rehabilitation programs—which the CLP acknowledges are important—are not happening.

Rehabilitation and support programs for men and women seeking domestic and family violence supports, therapy, counselling, and alcohol and other drug programs are non-existent under this government. People in custody are saying loud and clear that there are no programs such as alcohol and other drugs, family violence and Safe Sober Strong being offered.

The ABC article stated that 10 out of 11 alcohol and other drugs programs have been scrapped by the CLP government. That does not make any sense when we talk about the need to invest in these important programs. The article spoke about the prison population continuing to reach an all-time high. The data reveals

that a majority of the Northern Territory's rehabilitation programs are being cancelled more than 60% of the time.

Despite what the Member for Nelson skites about in here, saying how much his government has changed, it is not hitting the mark. It is lip-service. People are being denied access to their lawyers and their families, let alone the important rehabilitation programs that might turn their lives around and make the community safer in the long run.

The Treasurer knows this. He has a long history as a worker in Corrections—an esteemed career, I might add. He must be thinking, 'What is our government doing?' I hope he is speaking up at the Cabinet table to point out that the things his Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister are putting in place will not work in the long run. I hope he is speaking loudly there, because he does not saying anything in this place.

Just 25 prisoners sentenced to less than two years had access to domestic, family and sexual violence prevention and reduction programs. There are close to 3,000 prisoners in the Northern Territory justice system. Just 25 of those prisoners had access to this important program. Every person in this place knows that domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory is at unacceptably high levels. How does the CLP government think that only 25 prisoners having access to these important programs will ever help the community to be safe in the medium and long term? I do not understand.

Equally unclear is the investment going into through-care. What happens when these prisoners leave prison or a work camp? Are they supported in a constructive way to re-enter the Northern Territory community or are they just put on a seat to go on the crime merry-go-round?

By pushing through all these extra bodies and making sure that our prisons are overcrowded, the CLP is creating a university for criminals and a school for young criminals. What happens when young people leave those youth justice facilities? That is the missing piece. That is the part the government is floundering and failing the Northern Territory on when it comes to community safety.

It is incredibly concerning that 82% of children and young people in our youth justice system are on remand. They have not had their day in court yet. The CLP's regressive punitive measures mean that children and young people are not getting the rehabilitation they need or the health and mental health supports they need to get better. Their disabilities and cognitive development needs are unmet. There are significant waitlists for psychological support which is harder to access when on remand. Self-harm and mental health concerns are rising.

Courts have been told to do more video link-ups with children rather than having them in the court for their matters to be heard, but there are not enough video link-up facilities in the youth justice system to meet this demand. What is the CLP doing about that?

In addition, many kids in the Territory have hearing and cognitive issues, which are so serious that it reduces their understanding of what is going on. This is not justice.

Legal services have told us that it is nearly impossible to see their clients to seek instructions, represent their clients or have their client attend court. Scheduling a legal services visit at Holtze Youth Detention Centre has a wait time of nearly one week.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Berrimah jail and Holtze Youth Detention Centre. I thank the Minister for Corrections for facilitating those visits with his department. I acknowledge the staff, who have been doing a difficult job. They are incredible people. It is often forgotten that they are the ones dealing with the difficult circumstances. I learned from those visits that Corrections staff remain committed to their work. They are invested heavily in rehabilitative approaches, and I could see that they have been frustrated by the lack of more rehabilitative programs available for prisoners.

I take a moment to thank them on behalf of my Labor team and all Territorians when it comes to the work they are doing day-in and day-out. Their work makes a difference; they work in difficult circumstances. Often their shifts have only about half the complement of staff that should be rostered on.

I note that the Minister for Corrections has brought in a FIFO workforce. I believe that some of the G4S staff are employed for six weeks on, six weeks off. Some of them who do not live in the Territory are put up in hotels, so there is obviously a large cost to Territory taxpayers in covering those costs for those workers.

We have heard—although I do not think the CLP members bother to listen—multiple times from the United Workers Union about the concern for those workers who are NT Government staff, public servants in the system, and there could be an inequity between the contracted workers and the NT Government staff.

That area of Corrections needs to be focused on. Again, we do not hear much from the Corrections minister. He is not even brave enough to meet his own Corrections union and staff. We saw that happen earlier in the year. This is concerning to us in the Labor opposition. It is another reason to thank the staff for their work, because they do not feel supported by the government, but they will continue to do hard work in difficult circumstances.

It is highly concerning when the CLP government members claim in this Chamber that there is a win on domestic violence in the Territory. The latest crime statistics show that in eight months to August, compared to the same time last year 67.5% of all assaults were associated with domestic violence. That has gone up by 2.6%. In Darwin, domestic violence is up by 7.4%; Palmerston, by 9.5%; Katherine, by 4.6%; Tennant Creek, by 4%; and Nhulunbuy, a whopping 31%.

The DV sector has been left largely in the dark about where the CLP government's road map is for tackling this. It was asked several times of the responsible minister, the Member for Port Darwin, and there is no date or information to the sector, let alone to the general public, about this important road map. When those statistics are concerning, with the increases high, you would think that the government would invest more into the DV prevention sector and get a scoot on with the work on the road map as opposed to trying to pretend everything is hunky-dory.

It is hard to see how the government can claim to have a reduction strategy on crime when it still has not released this important road map to tackle domestic violence. Our Labor opposition stronger urges the CLP to get on with this work. It has now been over 14 months since the CLP has been in government, and the sector continues to be extremely concerned and frustrated. It wants to get on with the work it does, but it wants to be resourced and for there to be a solid plan and a way forward.

We have talked about community-led solutions many times in the House, including the success of the community justice work in my electorate on Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island, and the work that the Anindilyakwa Land Council led on behalf of the Anindilyakwa people on those two islands—the success of the community court and community justice group, and the men's rehabilitation program as an alternative to custody justice program.

When that program started and was monitored, there was a 90% drop in reoffending by those young Anindilyakwa men who were targeted through the alternative justice program—a good story but one that needs to continue. This was all community led and supported when we were in government and is perhaps still supported by the CLP. I do not know; they do not talk about the good stories when it comes to the bush.

The Attorney-General embarrassed herself this week in Question Time when she was asked by the Member for Mulka about the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and one main feature of the three aims, and for an update to the House. She did not understand the question. She fluffed on and tried to palm it off and say the question was related to police; it was not.

I did an adjournment speech that night, and she listened. I tried to provide an opportunity for her to understand the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. I will take this opportunity to, hopefully, re-enlighten the Attorney-General.

I seek leave to table the Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2021–2027.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: Community-driven solutions that are diverting more and more young people and adults away from crime and jail need to be supported by this government. I am hearing whispers in my electorate that the CLP government is looking to cut funding from community law and justice groups. This will have a detrimental effect when we look at the medium and long-term changes for community safety in the Northern Territory.

The positive examples that we have, particularly in remote communities, in regard to early intervention and crime prevention are so powerful. But we have seen, time and again, that it will only be focused on Darwin and Palmerston. Is that at the cost of the bush and the regions? If those results are not funded, resourced and supported by the government of the day, they will start to deteriorate. Communities, leaders and service providers who have spent their blood, sweat and tears on producing law and justice groups and diversion programs will start to go backwards.

The government will probably say that it did not work without showing any support at the front end, which is now. It is a critical time. As far as we know, the Attorney-General has still not visited even one of these programs. In 14 months there were only six registered law and justice community groups talking to people on the ground about the changes they are leading for their community.

I say to the CLP, get out bush, go out to our regions and actually listen to what will make a difference, not just here in town but in the bush and the regions.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, yet again, the Leader of the Opposition seems to be trying to rewrite history and live in denial about the eight long years that Labor governed the Northern Territory. During that time, Central Australia faced some challenges. Crime and antisocial behaviour have left people feeling unsafe in their homes, on the streets and in our town centres. Families lived in fear, businesses were struggling and too many kids were falling into the justice system far too young.

I will talk honestly about a couple of things: where we have come from and where we are going. Let's be upfront; the last Labor government failed to act when our communities needed it most. It ignored warnings from frontline services, including police. It underfunded police and left critical infrastructure to age and decline. It stood by while antisocial behaviour got worse, particularly in my home of Central Australia.

Labor failed to invest in early intervention, rehabilitation and community-based programs when the signs were very clear. It allowed the court system to become backlogged and did not listen to the local voices calling out for help. In fact, it ignored them in most instances. Let's not forget, Labor did not invest in prison capacity, which meant out police stations became makeshift holding cells.

I just sat here and listened to the Leader of the Opposition say all these things about Corrections. I can tell you, and I will clear the record, that Labor stopped investing in Corrections. It stopped investing in increasing bed capacity and programs to deal with offending behaviour. It put in a 'rack 'em and stack 'em' model because it did not care about Corrections.

I was there; I witnessed it and lived it. Labor did not deliver strong consequences for repeat youth offenders or support for victims who were left to pick up the pieces of crime.

When crime spiked in Central Australia, Labor waited too long, leaving communities to fend for themselves. We will not forget nor forgive Labor for what it did to our community when Stronger Futures ended, and it failed to put anything in place and let our community implode. The pain and suffering of multitudes of Central Australians rests on Labor's shoulders because of its own ideology. We are now having to clean up the mess that Labor left behind. We are doing it with urgency, focus and a plan that listens to people who live there.

Let's talk about what is changing. People in Central Australia and across the bush deserve to feel safe, whether they are heading to the shops, picking up the grandchildren or walking home after work. That is why we have taken action. More visible police patrols and joint agency operations are now targeting hotspots and trouble areas. We have introduced the police public safety officers to help reduce antisocial behaviour on buses, in bottle shops and in public housing. We have nearly completed the new 000 call centre in Alice Springs so emergency responses are quicker and more coordinated for the people in our region. We are also improving public housing accountability. People causing damage or disturbances in government homes will now face read consequences.

Too many people are becoming stuck in the justice system, going around in circles, and we are working to break this cycle. We have brought in youth boot camps and the Sentenced to a Skill program, where young offenders face consequences but also learn skills and receive support to turn their lives around.

In prisons we are increasing education and rehab programs, even for people on short sentences or remand, which the previous government failed to do. We are offering better post-release support through housing, employment help and case management to give people a fair chance of staying out of custody. All Labor did in the last eight years was deliver a 'rack 'em and stack 'em' model with no focus on rehabilitation. I know this because I was there, and I saw it.

Most importantly, victims are finally being put first. We have boosted funding for counselling and victim assistance, cut red tape for compensation, and introduced stronger rights under the victim's charter. Stronger families mean stronger and safer communities. Minister Cahill has expanded the Circuit Breaker in Alice Springs, and it is rolling out across the Northern Territory. This program works with at-risk young people and their families to tackle the real issues behind poor or bad behaviour.

We also have school attendance officers working to get kids back into the classroom—thanks to the Minister for Education—because kids who go to school are far less likely to end up in contact with the justice system.

Through family responsibility agreements we are holding parents accountable while connecting them to real help, housing support, parenting services and more. We are not here to punish families; we are here to back them and help them where they need it and to make sure no child in the Northern Territory is left behind. We must call it for what it is; alcohol, family violence and disconnection are major drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour in Central Australia.

We are facing this head-on. We are continuing to manage alcohol supply and demand, especially in high-risk areas. We are expanding rehabilitation and treatment options inside prisons and in the community. We have developed a full domestic violence prevention plan with new programs focused on early intervention and stronger penalties for perpetrators.

We are also working to deliver more housing for women and families escaping violence and for people leaving custody who need that all-important stability to stay on track and not re-enter the justice system. We are backing community-led programs run by locals for locals to create safer, more connected communities. We are investing in what actually works rather than throwing money around. We are also fixing the system that lets crime slip through the cracks. We are reducing court delays and freeing up police watch houses by expanding prison capacity.

We are building a stronger, more specialised workforce from justice and health workers to education and DV case managers. We are improving data and coordination so we know what works and then we can act on it. We are not papering over the cracks; we are rebuilding the whole system for the longer term.

Where does all this lead? It leads to a Central Australia where families can walk down the street without fear, kids can grow up in their homes where they feel safe and supported, and people who do the wrong thing will face fair consequences while still having a path to make things right. The last government let things get out of hand. We will not let that happen again.

The proof is in the pudding. The crime stats for Central Australia, the eight-month comparison of January to September 2024 to 2025. House break-ins are down by 24%, commercial break-ins are down by 38%, total property offences are down by 14%, assaults including DV are down 19% and DV-related assaults only are down by 17%. They are staggering figures, but this is what happens when we are serious about dealing with crime and the perpetrators of crime. These are the things that matter and make our community safer.

There is a noticeable shift in the community of Central Australia. People say they feel safer, and they are getting out more and enjoying the Central Australian lifestyle, when previously they were locking themselves up and barracking themselves in their homes. Our strategy has been around local voices, local needs and a long-term plan to rebuild trust and restore safety, but we cannot do it alone. It takes everybody in our community: the parents, our elders, our businesses, our schools, our service organisations and government all pulling in the same direction. Together we can make Central Australia stronger, safer and fairer for everyone, especially after it was let down by the previous Labor government for eight long years.

A stronger Central Australia starts with us, the CLP, and we are delivering for Central Australia because we are serious about delivering for our community and we will continue to stand up for our community and deliver for it longer term.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, before I begin my response to the government's crime reduction strategy, I ask members opposite to actually listen to me. Do not dismiss me as someone who does not care about community safety. I have worked with victims and perpetrators of crime for decades. I desperately want to build a safe Northern Territory for everyone, for every single Territorian, in every community in every town.

I know what violence does to families, I know the trauma that victims carry, and I know the fear that grips communities when crime is out of control, but I also know what works and what does not. What I see in this strategy is a political document designed to sound tough, not an evidence-based plan which will make us of us safer.

Today I express serious concerns about the CLP government's crime reduction strategy and their selective use of statistics to justify what is fundamentally a regressive and punitive approach that fails to address the root causes of crime in the Northern Territory. The government has been quick to trump at recent crime

statistics—a 7.4% reduction in victims of crime and 14% overall crime reduction in Alice Springs. These numbers sound impressive in a press release, but let's examine what they do not tell us.

First, the government conveniently chooses short timeframes that suit their narrative. Comparing January with August 2025 with the same period in 2024 ignores longer-term trends and seasonal variations. Any first-year criminology student knows that crime statistics must be analysed over extended periods to account for natural fluctuations. Cherrypicking favourable months is not evidence-based policy; it is political opportunism.

Second, the strategy boasts about 4,587 adults being denied bail, a 38% increase. But is this success? We are warehousing more people on remand, often for minor offences, at enormous cost to taxpayers. The average remand time may be 7% shorter, which is good news, but at 136.5 days that is still more than four months of incarceration without conviction. For many Territorians, that means losing jobs, housing and family connections, which are the very things that prevent reoffending.

The strategy prioritises enforcement over evidence. Lowering the age of criminal responsibility from 12 to 10 years against the advice of the Australia Medical Association, the Law Council and every major child welfare organisation is not early intervention; it is criminalising children who need support, not punishment. The government is claiming that this ensures young offenders get the help they need. Where is this help? The strategy is long on police powers and short on funded programs.

The CLP has expanded the use of scanners, increased bail denials and criminalised public drinking. Where are the addiction treatment beds? Where is the youth mental health support? Where are the cultural healing programs for Aboriginal communities?

The strategy acknowledges that crime has root causes, including problem drinking, school non-attendance, homelessness and housing shortages, yet the funded initiatives focus overwhelmingly on punishment for these experiences, not support to overcome them. It is like mopping the floor with the taps still running and calling it a flood prevention strategy.

Indigenous Territorians are vastly over-represented in crime statistics and our prisons. The strategy mentions culturally appropriate approaches but provides no detail on meaningful consultation with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations or the implementation of Aboriginal-led justice programs that have proved successful elsewhere.

The government links crime reduction to economic growth, suggesting that reduced crime means improved safety, a better lifestyle and a stronger economy. We heard those words in the Chamber this morning, but the government ignores the economic cost of this approach. Every person on remand is a cost to the system. Every child in detention is a tragedy that we will be paying for over decades. Every dollar spent on enforcement is a dollar not invested in education, housing or health services that work to prevent crime.

While the government is spending a record amount on Corrections, it has cut rehabilitation programs in jails due to overcrowding. Astoundingly, it has cut 60% of the programs that might reduce reoffending because its own punitive policies have created such overcrowding that there is no room for rehabilitation.

The Northern Territory has the highest recidivism rate in Australia, with six out of 10 prisoners returning to jail within two years of release. What is the government's response? It cuts the programs that might address this. Its own spokesperson admitted that this approach may appear to place less emphasis on rehabilitation but called it a necessary step. Necessary for what? Is it for ensuring that people cycle endlessly through our prison system?

Our Chief Minister acknowledged that added pressure on our Corrections system means that the government has to pull back on delivering some of that important rehabilitation and that it had to cease some programs of rehabilitation in prison because the demand on prison services is so high. The CLP's tough-on-crime approach has created such pressure that it cannot deliver rehabilitation, guaranteeing that people will reoffend and return to prison, creating more pressure and requiring more prisons in an endless, expensive and destructive cycle.

Studies consistently show that every dollar invested in early childhood education returns $7 in reduced crime, health and welfare costs, yet this strategy prioritises scanners and cells over classrooms and clinics, and now admits the government cannot even deliver the rehabilitation programs that prisoners so desperately need.

I will tell you what I do not see in this strategy. There are no targets for reducing Indigenous incarceration rates. There is no investment in alcohol and drug rehabilitation services proportionate to the problem, no commitment to addressing the chronic housing shortage in remote communities and no real plan to address the social determinants of crime, poverty, unemployment and trauma. There is no commitment to justice reinvestment, taking money from prisons and investing in communities to prevent crime in the first place.

The strategy mentions measures of success, like a greater percentage of Territorians feel safe and people feel confident to report crime. These are important, but they are subjective measures that can be influenced by media coverage and political messaging rather than measuring safety improvements.

We have so much evidence from jurisdictions around the world that tells us what works to reduce crime: stable housing; addiction treatment on demand; youth mentoring programs; community-led justice initiatives; and addressing intergenerational trauma. I will tell you about concrete examples that work.

In Glasgow, Scotland, they transformed themselves from the murder capital of Europe to one of the UK's safest cities, not through tougher policing but by treating a violence as a public health issue. The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, established in 2005, took a radical approach when they saw violent young people not as criminals to be locked up but as individuals experiencing trauma who needed intervention.

They employed former gang members as navigators to mentor at-risk youths. They worked with hospitals to identify assault victims and offer support before cycles of retaliation could begin. They invested in education, employment programs and community development. The result was that homicides fell by over 60% in a decade and knife crime dropped dramatically. This was not achieved through harsher sentences or lowering the age of criminal responsibility. It was achieved through treating the disease, not just the symptoms.

In Baltimore, Maryland, for decades they pursued aggressive tough-on-crime policing, higher arrest rates, aggressive street stops and zero-tolerance approaches. The result was some of the highest incarceration rates in America and persistently high crime. When Baltimore invested in evidence-based violence interruption programs such as Safe Streets, employing violence interrupters from the community to mediate conflicts before they escalate, the neighbourhoods with these programs saw significant reductions in violent crimes. The lesson from Baltimore is clear: you cannot arrest your way out of a crime problem, especially when that crime is rooted in poverty, unemployment and community disconnection.

We do not need to look at Scotland or America for evidence; we have it here in the Northern Territory. On Groote Eylandt, which has achieved what can only be described as a transformation, youth crime on the island plummeted by 95% between 2018 and 2022, from 346 offences to just 17. Overall offending has fallen 88%, from 1,041 offences to 130 in the last year. Burglary has dropped from 81 to just two.

How did they achieve this? Not through lower ages of criminal responsibility, increased bail denials or more police powers but through community-led justice initiatives; a healing centre on country; the Peacemaker Program, where community members solve disputes through negotiation rather than police intervention; and youth mentoring programs that provide role models and real opportunities. The Anindilyakwa Land Council Chair said that the reduction in crime reflects work in addressing the issues with a community-led approach that is right for our people.

On the Australian mainland, the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke, New South Wales reduced juvenile convictions by 46% and bail breaches by 72%, not through more police powers but through community investment.

The government cites monthly crime statistics as its measure of progress, but as any criminologist will tell you, reported crime statistics are influenced by policing practices, community confidence in reporting and changing definitions of offences. The strategy itself acknowledges that the spike in Alice Springs crime was largely due to the violent crime reduction strategy which resulted in more offences being recorded and counted.

In other words, crime statistics can go up because we are detecting more crime, not because more crime is occurring. The government cannot have it both ways. Claiming credit for reductions while ignoring that their only enforcement focus may affect future statistics. Behind every statistic is a person: a disabled man who steals food because he is hungry; a young person who breaks into cars because they have dropped out of school and can see no future; a woman who assaults someone while experiencing undiagnosed and untreated mental illness; or a man who drinks to escape trauma and ends up in a cell instead of a treatment program.

This strategy sees criminals; I see Territorians who need support. Now, because of this government's policies, these people are locked in overcrowded facilities where rehabilitation programs have been cancelled. They are being held in police watch houses not designed for long-term detention. When they are released, they will be more damaged, more traumatised and more likely to reoffend than when they entered. That is not tough on crime; that is creating more crime.

I am not arguing for being soft on crime; I am arguing for being smart on crime. Glasgow and Baltimore show us clear different paths. The Glasgow model of a public health approach to violence is directly applicable to us in the Northern Territory. Like Glasgow, we face entrenched cycles of violence, substance abuse and community trauma. Like Glasgow, we need to see young offenders not simply as criminals but as people who need pathways out of violence.

That means:

- adopting a public health approach to violence, as Glasgow successfully implemented
- truly investing in proven early intervention programs for at-risk children and families
- employing community members, including those with lived experience of the justice system as mentors and navigators
- expanding drug and alcohol treatment services with culturally appropriate options
- supporting Aboriginal-led community justice programs that understand the local context
- establishing violence interruption programs in high-risk communities
- addressing the housing crisis that leaves so many homeless or in overcrowded conditions
- raising the age of criminal responsibility in line with international best practice
- implementing justice reinvestment programs that have been successful elsewhere
- using statistics honestly, long-term trends, per capita rates, and acknowledging their limitations.

The Glasgow violence reduction unit did not just reduce crime; it transformed communities, created employment pathways and gave young people and the whole community hope. That is what the Northern Territory needs, not more young people locked up in detention.

I am tired of coming to this Chamber and being attacked because I am arguing for an approach that will work for all of us in the long term, that will keep us safer, that will stop us from causing harm that will damage us, and that is based on what we know will work. Like every person in this Chamber, I want to create a safe community for everyone in the Northern Territory: the people we represent and make laws for. I want real safety that is sustainable and builds a future, not the illusion of safety that comes from tough-sounding press releases and rising prison numbers, and not short-term political wins that create long-term social disasters.

The CLP's crime reduction strategy is heavy on rhetoric and light on evidence. It offers short-term political wins through tough-on-crime posturing while ignoring the complex social factors that drive crime in our Territory. The selective use of statistics may make for good press releases, but it does not make for good policy.

Territorians deserve a government that has the courage to truly address root causes, not just symptoms, that follows evidence and does not say, 'I'm not interested in the evidence', that learns from places from Glasgow and that sees crime reduction not as a law enforcement problem alone but as a whole-of-society challenge requiring health, housing, education and justice responses.

When I advocate for rehabilitation programs, I am not being soft on crime; I am fighting for fewer victims. When I argue for raising the age of criminal responsibility, I am not excusing bad behaviour; I am preventing the creation of career criminals. When I push for investment in housing and addiction treatment, I am not ignoring public safety; I am working to build genuine, lasting safety for every Territorian.

Until this government commits to genuine prevention and rehabilitation, backed by adequate funding and designed in partnership with local communities, this strategy will fail to deliver the safe, strong Territory we

all want. I urge everyone in this Chamber to consider the approach we are taking to try to reduce crime and build a safe community for everyone in the Northern Territory; to engage in genuine consultation on evidence-based crime reduction strategies that address causes, not just consequences; and to work together to build real safety, not just the appearance of it.

VISITORS
Tourism Central Australia

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge in the gallery two visitors from Alice Springs. We have Danial Rochford, the CEO of Tourism Central Australia, and Patrick Bedford, the Chairperson of Tourism Central Australia. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, when this government launched the strategy early last year we made a solemn commitment to the people of the Northern Territory that we would work to restore law and order, strengthen community safety and ensure that every Territorian could live without fear of crime and disorder. Eighteen months on I am pleased to report that the Territory is beginning to see tangible results of that commitment.

We all know that we need to get kids to school because it increases their opportunity to have a solid lifestyle. It helps grow our population because the safety of the community increases and people want to move to the Northern Territory; rebuild our economy because people have faith in the ability to build in the Northern Territory without everything being stolen on the job site; and restore our lifestyle because people feel they can do the things that they love to do in the Northern Territory, which is walk along East Point Reserve in the beautiful electorate of Fannie Bay.

According to the most recent Northern Territory Police crime data, overall recorded offences have fallen by 11% across the Territory compared with the same period last year. Property crime has declined by 14% and there are marked reductions in unlawful entries, motor vehicle theft and business break-ins. In Alice Springs we have recorded a 17% reduction in youth-related offending, a direct outcome of our early intervention programs, our improved after-hours youth engagement and expanded diversion options.

When we were in Alice Springs a couple of weeks ago, we met with the owners of Bojangles: Pearl and Rupinder. I had a conversation with them about what they are noticing. They are out late at night operating a business. They have noticed a massive improvement in the goings-on. We have all seen videos of Alice Springs, when there are cars flying up and down the street at night and fights happening. Pearl and Rupinder are two people who can claim that there has been a reduction in crime there. It was good to talk to them and hear that feedback.

When we came to government in August last year, I moved into my office in the Parap Village. Every day I went outside to talk to people about improving the amenity of the area. People were working behind glass walls where there was yelling, screaming, fighting, drinking and people causing drama in the Parap Village. There was a lot happening. I went out every day and spoke to these people and had good conversations. Now, I do that maybe once a month because it has reduced dramatically.

The previous owners of the Fannie Bay Supermarket had to deal with the windows being smashed again and again. That has not happened since we came to government. The Fannie Bay shops have settled completely, with minimal complaints coming through.

We have more police on the beat, who are reducing domestic violence through their social order approaches. They are talking to people earlier in the day with the aim of reducing domestic violence later in the afternoon.

Last weekend two TPS security guards were assaulted in Parap. One ended up in hospital. We have mandatory sentencing now, so when those offenders have their day in court they will receive mandatory sentences because they assaulted frontline workers. This is not on. This is why we did the work.

The same incident happened on the same day at the Nightcliff shops. I have not heard a word from the Member for Nightcliff about this assault during this sittings. A security guard was assaulted at the Nightcliff shops. The person who assaulted him will face their day in court and will face mandatory sentencing.

The reduction in numbers demonstrates that our plan is producing measurable outcomes. While we take heart in this progress, we recognise it is only the beginning. Unlike the former Labor government, we are not hiding the data that still needs improvement. There remain pressing challenges. The rate of violent offending, particularly in alcohol-fuelled assaults, remains unacceptably high in some regions. Recidivism among young offenders continues to strain police and community resources. There is more to do, and this government will not rest while any Territorian feels unsafe in their home or community.

We will continue to listen to residents of the Johnston and Nightcliff electorates, as we have been. The Members for Sanderson and Casuarina and I regularly have constituents from other electorates come to our offices and talk to us about their problem because they do not feel they can go to their local member.

We are accelerating the next phase of our crime reduction strategy to strengthen police capability and coverage in our regional centres; expand electronic monitoring for repeat violent offenders; increase rehabilitation and placements linked to employment readiness programs; and further resource family support initiatives to disrupt cycles of youth offending. They are practical targeted measures. These are principles that underpin safe societies and stable government.

Members of this Assembly will agree that genuine progress takes persistence. The improvements we are now seeing are the result of a disciplined policy, strong leadership and a clear moral conviction that no community should resign itself to crime. We are not declaring victory; the task before us is ongoing. We are working to build stronger communities not through rhetoric or short-term fixes, but through sustained reform and genuine collaboration between government, police, service providers and the people we serve.

I speak to a lot of police officers—most people know that I have a connection to police, so I have lots of conversations. They tell me that they have room to breathe now. Their work is not done and they are busy but they have room to breathe. This improves the response times, and you cannot knock that.

This government will continue to act firmly in defence of public safety and personal responsibility. We are determined that every Territorian in every town and community can live, work and raise their families in peace. We have made a strong start, and the data confirms this progress. Confidence is returning, but I will say again that the mission is far from complete. The Northern Territory crime reduction strategy roadmap is a strategy grounded in evidence, strengthened by resolve and guided by simple conviction that we have repeated again and again: the safety and security of Territorians will always come first.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about strategy and how our strategy was not long term, as she would like. We are not following their playbook. We are an agile government that will review our policies and strategies, and if it they are not working, we will adjust. We are not doing a five-to-10-year strategy that needs review; we are doing strategies that can be regularly reviewed and adjusted if they need to be.

Our government will not waver. We have made progress, but we have far to go. To the naysayers who continually and consistently state that our strategy to reduce crime will never work, look at the data as it is improving. The so-called evidence that the opposition continues to throw at us is the evidence that the previous Labor government was relying on—and look where that got us.

Member for Johnston, it may be news to you, but the Northern Territory is nothing like Glasgow.

Mr Young: She did not say that.

Mrs ZIO: Constant interjections for the other side. When members on the other side of this Chamber say they are sick of not being listened to—take that as a note that we are not listening to them.

Most Territorians know that we will not stop. We will finish what we have begun; that is, making the Northern Territory safer for everybody.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to support this ministerial report on crime reduction strategy. There are a couple of things I want to point out. I also heard the Member for Johnston talking about evidence-based approaches, getting the statistics right and looking at the long-term statistics.

Let me tell you one thing, Member for Johnston, we have only been in government for 12 months. We have not been here for 19 of 23 years …

Madam SPEAKER: Can you direct your comments through me, please.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: I am sorry, Madam Speaker. We have been here for only 12 months, not 19 of 23 years, so if you do a comparison, what do we have to compare with? We have been here eight months in comparison, and look at what we inherited. That is a normal way of making some comparison.

What do the stats show? These are the statistics Territory-wide: house break-ins are down by 25%; commercial break-ins are down by 26%; total property offences are down by 7%; assaults are down by 5%; there is a 17% reduction in alcohol-related assaults; and robbery is down by 24%.

Let's have a look at the greater Darwin area and the northern suburbs, because this includes my suburbs of Karama and Malak. House break-ins are down by 45%; commercial break-ins are down by 27%; total property offences are down by 11%; assaults are down by 5%; and robbery is down by 30%.

That is the evidence we can put forward because we have only been in for 12 months. Fair enough, once we get to 2028, let's do a four-year on four-year comparison. If we get elected again, let's go another four years on and do an eight-year on eight-year comparison. That is fine. I am happy to take that, but do not give me this rubbish I hear from the Member for Johnston that we are not comparing like with like. I do not know what she wants to compare. If she wants to compare where we were 23 years ago with where we were when we came into government, go for your life. That is a nice longitudinal look at the stats.

One of the good things we have is proactive policing. We are running Operation Safer Homes. The police are doing that. As of last night, they commenced an operation. I have mentioned previously in this House that public housing is an issue. I am all for public housing but it is an issue.

I will quote from a Police statement. This is Operation Safer Homes – Northern Suburbs:

> *The Northern Territory Police Force, along with our partner agencies, will be conducting a proactive high visibility public order operation throughout the northern suburbs over the coming days.*

It began last night in Karama and Malak because they recognise these are hotspots.

> *Beginning tomorrow, this coordinated operation brings together the NTPF, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, Larrakia Nation, Territory Families, Transit, and the City of Darwin to detect, investigate, and prevent offences such as public drinking and related antisocial behaviour.*
>
> *We are focusing on poor behaviour in and around public housing, poor behaviour in and around our buses, and poor behaviour in public places.*
>
> *By applying an intelligence-led and evidence-based approach …*

These are the words of the police, not mine:

> *… police aim to reduce harmful behaviours that undermine community safety and wellbeing. Our focus is not only on enforcement but also on engaging respectfully with residents and connecting community members to the support services they need.*
>
> *Casuarina and Property Crime Division Superintendent Kirsten Engels …*

I meet with her monthly. She said:

> *The message is clear: respect your neighbours and respect your community. We will continue to stand firm against anti-social behaviour wherever and whenever it occurs.*

This is where this government is delivering proactive policing. They did an operation in Karama and Malak in July, going around shopping centres and being proactive, and they wanted to talk to people. The intent was to protect vulnerable individuals, especially women and children, by reducing the risks associated with rough sleeping and overcrowded living conditions. Through engaging with a firm approach, multiagency teams engaged with community members—assisting them to return home—to promote safe housing and school attendance, and to reduce instances of antisocial and alcohol-related offending, particularly domestic and family violence.

These are the numbers that police have supplied. It was a four-day high-visibility operation. Persons spoken to, 409; referrals to Territorians Families, four; referrals to Education, eight; referrals to Return to Country

program, 244; high-visibility foot patrols, 103 conducted over the four days; litres of alcohol tipped out, 31; persons moved on, 192; cautions issued, four; arrests, four. This is what we are delivering, and we are supporting our police.

VISITORS
Ms Alannah Joyce and Mrs Rachel Joyce

Madam SPEAKER: Before suspending for lunch, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of two residents of the Karama electorate, living in Malak, Ms Alannah Joyce and her mother, Rachel. Alannah is rated number one in Australia and number seven in the world for her junior women's judo championship, 78-kilogram division. Congratulations, Alannah, and welcome. On behalf of honourable members, I welcome you to Parliament House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Madam Speaker, I am a major sponsor of Alannah in her future career, and I see her as a potential future Olympian.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

QUESTION TIME

Territory Art – Incentives and Programs

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for ARTS

Before I ask the question, we have the 2025 Youth Parliament Chief Minister, Sean Hagan, in the gallery Welcome, Sean and your colleagues.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms UIBO: I believe all the Youth Parliament Bills passed.

Minister, you have spent more time viewing Territory art interstate than you have visiting remote community art centres and regional centres at home. The Territory's creative industries contribute to over $734m each year to our Territory economy, a remarkable achievement driven by local artists and communities.

Why is it that you seem interested only in Territory art when you get to showcase and go on trips interstate. On this AusArt Day, will you stand up for our art sector and deliver new incentives or programs to support our artists and art centres on the ground in the Northern Territory? Other than Tiwi, Gapuwiyak and Hermannsburg, how many remote centres have visited in your time as the Arts minister?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the arts industry is an integral part of our economy. We are supporting that industry. A few months ago there was a question asking why I have only visited one particular art gallery. Now the numbers are going up, which is good.

On one hand, they are saying I am not visiting or supporting and now they are saying they need to know. I will say, as you normally keep track of my Facebook, that you will get messages and information there. That is where you find all the information. That is only …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Can we have some silence please. I cannot hear the minister.

Mr CHARLS: When the opposition is trying to track down a minister, only through their Facebook, not seeing the good things that this side is doing, that is an issue. That is exactly what is happening, and they are not seeing all the good things we have done for the art industry.

The Member for Gwoja is the newly appointed shadow Art minister. I believe the previous things were not working, so they had to make a reshuffle in the first few months of sittings as well. The newly appointed shadow minister is always trying to criticise, but I do not see him around much at all except on some of the road trips and other things. I am trying to track him on Facebook as well because that is the way that we can track them as well.

We are supporting our arts industry, and we will make sure we deliver. When it comes to the question about Screen Territory, the minister responsible for that answered that question multiple times. We are not cutting any of the costs …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; there was no mention of Screen Territory in the question; it was specifically about new incentives or programs …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Get to the point, Opposition Leader.

Ms UIBO: New incentives and programs was the specifics of the question.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call. There was a long preamble to this question, so you have a lot of latitude, I feel.

Mr CHARLS: I will quote again the shadow minister, who said two days ago …

Ms Uibo: You are the minister. Can you answer please?

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Mr CHARLS: We are continuing with the funding, which is about $27m—or just about $20m. We are continuing the investment.

With the State Square building, or the art gallery, which started as an investment of $47m and went up to $143m, we closed the EOI on Monday. Almost 60 individual people or organisations downloaded the …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order? Are you going with ‘How many centres?’

Ms UIBO: No, the question was …

Madam SPEAKER: That was your question.

Ms UIBO: … about new incentives and programs. What is the CLP government’s plan?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, please continue your answer. There will be silence.

Ms Uibo: No, there are two parts to it. He cannot answer the first part; he definitely will not answer the second part.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, be quiet.

Mr CHARLS: When it comes to the new incentives we are trying—the previous Labor government had a plan to put more funding from the taxpayers through the government to this new project. We are making sure that we can fund this through private proponents. That means we will be able to do more new ones on top of what we are delivering. The shadow minister can probably continue to try to address this issue.

Integrity and Ethics Commissioner

Mr HOWE to CHIEF MINISTER

The CLP government has acted to restore public confidence in the Territory's integrity framework by commissioning and acting on the McClintock–Hiley review into the structure in statutory integrity officers in the Northern Territory. Following receipt of that report, the government has accepted all recommendations in full including the establishment of a new Integrity and Ethics Commissioner to strengthen transparency and accountability.

Can you please update the Assembly on how these reforms will restore confidence in the Territory's integrity system and ensure strong, effective oversight that Territorians can trust?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as I said in my first reading speech earlier today when we introduced the legislation, the creation of the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner is now available for members of parliament and the community to see.

It is important that we do this work. Over a significant period there has been an undermining of confidence in our integrity institution for various reasons. Labor created integrity functions in the Territory and they have not been meeting community expectation. There is much documented publicity regarding this.

There is a way forward that takes into consideration the unique nature of the Northern Territory and what has happened in the past. We can learn from lessons past and move forward. The McClintock–Hiley review provided an important opportunity to reset our integrity frameworks and to restore confidence in the community in these frameworks in the Northern Territory.

This is important for the parliament, our government institutions and people who want transparency, integrity and confidence in government no matter where they live in the Territory or what institution it is.

This is an important step forward, and we are looking forward to it. We have accepted all the recommendations in complete fullness, with such highly respected people such as Justice Hiley and the ICAC Inspector doing this important work. It provides us with an opportunity to reset the narrative for the Territory going forward.

For too long, the Labor–Greens–Johnston alliance have played a lot of politics on this issue. If that is what they want to do, that is a matter for them. We are getting on with the job, recognising that what has happened before did not meet community expectation. We need to rebuild faith and have a credible model that Territorians can get behind and appreciate.

This represents a new era of accountability for the Northern Territory. It is important to have an agency with a CEO able to provide shared support to the staff. It will also mean that the Integrity Commissioner can focus on the core issues of integrity, governance and corruption and all the issues they should be spending their time on.

We are confident in the model. I thank Justice Hiley and Mr McClintock for that important work. This is significant reform for the Northern Territory; it heralds a new era in integrity for the Northern Territory.

Attorney-General Integrity and Transparency

Mr PAECH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Serious questions have been raised regarding your ability to manage conflicts of interest and your commitment to integrity. As the Territory's first law officer, you have bypassed a transparent, appropriate process of recruitment. Whilst still in train, you directly appointed the Director of Legal Aid. You failed to declare your extended family member's court matter while making comment in the public about it, potentially breaching the ministerial code of conduct. There are now questions regarding political interference in the independence of the court that remain unanswered.

How can Territorians have confidence in your ability to uphold the standards required to be the Territory's first law officer given your track record of integrity and transparency breaches?

Mr Maley: That is a bit rich from someone who bought shares in a liquor company.

Mr Paech: Let her answer the question.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence please. Attorney-General, you will be heard in silence.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, what an interesting question coming from the worst Attorney-General the Northern Territory has ever seen. He single-handedly threw Territorians under the bus with Labor's crime agenda, which was literally letting criminals go into the streets and cause more havoc.

I am proud to be the CLP Attorney-General for Northern Territorians. They voted for a CLP government to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle, and that is exactly what we are doing. In just 14 months we have brought forward many new Bills to deal with reducing crime. We heard from the Chief Minister this morning that those results are starting to turn around; the stats are going down. That is what Territorians expect from a government.

As the Attorney-General my role is to work with my department to bring forward this legislation to this House, work with our team and make sure that we do exactly what Territorians asked. I will not stand here and be shamed by a former Attorney-General who should be the one hanging his head in shame. I am proud of the work I have done.

Mrs Finocchiaro: So was the Opposition Leader, a failed Attorney-General.

Ms BOOTHBY: That is true; the Opposition Leader is also a failed Attorney-General. The reason they are sitting on that side of the Chamber and we are in government, 17 strong, is that we are listening to Territorians. We took our platform to the election: reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle, and that is what we are doing.

Firearms Legislation – Licences

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

One of our government's key pillars has been restoring the unique Territory lifestyle, which we know is deeply valued by our rural constituents. Over the past few months, I have been contacted by many constituents frustrated by increased delays in the approval process to purchase firearms to enjoy their pastimes. After raising questions, it became clear that the outdated framework was at the heart of the issue. I understand the government is now taking steps to resolve this once and for all. Can you update the House on the progress of this important reform?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member and for his strong support of the rural and regional community and the people who live and breathe the Territory lifestyle every day.

Our government is committed to protecting and restoring our unique lifestyle. That includes a Territory where people can go fishing, hunting and camping. These are more than hobbies in the Northern Territory; they are a part of who we are. It is part of the Member for Goyder's and my DNA. We are backing responsible firearm owners—people who respect the law, follow the rules and make an enormous contribution to our community and economy. The lifestyle is an important part, and a lot of money is spent in that industry to grow the lifestyle and economy.

The old legislation was causing a problem and was forcing people with A and B category firearm licences to wait a further 28 days to buy a firearm in the same category which they already had. It made no sense and was a frustration for these law-abiding firearm owners to wait another 28 days and start the process again. It also left the firearm shops effectively having the guns on layby waiting for the paperwork to go through. Our government is about cutting red tape, which is what this does, to make sure that the firearm owners, shops and dealers can get that result.

Our government has a commonsense approach to this. We are cutting red tape, but to be clear, we are not watering down any safety checks. We are not removing any safeguards but protecting our community and removing the duplication when buying another firearm of the same category. We recognise that these people

have already done the background checks and legal requirements. As someone who owns firearms, it is a lengthy process to get a shooter's licence, keep guns and ammo stored correctly and travel in a car with them in different containers and locked parts in your car to comply with the firearm rules and regulations.

As another part of restoring our lifestyle, we have introduced another process to allow people with an interstate shooter's licence to buy ammo so they can come here and enjoy shooting competitions. Instead of having to carry kilos of ammo, they can come here, spend their money in the Northern Territory and grow our economy.

Youth Offenders – Time on Remand

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

At this point in time, 81% of children and young people in Holtze Youth Justice Centre are on remand. It is taking up to a week for lawyers to get into Holtze to see their young clients, delaying legal proceedings and slowing down court processes, yet this morning the Chief Minister spoke about swift, fair and rehabilitative justice with reduced time to finalise criminal cases and time on remand. Clearly, that is not the case for children. How can the community trust any of your government's rhetoric about reducing crime or improving the justice system if this is the reality for children in prison?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I do not understand the question, to be honest. I know that those on the other side get confused, so I will talk about what we have done to make sure that young offenders have better access to rehabilitation and education and have the opportunity to break the cycle of reoffending.

The previous Labor government failed the youths in detention in the Northern Territory. It had a two-year delay in bringing online the new Holtze detention centre which caused young offenders to be in an old prison that was part of an adult prison. For two years young offenders had to sit in a facility whilst there were blowouts and massive delays for the Holtze facility.

I have been to the Holtze facility. It is a great facility that allows young offenders to have education and rehabilitation programs and some boot camp programs available to them, because it is about breaking the cycle of reoffending.

It is a bit rich for those opposite to ask about youth justice, when they caused the two-year delay. They caused a $35m overspend in bringing the facility online. Just imagine all the education and rehabilitation programs that were not done because the previous Labor government failed to get the facility up to scratch. There were two years of delay.

We have brought that detention centre online. The young people in that facility go to school; they are getting an education. The minister for Education speaks about this a lot. Education is the key to breaking the cycle of reoffending. It allows young offenders to have an opportunity for a better life.

It is unfortunate that the previous Labor government failed many of these communities. Labor was in government for 19 of the last 20-odd years, so the young offenders we are dealing with were not even born when Labor came into power. All they have known is failure and neglect because the previous Labor government failed to look after them.

We are turning the tide and making sure that young offenders have education programs while they are in detention. They also have wraparound supports whereby the counsellors come to talk to them and deal with some of their issues, and they have access to medical treatment and get their medication.

On the weekends they go to Sentenced to a Skill, where they learn about getting up in the morning, going to a job and doing community service. Then they go back into detention and back to education. We know that education is the key to breaking the cycle of reoffending.

HomeGrown Territory Grants

Mrs CARLSON to TREASURER

Before the CLP came to government, Territorians were grappling with the economic failure of eight years under the Labor government.

Mr Paech: And then you lifted the debt ceiling.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mrs CARLSON: Master Builders recorded the lowest number of new builds since records began. With crime and economic uncertainty spiralling, fewer people wanted to call this Territory home. Fast-forward 12 months and thanks to the CLP's nation leading HomeGrown Territory program, along with this government's strong action to tackle crime and rebuild our economy, the Territory is once again the place where people want to live, work and put down their roots.

Can you outline to the Assembly how the CLP is supporting the building industry as it responds to the incredible demand of our extended HomeGrown Territory Grants?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I never get sick of speaking about the most generous HomeGrown Territory Grant scheme in the country. There are people in the Member for Wanguri's electorate benefiting from this scheme, and she knows the benefit of strong communities. Through our HomeGrown Territory program, which is the most generous in the country, we are helping more than 1,100 Territorians now into their first home. These are Territory families.

We are growing our housing supply with 300 new builds in the pipeline and climbing. This means busy tradies, busy suppliers and, with a steady stream of orders and retails, they are having plenty of homes to fit out. We are talking big numbers. These builds supported by our grants will lead to more than $130m in direct economic activity. By extending the $50,000 and $30,000 grants by another 12 months we are giving Territorians more time to take up the scheme and giving builders even more business.

What a difference a year makes. When we turn around the economy, stamp out runaway crime and restore hope for Territorians, there are benefits to all.

Young families once hesitant to call the NT home are now jumping at the chance to get on the property ladder, but the houses cannot get built unless we are backing our hardworking builders and tradies who are, right now, rolling up their sleeves and helping us rebuild the Territory. Having recently visited a new development at Holtze, I could see how hard working they are. Every new build supports our local businesses, tradies, apprentices, suppliers and local business. When this happens the benefits flow directly into the community and our broader economy.

To help Territory businesses make the most of the economic turnaround, the CLP did what would make the biggest impact. We gave them the highest payroll tax-free threshold in Australia and made sure our apprentices and trainees are exempted. This saves Territory businesses up to $68,000 per year in money that can be reinvested back into their businesses. This means more businesses growing, young people training and jobs created in the Territory.

In good news, the latest ABS home building data shows the average construction time for new homes in the NT has fallen to 8.85 months, a 2.3% reduction compared with 2023 and 2024. What we are doing is working. Master Builders NT recently commended the NT builders on their hard work and improved building times, and so do we. We back our commercial and residential builders because they are helping to grow the Territory brick by brick.

Remote Housing Program

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

The Central Australia Plan has delivered significant infrastructure investment into Central Australia in our remote communities. The communities of Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Warumpi (Papunya) recently advised that they are still waiting for tender and design documents to be released for life-changing infrastructure in splash pads and water parks in those remote communities. Why are you holding up these projects, and when will you sign off on the agreements so that works can start?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it sounds like the question relates to the Central Australia Plan, which is a federally funded program. In general, the remote housing program over the last 12 months delivered 222 new homes under

the national agreement of $4bn over the next 10 years, and the aim is to build 2,700 homes. I am not sure why the Member for Gwoja is asking me about the Central Australia Plan because …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order, Member for Gwoja. He is not even a minute into his answer.

Mr PAECH: May I speak to the point of order?

Madam SPEAKER: This is your one and only point of order if it is frivolous.

Mr PAECH: Standing Order 110; relevance. I acknowledge that it is on your desk …

Madam SPEAKER: Sit down, Member for Gwoja. You will have no more points of order.

Mr EDGINGTON: That gives me a chance to remind the Member for Gwoja that the Central Australia Plan is a federal plan. Given that is a federal matter, it seems to me that the Member for Gwoja has the Member for Lingiari virtually sitting next door to his office in Alice Springs. My advice to the Member for Gwoja is that rather than coming in here and asking the Northern Territory Government about the Central Australia Plan, I suggest he goes back to the Member for Lingiari, the Senator for the Northern Territory. All those ones …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat please, minister. Member for Goyder, what is your point of order?

Mr MACKAY: Standing Order 20; interruptions. I would like to hear the minister's answer in silence.

Madam SPEAKER: I think you might have interrupted him more than anyone at this point, but anyway, please continue, minister.

Mr EDGINGTON: I suggest that he goes next door to his office and perhaps speaks to the Member for Lingiari about where the funding is for this Central Australia Plan because it is not just about housing. Everywhere I go, particularly in Central Australia and the Barkly, I am constantly asked questions like, 'Where is the $250m? Where is all the money that was apparently put into Central Australia by the federal government?'

All I hear is, 'Where is the money; what is being delivered; what projects are being delivered?' And all I hear is silence. Nothing is coming from the federal government when it comes to the Central Australia Plan. People living out bush are not only waiting for remote housing, but we are delivering 222 houses under the joint steering committee programs …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was about when the minister would sign off on the agreement.

Mr EDGINGTON: We have delivered 222 homes under the national agreement; this compares to just 206 the year before by the former Labor government. We are getting on with the job of delivering houses. We are delivering in remote areas; we are delivering repairs and maintenance, but every time I go out bush people want to know what has been happening with the federal money for the Central Australia Plan. My advice to the Member for Gwoja is to see the Member for Lingiari and get the answers you are looking for.

Remote Housing Program – Supplementary Question

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

The remote people of Papunya and Hermannsburg, along with the Commonwealth Government, have said that the bilateral agreement is sitting on your desk, and you have not signed off on it. Rather than blame the Commonwealth and remote Territorians, why have you not signed off on the agreement for water parks in Hermannsburg and Papunya?

ANSWER

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call. It is slightly different from the first question—perhaps a bit more information?

Mr EDGINGTON: Madam Speaker, I have already answered the question.

Racing and Wagering Commission – Wage Transparency

J DAVIS to MINISTER for RACING, GAMING and LICENSING

On Tuesday I referred the *Racing and Wagering Act* to you to be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee and raised concerns about wage transparency at the Racing and Wagering Commission. Can you please advise Territorians whether you will be referring the Act to LCAC; whether it is correct that $376,000 in taxpayer funds is spent on wages for the Chair, Alastair Shields, and the five other board members to meet once a month; whether a further $1m covers the salaries of the directors and inspectors; who the current director is, and whether it is a full-time position; and how that $1m is divided between the director's salary and the inspector's wages?

Madam SPEAKER: Have you finished your question?

J DAVIS: I have now.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Member for Johnston.

Mr HOWE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 109(2)(a); the naming of an individual cannot be authenticated within the question.

Madam SPEAKER: I do not think I have ever had to refer to 109(2)(a); please bear with me. Manner and form of questions.

Mr HOWE: It is109(2)(a). Is it strictly necessary? If not, I would ask the member to withdraw naming.

Madam SPEAKER: I will give you the right to reply. Is the naming of the person…

J DAVIS: I named the Chair, which is in the public space. I do not see any issue with that.

Madam SPEAKER: I will rule that it is fine, so please, minister for Racing, answer the question.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the answer is no; I will not be referring it.

Million Dollar Fish

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

The Million Dollar Fish has become one of the Territory's best-known lifestyle campaigns. It brings locals together and attracts visitors from across Australia. It is a homegrown CLP—the Territory party—initiative that celebrates what makes our lifestyle so special while giving our tourism and hospitality sectors a real boost.

Can you update the Assembly on how the Million Dollar Fish is helping to rebuild the economy and promote the Territory lifestyle, and share some of the great stories from the season? How many fish have been caught at the Elizabeth River jetty?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I do not think any have been caught yet at the Elizabeth River jetty, but I see a lot of Territorians on that river. From all over Palmerston people come out with their boats and launch them or are on the jetty with their fishing rods. I hope that all the Member for Blain's constituents are getting out and having a crack at the Million Dollar Fish.

It is an amazing CLP-born initiative. We are in our 11th season and continue to see fantastic results from the Million Dollar Fish, not only for the people who catch a red-tagged fish but also our tourism and fishing industries. I heard that on the weekend of the launch of the Million Dollar Fish all the local tour operator fishing guides were fully booked. It was not just locals; it was also interstaters, and this is in our off season. That is why this is such a fantastic initiative.

Everybody in the Territory knows how Territorian the barramundi is for our lifestyle. The Million Dollar Fish has become part of that. It is about that early morning launch, Member for Nelson, and that brag photo—I have seen a few of yours from out there. It is about the dream of landing the red tag. It is exciting.

Last season alone, more than 62,000 registrations were received. That is an enormous number. There was $210,000 of prize money handed out to those who caught fish, which is fantastic.

I will quickly talk about some of the Million Dollar Fish winners from the first couple of weeks of this season. This year we kicked off with a bang. A Darwin local—I believe from the electorate of Karama—Mr Russell Kenny caught the first $10,000 barra on the opening day at Corroboree Billabong. He was fishing with his grandson. That was a lovely story to hear.

More recently, Colin from Darwin hooked—you would not believe it—his second $10,000 barra. There were a lot of envious Territorians watching Colin and saying, 'Gosh, look at that!' He is persistent; he is out all the time trying to catch a barra, as many Territorians are.

We want visitors to come to the Territory and enjoy our Million Dollar Fish campaign. Six $10,000 barramundi have been caught, and there are still 94 out there. They are across the Territory, and there are 11 carrying the million-dollar tag. I hope that a lucky Territorian or visitor gets one of those million-dollar tags. That would be exciting.

This is what restoring the Territory lifestyle is about.

Tracy Village Sporting Precinct

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for PEOPLE, SPORT and CULTURE

I was happy to see that the community consultation process has started for the detailed planning of the Tracy Village sporting precinct. This is an important community project for the people of the northern suburbs. It is also an election commitment that a number of members on this side of the House and I have been working hard to achieve. Can you provide the Assembly with an update on this important project?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Members for Casuarina and Wanguri took this project to the election as a commitment. They were aware of how long the project had been delayed over the years. There was initial funding of $1.3m that I believe has been delayed for more than five years. I assure members and Territorians that we are getting on with the job.

We are delivering this project, which is a combined Northern Territory Government and federal government project. We will listen to the people in the northern suburbs as we want to hear their feedback. That is why there is a Have Your Say. I encourage the people who use this and sporting groups to provide their feedback while it is open to everyone.

They are working on a master plan. We want to ensure that we support the key sports that currently use that facility, including cricket, AFL, soccer and baseball, for stage 1 and stage 2. During the master plan process we will listen to the people about how we can improve the lighting, clubroom facilities and female-friendly changerooms, and the relocation and upgrades of the sporting field. A project control group and a steering committee were established to assist in the delivery of the early stages of this project. There is a session at the social club this Saturday, so I encourage everyone to make their contribution. This is the time to provide that valuable feedback.

Another project, in Woodroffe, is the home of the Palmerston Cricket Club. The Have Your Say for that has been completed, so now we are at the stage of gathering feedback and considering how we want to take this project into the future because it will support the people living in Palmerston.

It will not stop there; we are waiting for the final report of the Marrara master plan to understand the requirements to plan long term and see how we can improve the Marrara precinct, which is a key sporting facility for the greater Darwin region and the Northern Territory.

I am sure that the Members for Nelson and Goyder are counting down the hours for this weekend, when the Crocs have their first game under the lights. That was a commitment we took to the last election, and we are

delivering that 14 months after coming to government. I wish both members good luck. Have a good time this weekend.

Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for YOUTH, SENIORS and EQUALITY

During Estimates you said:

> *I take advice from the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians which meets regularly throughout the year. The council provides me with high-level and strategic advice on issues of importance to seniors …*

Yet you have met with the council only once, in February. Expressions of interest for new members closed at the end of May. Since then, nothing.

While seniors are crying out for action on aged care and cost-of-living pressures, why have you turned your back on senior Territorians? Can you tell me when the new advisory council will be stood up for you to meet with?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there was one meeting with the seniors, I believe—I cannot recall exactly how many. We appointed the new Chair and members for the seniors committee. I am sure there is a date; I believe it is 30 October, but there is a meeting scheduled. We had to change the schedule of the meeting once or twice because of availability of the members. It is not about how many meetings we will hold just for the stats; it is about how we ensure members attend the meeting and provide valuable feedback.

In the last meeting there were two or three main things, and I facilitated a meeting for a small group from the seniors advisory council to meet with Minister Edgington, because one thing they wanted to work on was aged care, which Minister Edgington is responsible for. I facilitated that meeting, and Minister Edgington listened to them.

We have heard in the Chamber over the last two weeks that he is still asking the federal government: what is happening to aged care in the Territory? We are hearing about the processes, similar to many other processes, but seniors want real action, because we have about 60 to 80 seniors in hospital, and most likely some of them were there during the last government as well.

When I worked in the hospital I heard many stories of seniors who passed away in the hospital and were not with their family members during the last hours of their lives, especially during COVID.

We know this is a long-term, chronic issue, but what is really happening is we are not getting any traction from the federal government. It does not matter what noise Minister Edgington is making—with the Chief Minister in her own way. We are trying our best to get attention from the federal government so we can address those issues.

Seniors raised with us housing, location and other things. I am working with the responsible minister on that, because when it comes to those issues, it is about understanding them, working with the relevant minister and having a clear action plan. That is what I have been doing. The previous Chair, Dr Ram Vemuri, was reliable. He came off the board and the advisory council as the Chair and took on the role of Chair of the Multicultural Advisory Council. I look forward to working with Bob Shewring as the new Chair of the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians.

I will update the Assembly in the future about how that is tracking.

Population Growth

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

The 2025–26 budget estimated population growth of 0.7% for the year ending June 2025, reflecting renewed confidence in the Territory's economy. Strong population growth is vital to building our workforce, supporting local businesses and strengthening communities. Our Territory lifestyle is key, and it can only be experienced here. It is one reason people choose to stay.

Can you update the Assembly on how our CLP government is delivering on the budget commitments and why more people are choosing to move to the Territory to experience our unique lifestyle and opportunities?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know from speaking with the Member for Karama how important population growth is for his community, especially when it comes to growing the workforce. I appreciate his advocacy for them in that space, and I am sure they appreciate it as well.

For far too long under the former Labor government, the Territory stood still. Crime was out of control, businesses were suffering and, worse still, long-term Territorians were packing up and leaving. Things were looking grim. No more.

On the back of our Finocchiaro CLP government's commitment to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our beautiful lifestyle, in just 14 months we are delivering a safer community, our economy is the fastest growing in the nation, and once again Territorians and visitors to the Territory are enjoying our beautiful lifestyle. People who left in despair are returning. People who were considering leaving are doubling down on their commitment to the Territory.

You can feel it when you walk through the Darwin CBD, visit one of our markets, talk to a small business owner or meet new families settling into schools throughout the Territory. There is a renewed sense of optimism, a feeling that we in the Territory are on the move again. Opportunities for investment abound, and with the Territory on the brink of providing a solution to Australia's energy crisis, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

On the back of this, we are making it easier for people to move to the Territory and build a life for their families. Our skilled migration and workforce programs are demonstrating to people outside of the Territory, not just in Australia but overseas, what opportunities are here. Our skilled migration and workforce programs are working with businesses to make sure they get the people they need, whether they are nurses, tradies, childcare workers, educators or hospitality workers. We have it all covered.

Employers are telling me that for the first time in many years they are confident that they will get the resources they need to keep their business growing.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports for the 12 months to March 2025 our population grew 1.3% to 263,417 people. That is well above the budget forecast of 0.7%. It is not just about jobs; it is about connectivity, getting people in and out of the Territory to enjoy our wonderful, stunning lifestyle and build their families and futures here.

Multicultural Advisory Council

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Your government claims to value multicultural voices, yet you have not met with your own Minister's Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs since becoming the minister. Why have you never bothered to sit down with your own representative ministerial body? It has become yet another advisory body that has been silenced by your CLP government, and you are now part of an ongoing rejection of genuine community engagement.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Labor team for the strong interest in the lifestyle today, because they never had that interest. They really trashed the lifestyle of Territorians.

When it comes to the Minister's Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please. I cannot hear the minister. I can hear you, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr CHARLS: When I took charge as the minister on 10 September last year, I was going through different advisory councils one by one. Normally when people are appointed, they will be appointed in different terms. They may get a term of six, 12, 18, 24 months or up to three years. When it comes to the multicultural council,

everyone was finishing their term at the end of March, so I had to go through a process of advertising all the roles, which are finalised now.

I included the Minister's Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs in the last answer. Professor Ram Vemuri was appointed as the Chair.

This government makes sure that we pick the people from at least five continents around the world so that we have representation from different regions of the world rather than having people representing only one region or just the Asian countries. I make sure that we have representation from five different continents. We know there are no people living in Antarctica, so it probably five out of six.

When it comes to their keen interest in the multicultural community, I am sure they may be identifying me as a multicultural person as well. I do not know how they identify. I am interested in working with that group and, being a migrant, I know the journey of different groups. I do not think that their voices were coming onto this level, whereas thing have changed with the new CLP government. They have a voice of a multicultural person in the highest level in the Northern Territory Government, the Cabinet room.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was, specifically, why has the minister not sat down with his representative body in the last 14 months of being the Multicultural Affairs minister?

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat. Please continue, minister. I think he is answering the question.

Mr CHARLS: The previous minister has not changed a bit. I was a staff member in NT Health, and she was my minister. I do not think anything has changed because she cannot understand what is said.

Ms Uibo: I am asking about your portfolio.

Mr CHARLS: When I was working in the hospital, we used to send all the information for the LA brief to the minister saying, 'These are our problems'. I never saw any problems fixed.

Ms Uibo: Why have you not met with them in 14 months?

Mr CHARLS: I answered that I just appointed the ministerial council. I will meet with it towards the end of this year. Still, the previous Health minister, the current Labor Leader of the Opposition, is asking the same question. I do not know what the issue is. If she wants to constantly interject, she can continue that. Multicultural communities in the Territory are an important part of our community.

Members interjecting.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; there has been interruption after interruption. I do not know how many more warnings she needs. I cannot hear the response from over here.

Madam SPEAKER: We are on the last day of a two-week sitting period. It is important that we maintain our integrity and behaviour. Opposition Leader, I ask that you stop interjecting. I do not want to appear like I am picking on you, but you are the main offender today. Please refrain from the interjections.

Remote Communities – Ministerial Visits

Mr PAECH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Over the last 12 months, remote communities have been working hard on localised justice responses to help make their communities stronger and safer.

Over the last 12 months, how many remote communities have you personally physically visited? How many local law and justice groups have you met with? Are you too scared of remote Territorians, or do you just not want to get your hands dirty?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Attorney-General, you have the call and will be heard in silence. The next person I hear will have an hour outside the Chamber.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I think you are right. It is the last day of a two-week sittings, and they are scratching the bottom of the barrel. As the Attorney-General, I have visited a lot of places. I have been to Alice Springs many times, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Santa Teresa two weeks ago and to Groote. Our government has been all over the Territory visiting Territorians and listening to what they have to say.

The member specifically talked about the law and justice groups, which sit under my portfolio. I would like to explain this to the Member for Gwoja, who does not listen when I talk about these groups. I was visiting Groote a couple of weeks ago, and I sat with members of their law and justice group, the judge, people involved in the community and Community Corrections—I think her name is Margie, who has lived there a long time. A raft of people from my department, land councils and other groups came together and shared how it works. It was informative. I saw firsthand exactly what happens in the law and justice groups and community courts.

There is work happening now under the Aboriginal Justice Agreement for an evaluation on the community courts, law and justice groups and alternatives to custody. On this side of parliament, we believe in reducing crime and doing things that work. We were elected to do that, and we have reduced crime across the Territory. There has been a 17% decrease in Alice Springs of DV victims, which is unbelievable.

What we are doing is working, which means we have to look at other things in front of us, and that includes things under the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. If our evaluation is working and there are reductions, we will look at those things. If it is not working, we have to revisit it.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. To confirm, you have been to only two of the 76 remote communities?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: The question was how many. You have 33 seconds, minister, and you will be heard in silence.

Ms BOOTHBY: Across our ministries, we are always out across the Territory. Let's think about this from a practical point of view. We have two ministers in Alice Springs, one minister in the Barkly …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, minister. Member for Gwoja, make it quick.

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. It is a direct question to the Attorney-General, not to the entire Cabinet.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: There will be no more interjections.

Ms BOOTHBY: I was just reminded that I went to Limmen Bight, Nathan River; there is another one, so go and put up your fingers, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Uibo: That is not even a community; it is an area.

Madam SPEAKER: Everyone, stop the interjections.

Recreational Fishing – Barramundi Industry

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

The rec fishing sector is worth over $270m to our local economy. Research shows that one in three people aged over 18 years in the Territory go fishing. That is more than any other state or territory in Australia. Last Friday 17 October was National Barramundi Day. To celebrate, we enjoyed cooking some local barramundi on the back of a ute. Red tag or not, we love our barra. Could you update the Assembly on what you are doing to support the local barramundi industry as well as our local recreational fishers who love to go out and wet a line?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will need more than three minutes to talk about the barramundi industry. It is a crucial part of our economy, recreational fishing and our lifestyle. All those things combined mean that we support the barramundi industry on this side of the Chamber.

The Member for Goyder is right. Last Friday he and I cooked up some barramundi in the back of my ute. It was National Barramundi Day. We were supporting local homegrown barramundi, recognising our farmers and fishos, who produce high-quality sustainable seafood in the Northern Territory.

In 2024 the Northern Territory produced about 100 tonnes of wild-caught barramundi and over 6,500 tonnes of farmed barramundi, which contributes a huge part to our economy. It drives local jobs and local and international recognition of the Northern Territory and our barramundi industry.

Territorians love their recreational fishing, and we are supporting it. The Member for Goyder has probably caught more barramundi than the Member for Namatjira and I combined. He worked at a barramundi farm, though, so there is a hint.

When people think about the Northern Territory, they think about barramundi—catching it and coming up here to chase the elusive red tag. It is a great initiative from the CLP, with 11 years of chasing that red-tagged barramundi. A few weeks ago I released a fish—it bit me on the thumb—and it was caught two days later. It had a red tag on it. We are here to support that.

The Territory led the way in seafood labelling in 2008. Now, the rest of Australia is following our lead; new country-of-origin labelling laws will let diners know exactly where their seafood comes from. These changes are coming in to allow consumers to know if the barramundi and seafood they order in restaurants is Australian or imported. We are here to support the barramundi industry.

I give a big shout-out to Humpty Doo Barramundi. I have been to the facility. It has a great global reputation for producing premium high-quality saltwater barramundi in the Northern Territory. I am pleased that it is continuing to grow. It has programs in Wadeye supporting the community. This is about local jobs and supporting local community engagement.

We are keen to continue supporting the barramundi industry. Lots of people in the Northern Territory fish. It is a great pastime. You can take your family fishing. I have been to the boat ramps and have lined up for literally an hour to get into places like Shady Camp.

Madam SPEAKER: Your time has expired, minister.

NT Allied Health Excellence Awards

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Late last week the NT Allied Health Excellence Awards were held. Allied health covers a wide range of professions, from medical imaging and social work to pharmacy and audiology. Many constituents in the amazing electorate of Fannie Bay work in the allied health space.

I give a shout-out to my daughter, Kalani, who is an occupational therapist with the MJD Foundation in the electorate of Fannie Bay, in Coconut Grove. She travels remote, and I am proud of her.

Our allied health teams are on the front line, keeping Territorians well every day. From urban centres to the bush, allied health professionals deliver care that keeps Territorians strong. Their work is vital to ensuring all Territorians get the care they need.

Can you tell the Assembly about the important role allied health plays in our health system to help Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, late last week the NT Allied Health Excellence Awards were held in Darwin. The awards recognise and reward the outstanding contributions and performance of allied health professionals working throughout the Northern Territory.

The awards received 151 nominations across eight categories. This included increased representation from all five regions in the Northern Territory. Nominations were submitted by industry peers and stakeholders, including other health professionals, work colleagues, managers and employers. I congratulate those nominated and, of course, all the winners across each category.

As Minister for Health, I have the privilege of speaking and meeting with many health workers, including allied health professionals. Allied health is the third-largest clinical workforce in the Northern Territory, with specialties spanning a wide number of professions from physiotherapy to diet and nutrition, occupational therapy and speech pathology, medical imaging, social work, pharmacy and audiology.

The Territory's allied health professionals do an amazing and outstanding job in all parts of the Northern Territory. They are helping keep Territorians out of hospital and reducing the burden of chronic disease. Across towns, regions and remote communities, allied health professionals are making a difference to Territorians.

I thank all the allied health workers for their service and commitment to ensuring better health for all Territorians. Their remarkable work and specialist knowledge are critical to the delivery of healthcare services in all parts of the Northern Territory. Congratulations to all the nominees and award winners. Thank you for the work that you do across the Territory; your work is valued.

Madam Speaker, while I am on my feet, I ask that any further questions be placed on the Written Question Paper.

REORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 59, I move that the Assembly now consider Government Business Order of the Day number 1.

Motion agreed to.

TAKE TWO BILLS TOGETHER
Electricity System and Market Operator Bill
and Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill

Mr MALEY (Minister for Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I seek leave for the debate on the second reading of the Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025, Serial 35, and the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025, Serial 36, be taken cognate.

Leave granted.

ELECTRICITY SYSTEM AND MARKET OPERATOR BILL
Serial 35
and
ELECTRICITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MARKET REFORM) BILL
Serial 36

Continued from 3 September 2025.

Mr MALEY (Minister for Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I move that the Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025, Serial 35, and the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025, Serial 36, be now read a second time.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, we support the cognate Bills because it makes sense. Thank you, Deputy Chief Minister, for clearing that up because we assumed that these Bills would have a similar aspect.

The primary objective for the electricity sector has always been clear: to promote the effective and efficient investment in the operation and the use of our electricity services across the Northern Territory now and in the long term for the interests of the consumers of electricity, the Territorians we represent. The Labor opposition supports this. That means acting in the best interests of Territorians in regard to the price, quality, safety and reliability of supply, the security and stability of our local electricity systems, and ensuring the Territory makes a meaningful and lasting transition to renewable energy.

These are not abstract principles; they are the foundation of good energy policy, and they are the standards against which any government should be judged. Unfortunately, we have seen this CLP government walk away from every one of these important principles. So far its record in this area is patchy at best, and in reality it is woeful. This will make a big difference for the Territory into the future.

The CLP's so-called battery grants were nothing more than a one-off election bribe. They lasted less than a year and benefited only a handful of Territorians. The CLP government did nothing meaningful to expand solar use across the Territory, and I do not think it will over the next three years. It will be a base-level sugar hit timed to win votes when the CLP does act again.

The CLP government doubled solar tariffs for periods when the sun does not shine. Perhaps the CLP thinks that the sun sets at nine o'clock in the Northern Territory. Maybe CLP members should move down south, as they tell people who do not like the way they are governing to do. This change is nonsensical, unfair and deeply offensive to Territorians who were promised by the CLP in opposition and throughout the election campaign that it would double solar feed-in tariffs for peak times. Everyone knows the peak times are from 6 am to 6 pm. Instead, the CLP backpedalled and backflipped and broke its election commitment to Territorians.

Some Territorians spoke out regarding the single issue that they may have voted for, which was doubling the solar feed-in tariffs. Instead, their broken election commitment resulted in the feed-in times going from 6 pm to 9 pm—a three-hour window and not in the peak times that everyone expected.

Then there are changes to power prices that have punished everyday Territory families. Central Australians who need heaters to get through freezing winter nights are now being slugged unfairly. Families in rural areas who rely on bore pumps for their water have also been hit with these increases. The CLP promised to restore the Territory lifestyle, but they have punished the hip pockets of Territorians who live in rural areas and those who endure our coldest winters.

I agree that the government reforms to the electricity market are necessary. We need a clear framework for planning, procurement and system control. These reforms are meant to facilitate an orderly and efficient transition to renewable energy. That is what the intent of these two pieces of legislation should be: a system that gives investors certainty, consumers fairness and the Territory a pathway to a cleaner, more sustainable future for the energy mix.

Here is the problem: this work is being led by a CLP government that has shown no belief in renewable energy, no commitment to energy emissions reduction and no vision on climate action. This is the same CLP government that proudly scrapped the renewable energy target without a single plan of replacement. It claimed to believe in climate change then acted otherwise, and it also misled Territorians about the government's intention on emission reductions. It is more than a little surprising to see the government members push through the reforms that, on paper, are designed to support the transition that they spent years undermining when they were in opposition. It is the height of hypocrisy.

They are happy to say the words 'market reform', but they cannot bring themselves to say the words—I will say it again, the dirty word for the CLP—'renewable energy target'. It is bizarre that the minister responsible for this legislation, in his introductory speech, refused to say the words 'renewables' or 'solar'; those words were completely omitted from the introduction of this legislation. It reminds me of a time when the CLP government was last in and banned the use of the words 'climate change'. It is phenomenal; it reminds me of that era.

This legislation is exactly what needs to happen for the Territory to bring more renewables into the energy market. They are about ensuring that three key electricity systems—the Darwin–Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs grids—have the most cost-effective reliable energy mix sources, including renewable sources.

The legislation is about ensuring that it is planned out well in advance, so we get the best possible deal for Territorians, regardless of which energy source is used. It is a great idea. I wonder where CLP members got that idea from, because they did not come up with it by themselves. The work has been done over the last couple of years, already in place, and that is why we support the legislation.

The minister can roll out the CLP robot lies that he has been given by his media adviser and advisers upstairs regarding action, certainty or whatever it is they keep droning on about, but the work was well in train because of the hands of control behind the scenes, which was thankfully not the government but the hard workers in

the Energy department and the three government-owned corporations. We talked about this just yesterday; the CLP is 12 months behind the ball. So much for action and certainty. Shame job.

I seek leave to table the following document—no, I did that yesterday. Yesterday, I tabled …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Ms UIBO: Do not get so excited. My goodness. I was going to talk about the Territory Electricity Market Overview Paper, but I spoke about that yesterday because, guess what? The CLP government ran out of legislation this week, so it had to fill the two hours. It was pretty embarrassing. We heard the doom and gloom, the dire state of the electricity market in the Territory and how it will be life threatening.

When I asked the Deputy Chief Minister, 'Who gave you that advice? Should we panic because everyone will be in a dire state?' the answer was, 'No-one gave me that advice. I just said it and did a media drop to the *NT News* to make sure they report on it so we can prime everyone up about something terrible happening, but nobody actually gave me that advice. I'm the Deputy Chief Minister, responsible to the Crown, who swore an oath to the NT about all the work I should be doing, but I didn't get any advice about that. I'm just saying it because it's just common sense that we'll all be in a life-threatening situation because of our electricity market.'

It was a huge slap in the face to all our energy networks, the experts in the field, everyone who does amazing work in our government departments and everyone who does technical work in the government-owned corporations—Power and Water, Territory Generation and Jacana, the retailer. All those experts, and not a single one of them has given the Deputy Chief Minister advice that there are life-threatening blackouts at hand.

There is no basis on that panicked doom-and-gloom statement by Deputy Chief Minister, and not a single piece of advice. When asked about the regulator he said, 'The regulator hasn't said anything'. The Australian regulator for the energy market, who is responsible for all jurisdictions and guidelines in the country—making sure the Territory is not left behind. There was not a single warning from them either, so where has this come from?

It has come from the fifth floor. It sounds good, so the Deputy Chief Minister ran with it, with no basis whatsoever, to frighten Territorians. If you experience a blackout in the next couple of months, in the wild weather of summer and the Wet Season, then nobody will complain to the government because he said that it would happen. We know it will happen, unfortunately, but in this pre-cyclone season we particularly thank the great men and women of the Power and Water, who are literally the ones putting their life on the line—the linesmen and women—in storms, cyclones and power blackouts to restore lights and energy when it goes out for different reasons.

It is a timely reminder to Territorians that whilst it can be frustrating when power surges and blackouts happen, there are men and women behind the scenes working day-in and day-out, night-time and daytime, to restore the supply of energy and electricity to us in our houses, businesses and workplaces. It is an opportune time to speak about their patience but also the thanks and appreciation for those men and women for the work they do.

We talk about energy efficiency and the work done over the last couple of years. The document I tabled yesterday was dated February 2024. That was months before the election. If you want a good summary of these Bills, I highly recommend reading that document if you have not already—I hope everyone has done their work on the government side. It will be on the *Parliamentary Record*, of course, as it was tabled yesterday. Reading that document provides a good understanding and setting for why this legislation has been brought before the House. That would be the best source of truth and information for people who are not necessarily across it.

It is a technical space. It took me a lot of learning when I held the portfolio previously, but it is such an important part to get right when for the Territory's energy supply today and in the short, medium and long term. One area is the public procurement model. The minister spruiked that in his introductory speech, but a lot came in before that. It was considered the best and most pragmatic option for improving renewable energy integration to ensure a secure, reliable and affordable energy future for the Territory. It is all there in the document.

I am gobsmacked at the immaturity and hypocrisy of Minister Maley in refusing to utter the word 'renewables' in the context of this important legislation, the two Bills we are debating cognately. It begs the question: who is the Deputy Chief Minister trying to appease by refusing to acknowledge the transition to renewables? Does he fear being called a greenie if he says the word 'renewables'? I do not know; hopefully, he will address that in his wrap-up speech.

'Renewables' is not a dirty word; it should not be looked at as a negative thing. We know that diesel generation and gas are required to have that stable energy mix. Territorians are not silly; they know that. It should be talked about openly, particularly by the Energy minister. It is shameful. How can the CLP members claim to be listening to Territorians—particularly young Territorians who are interested in the environment and renewables—when they cannot even go out to face them, talk to them and look them in the eye and say that this government supports renewables? It would be great to see that. I would love to be proven wrong on that, so if the government can talk about renewables, I am all for it.

The minister created a whole lot of fluff about the reasons for this. We are all adults; we are all big people in here, so you can talk about the things that will make a difference for the future of the Territory. That is the government's job. The Labor opposition wants to support good things. It was so bizarre that yesterday the same fearmongering and lines were trotted out in the ministerial report by the Deputy Chief Minister. Who was that performance for? We do not understand. We have no problem with the reforms; we support them.

We started some of the reform work, and we are honoured to see the CLP government continue it. It is about the transition to renewables—make no mistake about it—so why try to deny it? It is beyond belief. It is bizarre. Territorians will get mixed signals. There will be uncertainty for the industry and investors if on the one hand the government says and does one thing, but on the other hand it does not acknowledge the work and action of this legislation. That is a clear example.

I expect that the minister addresses that in his reply. Territorians deserve to know where the CLP government stands on supporting renewables for that important energy mix. We have already said that there has to be a mix. We acknowledge, understand and support that, but please, if government members could stop misleading Territorians by saying that it is not a part of what this important legislation is aimed at, that would be much appreciated.

When the reforms in this legislation are broken down it is clear that there are some strong points about attracting generation investment to the Territory energy market. That is great. The government needs to support that process for industry and have a clear strategic plan about energy needs and the mix of sources for the optimal benefit of all Territorians, businesses and industries. We need to ensure that the market response is fit for purpose and that asset infrastructure can meet those needs not just now, and not just the loading that is required in peak times, but also in the future.

Understanding that balance is something to really wrap your head around. CLP backbenchers, if you have not had a briefing from your minister, please do. It is interesting work that the department and the three government-owned corporations (GOCs) are leading, with some of the private investors in the Territory.

I will go mad if I keep hearing about the solar farms, because there are clearly people in this Chamber who do not understand the pressures of connectivity of those large-scale solar farms. They are a great story for the Territory. They were frustratingly slow …

Mr Kerle: Planning is what you guys should have done. You should have planned it.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Ms UIBO: I understand the ignorance and lack of understanding by the Member for Blain. It has been more complex and will continue to be. That is why this legislation is so important. It is to enable more connectivity to bring in some of those external market providers to the energy mix.

The six large-scale solar farms around the Territory were frustratingly slow to come online. It was the first time in the Northern Territory's history to have large-scale solar connectivity brought into the energy mix. So much needed to change in the market settings, the balance of the grid and making sure the system was not overloaded or underloaded. There is a fine balance in being able to understand that requirement. The experts in our government-owned corporations, our energy department and in private industry were looking at bringing those new products of large-scale solar to market. We have one just outside of Katherine.

We were able to follow that journey and understand why it was not just a case of, 'The solar panels are done. Plug them in and off you go.' There was a huge amount of work on being able to deal with private investors, the government-owned corporations and residential energy going into the grid as well. There were a lot of factors. I hope the ministers responsible—the three ministers hopefully; the Essential Services minister, the Treasurer and the Energy minister—have continued on that learning journey of government and the GOCs, because energy is not a simple thing.

The good thing is this legislation provides more of the settings for some clear markers of how the future processes of renewables coming in, particularly large-scale solar farms—a big example that many people would be familiar with—can be connected. It is a good way forward. I am glad the CLP government has not scrapped this important work. It will allow for better and more streamlined process now and into the future, particularly when we look at attracting more private investment to the energy sources in the Northern Territory.

Investors will not put their money into any jurisdiction without that clear pathway and clear signals from government that it is supported, red tape will be removed and there are clear guidelines they can work within. Families will not invest in their personal rooftop solar. They think there is nothing in it for them, and they do not understand the government's plan to have safeguards for energy source and supply. That is why the mixed signals with the government's messaging this week can be incredibly dangerous. It is almost a bit of whiplash.

When it comes to climate change and the work that needs to continue to be underpinned by government, it will either be a legacy that can be celebrated or it will be damning on the Northern Territory's energy market.

Look at climate change as an example. Before the election the CLP promised Territorians that it had a plan for emissions reduction. It said the right thing to voters before August 2024, but interestingly, after the election those promises disappeared pretty quickly into thin air. Territorians are now paying the price of a government that cannot tell the truth when it comes to energy or climate.

We have already talked about the power price hikes for schools in this House this week. Basically, it was by stealth. It is another example of the underhanded way the government has conducted itself when it does not have real and clear energy policies to guide it. The government snuck in those power price hikes for Territory schools without warning and dumped the bill on the Education department for it to pick up.

Instead of resources for schools, Territory kids, teachers, principals and school staff which could have made a positive impact on the community, the government chucked them energy bills without notice or warning. People found out after the fact. It was a cowardly move by the CLP, forcing our Territory schools to find the money from their stretched budgets, hurting teachers and students alike when it comes to resourcing our schools—such as with the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement struck by the former Territory Labor government and Albanese Labor government.

Local government councils will cop the same. The power tariff subsidy will be removed, and they will find themselves with massively hiked power bills.

It sounds like the truth hurts over there, because the CLP has no vision for the Territory's energy future. Anything put forward is the legacy of the former Labor government, but eventually, the CLP government will run out of things that we started which it can claim, and it will have to start thinking of its own plans and legislation. Let's hope that the CLP will use the Christmas and New Year period to do good work for the Territory.

This legislation is the culmination of work by a number of departments. I commend the work of the Power and Water Corporation, which has made a huge effort in bringing forward these two Bills. Obviously, it has a footprint in our urban, regional and remote areas. The vision that was given a number of years ago has definitely come to fruition, and we commend the collegial work of the GOCs and the Energy department. A huge congratulations to everyone behind the scenes.

This complex work has not been plucked out of nowhere. It was not magically started 14 months ago when the CLP came to government. We are proud of the work that Territory Labor led, and the CLP continued to work on the legislation diligently, even though it should have come into the House this time last year. It is fortunate that the bulk of the work was done, which meant that the CLP could not back out. The 14 months to catch up on everything has meant that the government realises that this is good for the Territory. Otherwise, it would have been directionless about the energy future and the market in the Northern Territory.

The CLP is one year behind in these reforms. This is indicative of a government which has no long-term plan or pathways for renewables beyond what our diligent public servants have forged on with in the background. Obviously, the government has not paid much attention to them. Thankfully the work they have done has been recognised, and we will see the legislation come into effect so that more good work from our public servants can continue.

There has been nothing but short-term stunts. There is no strategy and planning for energy from the CLP government. We need to show businesses certainty—which is one of the CLP's buzzwords for the year. Families need to have confidence that the government is doing what it should. The Territory's reputation as a place of energy investment will be undermined; it has already with the toing and froing and the hypocrisy of the government, which Territorians do not deserve. They need much more from the government about long-term planning, not just a headline that looks good or bad depending on the government's angle of fearmongering or celebrating the years of work that culminated in this legislation.

Renewables are not just good for the environment, but they are critical for lowering Territorians' bills, attracting that important investment I spoke about earlier and ensuring the Territory's economic future is planned properly. Territorians deserve a government that takes seriously the responsibility for energy reliability and stability for the Northern Territory to keep power affordable, reliable and sustainable, and to protect consumers. It is important to protect Territorians' hip pockets in this high cost of living to ensure everyone is prepared and the systems are fit for purpose now and into the future.

Given the highly technical nature of both Bills and the fact that we, the Labor opposition, support the substance of this legislation and the work commissioned by the former Labor government, we were supportive of more continued work when it comes to the future of the Territory's energy mix.

I have a couple of questions of the minister that I hope he will answer in his wrap-up of the Bill in specific detail:

1. Could the minister explain why he has deliberately avoided using the words 'renewables' and 'solar' when both Bills are clearly about enabling that in the energy mix?

2. Could the minister confirm for industry and Territorians that these reforms about ensuring that we have the most cost effective and most reliable mix of energy sources that our powering our energy networks, and does the mix include solar, thermal and other renewable sources.

3. When will the minister think that the separation with NTESMO will be up and running, and is there a timeframe for that to happen, considering it is one year behind the original timeframe?

4. Could the minister be transparent in why there was a process of scaremongering yesterday that overshadowed the good work being brought to the House, and is there a link between the two?

It has confused people. I have spoken publicly about this because we support this Bill, but we were concerned about the comments in the House through the minister's report yesterday. I think it has overshadowed the good work that the CLP government continues by bringing those two in. It has confused Territorians. Will there be a communication to Territorians about the cognate Bills and what they mean, because people are confused with the different articles that were dropped in the newspaper yesterday?

The Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025 and its companion Bill are an opportunity to set a new direction for the Territory's electricity market system. It is to provide Territorians with a fairer system and it will provide the ability for the government, should it choose, to have a strategy and a clear energy policy for the next two years while they are governing.

We want to make sure the record concerning energy is not tainted or severed because of the changes of government. We want to ensure that Territorians will not be whacked with a 30% power increase for their bills, like what happened the last time the CLP was in government. We believe Territorians deserve better.

The work of the two cognate Bills is important to ensure there is Territory investment, stability and sustainability in the Northern Territory energy market. Additionally, we could bring on new sources of energy into the mix for the supply and demand to support Territorians residentially and commercially, our small, medium and large businesses, and the opportunities to grow the energy and commercial industry that supplies the energy market in the Northern Territory. We think this is an exciting story for the Northern Territory. We hope that the light on this good story does not dim.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I support the CLP government's electricity market reform legislation. I listened again to the Leader of the Opposition trying to rewrite history. There is a reason we brought this legislation forward, and it was clear from the reports of the Utilities Commissioner, who provided advice to the previous Labor government, that there was much work to be done on our energy system, including NTESMO and RESIP. The previous government chose not to follow that advice. We did. We sat down with the Utilities Commissioner and looked at all that work. We have moved quickly to introduce this Bill.

I listened to the contribution from the Leader of the Opposition regarding renewables. I support renewables; I have no issues with renewables, but I will not do it at any cost. We will do it smartly.

Labor rushed into renewables and started pushing out solar farms but did not do the work needed at the back of the system to make sure the system was stable. Labor rushed into putting in the solar farms but did not do the work to make sure there was enough battery backup and synchronous condensers to ensure the stability of the network. If they just bought them online, it would have crashed the system.

These reforms are not just good energy policy, but they are good economic policy. The spinout of the Northern Territory Electrical System and Market Operator (NTESMO), the execution of the Regulated Electricity Supply Investment Plan (RESIP) and the introduction of a new public procurement model, are just the start of the affordable and reliable energy future the CLP is making possible for the Territory.

These reforms strike at the heart of how we manage public money, protect Territorians and local businesses from cost-of-living pressures and rebuild confidence in the Northern Territory as an energy investment destination.

For too long our electricity system has been treated as a technical problem that Labor failed to fix. Under the CLP government we recognise that a strong energy future for Territorians relies on a well-functioning electricity market. With the Territory's electricity market falling apart after eight years of Labor and Territorians having to front the cost of this failure, these reforms seek to address that.

The way the Territory's current electricity market operates could not be further from the way that it should be operating. When it comes to cost, there is a clear disconnect between the cost of generating electricity and what Territorians and local businesses are paying for it.

I am talking about how much the government is quietly footing the Bill to keep the Territory's electricity bills artificially low through the government's CSO subsidy. This is a problem which is weighing down our budget. Community service obligations (CSOs) are government subsidies that reduce Territorians energy bills by approximately 50%.

In the current financial year, the Territory budget has to swallow a $51m increase to our CSO. If it were not for our government's CSOs, a single person's household would be paying approximately $1,400 more for their energy bill. For couples, it would be $1,800 and more for a family of four, at about $1,900.

To maintain this level of cost-of-living support, the CLP Finocchiaro government's first budget allocated $192m to the CSO so that Territorians do not have to dig into their pockets to cover the cost of Labor's failures. That is real cost-of-living support for everyday Territorians.

The savings our government makes for Territorians on their energy bills is proportional to the cost of energy bills. The lower the cost to generate energy, the lower the cost passed on to Territorians and the less our government has to subsidise these costs.

Through the reforms being debated today the CLP is working to narrow the gap between what it costs to generate electricity and what it costs Territorians to use it.

With an efficient market system and investment in new efficient assets that drives down generation costs, these reforms under the CLP set Territorians up for a future where they can more easily afford their energy bill due to downward pressure on costs by our government. That is a win for our electricity system. It is a win for Territorians and, effectively, it is a large win for the Territory's bottom line.

Getting control of our electricity costs is not just about ledgers and lines; it is about what Territorians miss out on when our government has to prop up Labor's neglect of our electricity market. Treasury modelling shows that every $10m increase in the CSO is equivalent to roughly 40 additional nurses or 60 police officers who we could otherwise employ.

As this CLP government works to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our Territory lifestyle, the skyrocketing costs of energy and, consequently, our CSO is another Labor failure we cannot afford not to fix. Without structural change in our electricity market, the CSO will rise more quickly than inflation and revenue combined. With such unsustainable growth, the Territory is not just missing out on having more nurses and police officers; we are missing out on funding for schools, hospitals and roads. Something has to give.

This is not a budget black hole that we can just climb out of as our economy recovers; this is a structural deficit that threatens the Territory's future financial viability. These Bills reshape the Territory's electricity market and give us the means to ensure that this does not become the case by putting downward pressure on our electricity bills and CSO payments, getting that back down to earth.

It was not the CLP that got us to this point. Under the previous Labor government there was no strategic oversight of electricity investment. Under Labor, the Territory's electricity market was left to its own devices, and Territorians have had to pay for this disorganisation ever since. Territory Generation, Power and Water and Jacana have always had Territorians' best interests in mind, but with no overarching plan for our electricity system, each pursued their own projects in isolation. This duplicated costs and effort. After eight years of government, it is clear that Labor did not plan for anything and, unfortunately, the Territory's electricity market was no different.

Instead, Labor pushed ahead with its ideological 50% renewables by 2030 target, ignoring the problems that were plaguing the Territory's electricity market. What was the result? Solar farms were stranded because they could not connect safely to the grid and ageing gas turbines were still running at the end of their design life, with no sense of urgency to fix them. Blackouts across Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs cost businesses their productivity and families their comfort.

This should not be news to those opposite because the Utilities Commission, our independent regulator, had been warning them about this for years. Its 2024 Electricity Outlook Report identifies immediate reliability risks in the Alice Springs grid and a medium risk in the Darwin–Katherine system. This is not good enough for the CLP, and it is not good enough for Territorians. Territorians do not need more political promises; they need action, and the CLP is delivering this for them in our year of action, certainty and security.

Today our government is acting by moving forward these reforms so that the future Electricity Outlook Report may paint a more positive view of our electricity system. To get this work underway, the Electricity System and Market Operator Bill spins NTESMO out of PWC to make it a standalone, independent statutory corporation.

I cannot stress the importance of this reform enough. The CLP is not adding another layer of bureaucracy to our electricity system and further bogging it down in more inefficiency. Instead, NTESMO will do exactly as its name states, coordinating system planning, procurement and operations across the Territory's regulated networks. It will bring technical expertise and fiscal oversight to our electricity market under one roof, taking it out of isolation in our three current GOCs.

NTESMO will be responsible for the RESIP, a 10-year master plan for coordinating least-cost electricity investment across our regulated networks. This plan sets out what assets we need and when we need to get them. For the first time, the Territory will have a single investment road map to replace the random reactive approach that dominated under Labor.

By reducing duplication and improving procurement efficiency under the RESIP, this government expects a reduction in generation costs. These cost savings will not happen overnight, of course, but Territorians and our local businesses could have felt these benefits sooner if Labor had got on with the job of fixing our electricity market over the last eight years rather than neglecting it.

As Treasurer, I will have a role to play in approving GOC investments under the RESIP to ensure that Territorians are getting value from their public institutions. However, with the price of emergency gas for electricity generation being one of the main contributors to our fiscal deficit, NTESMO and its ownership of the RESIP will ensure that the GOCs take on the right projects at the right costs, bringing fiscal discipline back to our energy system for the benefit of Territorians. With NTESMO at the helm of our new and improved electricity market, the RESIP will create a pathway to stabilise electricity bills and our budget's bottom line.

The CLP is serious about rebuilding our economy. The central planning and procurement process introduced under the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill provides a clear gateway for new investors to play their part in rebuilding our economy as well.

This central procurement model takes the RESIP and puts it into play. Our electricity market is small, with our government-owned corporations playing an outsized role in energy generation, transmission and distribution.

Most private involvement in our electricity market is electricity generation in the Darwin–Katherine system. Under Labor, these private operators struggled to get connected to the grid. Going forward, when investors come to the Territory, a centralised procurement model provides a clear entry point for them to be involved and bring their capital to the Territory.

The opposition was up in the clouds when it came to what the Territory's electricity market actually needed. However, with the recent blackouts and the challenges we face with ageing infrastructure, this CLP government is quickly bringing Labor down to earth. With this legislation, the CLP is taking the politics out of our electricity system and bringing a level procurement playing field into play.

The Territory has everything a private investor could want: abundant gas and sunlight for solar. This new model aligns investor appetite with the Territory's natural capital and shepherds their capital to where our energy system needs it.

The CLP is the only party which is serious about getting the Territory's energy house in order. We inherited a dysfunctional, costly electricity market in decline and a fiscal position under pressure. Through this Bill, we are changing our electricity market for the better. This legislation is about ensuring that the lights stay on and the books stay balanced.

This is real, once-in-a-generation reform that completely changes the paradigm our electricity market operates in. We are spinning out NTESMO. We have a plan for the Territory's electricity market under the RESIP. We are safeguarding the budget so the CSO and what the cost-of-living mechanism should be, and not a bandaid to stem the bleed of Labor's electricity market failures.

We are restoring confidence in the Territory, providing a clear mandate for the role of government-owned corporations and what they should be doing by playing in our market. We are positioning the Territory to be the energy investment partner of choice. We have investors from all over Australia and the world lining up to invest in the energy market in the Northern Territory because they can see the benefits.

I commend these Bills to the Assembly.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I will be clear from the outset that I am not objecting to the content of these Bills. The technical reforms proposed are largely sound, and the creation of a more coordinated planning framework through the RESIP has real potential to improve how we invest in the Territory's energy future.

That is precisely my point. This is a significant opportunity to set the direction for our electricity system for decades to come. We heard yesterday about the extreme pressure and stress that our electricity system is under and the threat that it puts all Territorians to. When we have that kind of opportunity in front of us, we need to make sure that we are using it to its full potential. The issue is not what is in the Bills; the issue is what has been dropped from them—strangely, any clear commitment to renewable energy as part of the Territory's future electricity system. That is not a fatal flaw in the legislation, but it is a missed opportunity. In the context of where the Territory is heading economically, environmentally and in terms of liveability it is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

This is not about opposing reform; it is about making sure that the reform we are undertaking sets us up for success. The RESIP framework gives us a chance to plan strategically to coordinate investment and think long term about what our electricity system needs to deliver. This is an opportunity for us to use it properly. Let's make sure that when we are building this new planning framework, we are building it with clear goals that reflect not just market efficiency but also the Territory's need for affordable power, reliable supply and a system that can withstand the climate challenges that we are already facing. The technical structure this Bill creates is good, but structure without direction is not enough. We need to know where we are going, and we need to make sure that where we are going is somewhere worth getting to.

These Bills allow for the creation of a new electricity planning process, the RESIP. This plan will guide decisions on how electricity generation is procured in the Territory with oversight from the Northern Territory Electricity System and Market Operator and a new planning and investment review panel. The structure itself is no cause for alarm. It centralises planning and could bring more coordination to how we invest in generation, storage and transmission.

There is one critical omission. Nowhere in the stated objectives of the RESIP is there a commitment to growing renewable energy generation. That is not a minor oversight. The original reform papers from 2020 and 2024 made it clear that expanding renewables was a goal. The updated legislation has removed that principle quietly but completely.

In a jurisdiction like the Northern Territory with abundant solar resources, high electricity prices and pressing climate risks, the failure to explicitly support renewables is not just short sighted; it is a deliberate prioritisation of the gas industry at the expense of present and future livelihoods across the Northern Territory. The central procurement model being proposed means that future generation projects will need to apply to participate in the market and without clear policy direction. It is likely that investment decisions will be made on the basis of short-term commercial returns, not long-term environmental or community outcomes.

Although these Bills do not dismantle existing policy, they point the system away from a renewable-led transition towards a model where the market, rather than policy, decides what kind of electricity we want in the Northern Territory. In a market still dominated by gas infrastructure, that means we risk locking ourselves into the status quo rather than taking the opportunity to build something better. This is where the opportunity lies. We could use this legislation to send a clear signal that the Territory is serious about renewable energy, that we are planning for it and are creating a framework that actively supports it.

To understand why renewables matter, we need to step back and look at this in a broader context because, obviously, energy policy is not in a vacuum. The Northern Territory is already on the front line of climate change, and we are one of the regions least equipped to deal with it. Renewable energy is not optional for the Northern Territory's future; it is essential. The longer we treat it as something we will get to eventually, the harder and more expensive this transition becomes.

Anthropogenic, or human-caused, global heating is happening now. It is not a problem for some future generation. It is impacting on our people in the Northern Territory, our economy and our environment. Across the Territory there is already evidence of rising temperatures, longer and more intense heatwaves, prolonged droughts, the sea level rising, more destructive cyclones, unpredictable flooding, the spread of tropical disease and shrinking habitats for our plants and animals. These are not just weather events; they are life-and-death matters. People die in heatwaves, particularly in the extreme heat and humidity in the Northern Territory. As climate change intensifies, we risk more people dying from heat-related illness. These are preventable deaths if we act urgently to prevent future climate change.

Let me emphasise again that we are not talking about distant projections; these are real conditions happening now and they will only intensify. When we talk about one or two degrees of warming, we are talking about the average change across the country, and in climates like ours—tropical and equatorial climates—we experience the extremes of that range. Temperatures in climates like ours are already pushing the limits of human adaptation and liveability. The reality is that we will not be able to live here.

The effects of climate change extend beyond housing and heat stress. In April 2021 we heard from senior staff specialists at the Alice Springs Hospital and ANU researchers publishing research in the *Lancet* Review that 34% of doctors are considering leaving the Territory because of the effects of climate change. We know how much stress our health system is under. Imagine if this happened, the massive gap it would leave in our healthcare system.

Every part of the Northern Territory suffers from health worker shortages. Whether it is hospitals, NDIS services, remote clinics or dentists, we cannot afford to lose more health workers. We cannot afford to lose workers in any sector. We want to build our economy, workforce and population. If the NT becomes unliveable it will also become unvisitable. Our tourism season, already confined to the cooler months, will shrink further. Our private tourism sector will suffer, jobs will be lost, businesses will shut down and our broader economy will be hit hard.

I ask my fellow members, do you want to live in a Territory like this? I do not. We have an opportunity to prevent that happening by transitioning to renewable energy, reducing emissions and building a resilient affordable energy system that can meet our needs in a warming world.

What is frustrating is that we are not without options. In fact, we are in an extraordinarily strong position if we choose to use it. The Northern Territory is one of the sunniest regions in the country. Tennant Creek is the sunniest place in Oceania, with 297 sunny days a year. Alice Springs is fourth with 291 sunny days a year, Darwin is seventh with 250 days. We have enormous potential for solar generation backed by storage and smart grid technologies. With the right policy settings we could not only meet our own needs cleanly and

affordably, but potentially export clean power, expertise and innovation to other parts of the country and the world.

We have an environment that people travel from across the world to see. Tourists come for our wildlife, wetlands, rivers and seas, but climate change is already threatening those ecosystems, and if we do not act now we will not just be dealing with lost biodiversity but also with lost jobs, lost revenue and we will have lost our home to live in.

We know the Territory's economy is small and exposed. We cannot afford to bet on a gas-led recovery while ignoring the global shift towards renewable energy. Other jurisdictions are investing in renewables, not out of ideology but out of basic economic self-interest; we should be doing the same. Renewables are already the cheapest form of energy on the market, and they will only get cheaper. We do not want to end up as the only buyer left for gas, paying through the nose because demand has plummeted and gas companies are stuck trying to offload gas to a handful of buyers.

The world is moving away from gas for climate and economic reasons; it is time for us to do the same. Any energy plan that does not include renewables is a plan that locks Territorians into higher energy prices and catastrophic climate consequences. The answer is not evading us; the answer is renewables. Everyone outside this Chamber knows that, and it is time for the government to catch up.

My message to the government is this: if these Bills are about setting the foundations for a modern electricity market, let's make sure that the foundation supports the kind of future we need. That means including minimum renewable energy targets in the RESIP. We need clear, measurable commitments to growing renewable energy generation as part of the Territory's energy mix.

It means requiring genuine community consultation and not just industry consultation on the RESIP before it is finalised. The people who will live with these decisions deserve a say in them. Ensuring that the planning and investment review panel includes representation from community, consumer and environmental stakeholders, not just government and market players.

These are not radical demands; they are sensible improvements that will turn good technical legislation into genuinely transformative policy. These Bills are not bad, but they could be much better. They give us a structure for planning, but we need the vision for what we are planning towards. The question before us is not about market efficiency or regulatory frameworks, it is about what kind of Territory we want to build and whether we are willing to make the choices now that will give our children and grandchildren a liveable future.

We have the sun, the land, the technology, the economic imperative and the moral responsibility. What we need now is the political will to put renewable energy at the centre of this reform, not as an afterthought or something we will get to eventually but as a core, explicit, non-negotiable heart of our energy future.

This is an opportunity for us in this Chamber, so let's not waste it.

Mr EDGINGTON (Essential Services): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the electricity market reform legislation introduced by the Deputy Chief Minister. As the Minister for Essential Services, one of my core responsibilities is to ensure that Territorians are provided with a secure and reliable power supply. As repeatedly emphasised over the last few days, this has been a challenging task due to the dire state the former Labor government left our electricity grid in after eight years of neglect.

The Utilities Commission has long advised of the necessity and urgency of the reforms being debated today, reforms despite their critical urgency, the former government never got around to introducing. Those opposite claim to have started work on these reforms, but the fact of the matter is simple: these reforms were not delivered by the former Labor government. While Labor failed to deliver these critical reforms over its two terms in government, our CLP government understands how fundamental secure, reliable and affordable power is to almost every part of the Territory's economy and lifestyle.

When Territorians put their trust in the CLP 14 months ago, my colleague, the Deputy Chief Minister, got cracking on work to ensure our government delivered on its commitment to provide Territorians with secure, reliable and affordable power. The results of this hard work are on full display this afternoon, with passage of these Bills representing the first step in safeguarding the Territory's electricity system. These two Bills are critical to providing the electricity market reform the community, industry and the independent regulator have long requested.

With the support of the Chamber, this government will pass these Bills and take the first of many steps to reassure Territorians that they will not have to put up with interruptions and outages brought on by Labor's eight years of inaction, mismanagement and neglect.

Three areas of reform introduced in the Bill that I am most excited about are:

- the critical improvements to system planning through the definition of the Northern Territory's Electricity System and Market Operator's (NTESMO) responsibility to deliver a Regulated Electricity System Investment Plan (RESIP) and conduct wider whole-of-system planning

- move to a centralised public procurement model

- the formalised definition of Territory Generation's role in maintaining auxiliary services critical to stabilising the grid while also establishing a framework for the equitable cost sharing of these services across market participants.

The Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025 separates system control function from Power and Water Corporation and establishes NTESMO as an independent statutory corporation responsible for, amongst other things, whole-of-system planning.

Whole-of-system planning is of particular interest to me in my role as the Minister for Essential Services as it is a critical factor to ensuring the future system reliability that Territorians deserve. Delivering true reliability requires years of strong government oversight, decisive action and a sustained pipeline of investment that replaces ageing assets, strengthens transmission and storage, and builds new generation and firming capacity.

Although it would have been better for the Territory's electricity system's reliability if the previous government had passed whole-of-system planning legislation years ago, as was recommended to it, it did not do this. That is why it is critical that this government takes action where Labor failed and passes the Bills put forward by the Deputy Chief Minister.

Our government has decided, based on expert advice, that the best framework for this whole-of-system planning is through a RESIP developed and centrally procured by NTESMO at the direction of a mandate by the minister for Energy.

The RESIP will determine the portfolio of required investments in capacity and essential systems services in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs and regulate electricity systems to ensure system security, reliability and supply at least cost. This plan will be developed periodically for each of the regulated electricity systems and will specifically determine the optimised timing, location and scale of electricity assets required in a 10-year forward plan. The legislated assurance that whole-of-system planning will be conducted by NTESMO through the introduction of the RESIP will ensure that in the future our grid will be more reliable.

To provide context on why these Bills are necessary and particularly why the establishment of legislated whole-of-system planning is critical, I will refer to a case study that clearly demonstrates what can go wrong when critical planning does not occur. I refer to the eight years the Territory spent under the previous Labor government.

Although whole-of-system planning for electricity systems may seem like an obvious function of government, the Territory has over the last eight years observed the failures of a Labor government that neglected to conduct whole-of-system planning or, if it did, failed to get meaningful results or tangible benefits for Territorians.

Yesterday I informed the Assembly of Labor's failure to finalise a plan to replace Channel Island's ageing generators as they approach end of life. To summarise my previous contribution, due to a lack of forward planning by the Labor government, Channel Island's original gas generators are still operating after nearly 40 years, elevating the risk of mechanical failure and system trips, increasing the likelihood of blackouts.

The truth is that due to Labor's planning failure, it is not just Darwin's grid currently facing stability issues. Do not just take my word for it. Power and Water published a list of current system constraints, all of which can be directly linked to Labor's planning failures.

By way of background, system constraints are notifications designed to give market participants warning that system control may need to act in order to secure and stabilise the power system. There are several

longstanding system constraints dating back to Labor's time in office which affect system participants in the Darwin–Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs generation, transmission and distribution networks. It appears that Labor did not conduct much in the way of system planning to provide future respite from these constraints.

The Alice Springs Power Station has been operating under constraint restrictions since 2019, before Labor even commenced its second term in government. Due to this constraint, there are times when Power and Water system control needs to curtail rooftop and utility solar in Alice Springs to maintain grid stability and reliability. This is not a good outcome for large-scale solar generators that have invested in Alice Springs or anyone in Alice Springs with solar installed on their roof, who can have their solar exports turned off at any time.

Labor had five years to plan and implement solutions to alleviate grid concerns in Alice, yet this constraint remains. Tennant Creek, due to grid instability, has also been operating under a generation restriction since 2019. As the Deputy Chief Minister reminded the Assembly yesterday, in the 18 months the Opposition Leader was Minister for Essential Services, Tennant Creek was classed as the most stable of the Territory's grids.

Considering the size of Tennant Creek grid, and the aforementioned relative stability, you would think that Labor would have at least tried to address the issues faced, yet from the records and information available to me, I have found little to no evidence that the Labor government or now Opposition Leader took any action to resolve Tennant Creek's stability issues.

Due to Labor's neglect, the Darwin–Katherine grid, amongst other challenges, is currently facing system controllers placing major system constraints on the system, with many in place since 2020 and 2021 up until today. These include generation restrictions, put in place to account for increasing rooftop solar penetration to ensure that the system retains adequate minimum spinning reserve for grid stability, and that once system demand falls below 100 megawatts, capping solar exports at zero megawatts takes place to ensure baseload gas units can continue to operate effectively in periods of low system load.

Labor's failure to address system constraints across the three regulated electricity networks is inexcusable and further exemplifies the former government's lack of a credible plan for the Territory's electricity systems. I have to say, while it may be inexcusable, a lack of action is not out of character for the former Labor government. While Labor failed to plan or act, the approximately 80% of Territorians living in a regulated grid can rest assured that the CLP government is taking direct action to clean up Labor's mess.

The RESIP legislated in the electricity market reform Bills our government's concrete response to ensure the system constraint issues currently faced by our three regulated systems are adequately addressed.

As I outlined earlier, this will be achieved through the implementation of the RESIP framework, which will determine a portfolio of required investments in capacity and essential system services tailored for each of the Darwin–Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek grids. Once this portfolio is presented, this government will move rapidly to implement the plan so we can stabilise the grids, reduce curtailment and restore confidence in our electricity system.

I am anticipating that some members opposite are trying to justify that they did have a whole-of-system electricity plan for the Territory, namely their farcical plan for 50% renewable generation by 2030. I urge those members to spare us the justification, because Labor could not even get the basics right when planning for projects and the system stability needed for the pursuit of their 50% renewables target.

As we all remember, in 2016 Labor came to government promising to increase the Territory's renewable energy generation from 4% to 50% by 2030. Power and Water Corporation's 2023 Future Network Strategy reveals that the majority of this 50% renewable generation would come from large-scale solar installations. But Labor clearly did not do the whole-of-system planning work to see that they had everything in place to reach this target.

They neglected the fact that for large-scale solar to be added to the grid, their capacity needs to be firmed, adequate transmission capacity needs to be in place to dispatch electricity from the solar farms and the system's strength must be increased in order to maintain grid stability. Firming the grid to integrate large-scale solar requires targeted investment. This includes battery storage to provide fast, short-term contingency energy dispatch and frequency support to smooth variable solar output and bridge gaps during evening demand peaks.

Synchronist condensers—assets designed to increase system strength by supplying rotational inertia and stabilising voltage, enabling safe connection of inverter-based generation such as solar. More simply, synchronist condensers help the grid to remain stable during shifting electricity generation and demand load periods. Combined, these measures lower the outage risk and maintain power system reliability needed to allow for the commissioning of additional solar capacity.

However, without a robust planning and coordination process like that specified in the electricity market reform Bills, Labor failed in all regards to deliver these projects in parallel with solar capacity coming online. Labor failed to deliver either a synchronist condenser or large-scale battery project while it was in office.

Only when the CLP government came into office was critical firming capacity delivered in the form of a 35-megawatt Darwin–Katherine Battery Energy Storage System nine years after the former Labor government first had the chance to start implementing these essential technologies.

Due to Labor's failure to sufficiently invest in the firming infrastructure required for additional solar generation to be safely integrated into the grid, when it came time for major solar projects to be commissioned—including projects located at Batchelor, Katherine and Manton—they were prevented from exporting to the grid and left idle because of the former government's neglect of whole-of-system planning.

Before I make my closing remarks, I wish to highlight one more element in the energy market reforms that has not been discussed yet but demonstrates the CLP's commitment to equitable cost sharing in our electricity system. In this, I will briefly outline the importance of the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025 in defining a role for Territory Generation in providing ancillary services critical to maintaining a stable and reliable electricity system and ensuring TGen has the ability to cost recover from energy networks for the supply of this critical service.

Prior to the introduction of the Bill there was no formalised cost structure for providing the Territory with these critical stabilising ancillary services. Territory Generation has been performing this service and absorbing all cost, with the shortfall ultimately transferred to taxpayers. Other market participants benefiting from the arrangement were not charged for the services Territory Generation provided.

What this Bill changes is that in addition to defining Territory Generation as the provider of ancillary services, it also provides the framework and mechanisms for the costs associated with delivering the service to be recovered by TGen.

The energy market reform Bills mark a fundamental shift in the Territory's energy future. After eight years of underinvestment and stalled reform under Labor, the Territory's regulated electricity systems were left in a dire state.

The Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025 and the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025 provide the long overdue changes to the way our three regulated electricity systems operate. Our government is committed to providing Territorians with the secure, reliable and affordable power that we deserve.

I urge those in the Chamber to support the Bills. I commend the Bills to the Assembly.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker, first I thank the minister for bringing this important reform before the House.

For too long, Territorians have been left waiting for real leadership in the power sector. After years of neglect, uncertainty and delay under Labor, the CLP Finocchiaro government is finally doing the hard work to deliver stability, reliability and accountability in our electricity system.

These reforms are not about politics; they are about people. The are about keeping the lights on families in Nakara, Tiwi, Brinkin, Lyons, Muirhead, Lee Point and across the Territory, ensuring that small businesses in Casuarina can keep their doors open and giving every Territorian confidence that when they flick the switch the power will stay on.

I commend the minister for taking decisive action to modernise the electricity market, driving reform that balances investment and affordability and strengthening the system that Labor left in crisis. This government is getting on with the job of rebuilding the Territory, fixing what was broken, restoring confidence and delivering real results for Territorians. Thank you, minister, for your leadership in securing the future of power in the Northern Territory.

I will talk about something simple that every Territorian understands—keeping the lights on. A few weeks ago I met James, who runs a small business cafe in Casuarina. He has been serving coffee and smiles for more than a decade. He works hard and employs locals. He is proud of his little shop. One afternoon the power went out with no warning or reason. The fridge stopped, the ice melted, the air conditioner died and customers walked away. He lost a full day's income. When I visited him later he looked tired. He said, 'Khoda, I do everything right, but I cannot fight darkness'.

That is what we are really talking about today. Electricity is not a number on a bill; it is a small business staying open, a family keeping food cold, a child studying for school and safety for a hospital ward. It is not about the power poles and cables; it is about people, and yet for eight long years Labor ignored Territorians. It ignored the warnings from power industry experts, the ageing generators at Channel Island and the small business owners, like James, who suffered every time the grid went down. Labor did not act at all, not because it did not know, but because it did not care enough to make hard decisions for Territorians.

In eight years what did Labor do? Nothing. No new generators, no serious investment in our grid and no plan for our growing population. It left us with an ageing system, mounting costs and blackouts becoming a way of life. This is not leadership; this is neglect of Territorians.

When the CLP came to government last year, we walked into a mess. We found power stations with turbines built in the 1980s, before I was even born. We found solar farms waiting years for connections because of red tape. We found the community service obligation (CSO), the subsidy that keeps electricity affordable, blowing out to $192m. That is a $51m increase in just one year. We are not talking about the future; it is what happened in one year.

That money comes straight from Territorians' pockets. It is money that could have gone to our schools, hospitals and roads but was wasted because Labor could not manage the basics. It left Territorians paying more for less, so the CLP government acted quickly. In just one year, this CLP Finocchiaro government has done what Labor could not do in eight years. We delivered the Darwin–Katherine Battery Energy Storage System (DK BESS), the biggest battery in the Territory. When the blackout hit in September, it was the battery that saved the grid. It kicked in instantly and kept the lights on. Without it, people would have been sitting in the darkness for hours. That is what real action looks like.

We also extended the life of key generators at Channel Island—one to 2031 and another to 2035—giving us breathing room to build for the future. We introduced the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025, the first serious reform in over a decade to finally bring structure, accountability and stability back into the system. We have done more in 12 months than Labor did in eight years. Although Labor ignored Territorians, we are listening, and we are delivering for Territorians. Power reliability is not a luxury; it is a lifeline for Territorians.

In Katherine, families faced 6.7 outages last year, more than eight hours without electricity for every customer. In Darwin every Wet Season, storms knock out parts of the grid. In Casuarina I hear it all the time from families in Tiwi and Nakara who lose power during the storms and from business owners who cannot trade when the lights flicker. At Royal Darwin Hospital, every blackout is a potential crisis.

The average Territorian suffers 2.6 outages per year—more than double the national average. That is the cost of Labor's inaction and of being ignored. Then there is the other side: affordability. Power bills keep rising, and families are struggling. A mum in Tiwi told me she turns off the air con at night because she cannot afford the bill. An elderly couple in Nakara said that they sit with the lights dimmed to save money. That is not a choice; it is survival for some families.

When Labor left office, they left Territorians with high costs, no plan and a broken system that depends on ever-growing subsidies. Every dollar invested in inefficiency came from families that are already doing it tough. We are changing that. We are modernising our government-owned power corporations. We are cutting red tape so new solar projects can get connected faster. We are making sure that every dollar spent benefits Territorians, not bureaucracy. Affordable power is about fairness. It is about giving every family the right to live in comfort without fear of the next bill.

Let's not lose sight of the human stories. I met a single dad in Muirhead who works night shift to cover rising power costs. I have spoken with the local shop owners who run generators just to keep their doors open during the outages and I have seen older Territorians sitting in the heat, sweating through the night because they are too scared to use the air con. I am sure there are many more people across the Territory who are worried for their future and their children's future. These are the people Labor ignored and the people we are fighting for.

Now let's look ahead. The Territory's future depends on smart, stable and forward-looking investment in power. We are growing the economy with Defence expenditure. There are new homes in my electorate at Lee Point and Muirhead, and industry is setting up across the Top End. That means more demand. We need to plan ahead, not scramble at the last minute like Labor did.

The CLP is investing now, not waiting for another crisis. The DK BESS battery was just the start. We are building new generation capacity, expanding solar projects and preparing the grid for the future. We are creating jobs in renewable energy and training young Territorians to work in solar battery storage and energy management, because every new project we build delivers not only power but also opportunity. That is what real leadership looks like.

Let's remember that the NT stands alone in Australia. We are not connected to the east coast grid. We cannot import power when something breaks down. If the system fails here, we fix it ourselves. That is why we need strong, reliable infrastructure. We need to be a powerhouse and not depend on anyone.

Labor ignored that reality. It spent years pretending the problem would go away. We are facing it head on. We are securing fuel supply and planning for redundancy. We are building the systems that can withstand our harsh climate and growing demand. Energy security in the Territory is not optional; it is survival for Territorians.

Here is the difference: Labor had eight years and wasted it; the CLP Finocchiaro government has had one year and is rebuilding the system from the ground up. Labor ignored Territorians; we are listening to them. Labor made excuses; we are making decisions for Territorians. Labor left the lights flickering; we are keeping them on for all Territorians. It is that simple.

I speak about this with passion because I see it every day. When I walk through Casuarina Square, when I talk to families in Lyons and the parents at Nakara primary and when I visit seniors in Brinkin and workers in Tiwi, they all say the same thing; they just want the basics to work. They want power that stays on, bills they can afford and the ability to trust that when they flick the switch, the light will come on.

That is what this is about. It is not about politics; it is about our people. The CLP Finocchiaro government is clear about what it wants to do for Territorians. We will keep building, investing and putting Territorians first. We are not here to make excuses; we are here to deliver. We are restoring the reliability, protecting affordability and investing in the future. We are building the Territory's power system so our kids will grow up in a place where blackouts are rare, bills are fair and opportunity shines bright for them. Reliable and affordable electricity is a basic necessity for everyone. It is the foundation of everything we do.

Without power businesses fail, children fall behind and families will suffer; Labor ignored that. They ignored Territorians and left us in the dark, literally and figuratively. The CLP Finocchiaro government is bringing back the light. We are rebuilding the system that Labor broke. We are investing in our people, not the politics. We are proving that strong leadership can deliver what matters most, which is safety, comfort and hope.

Let's make sure that Territorians never again have to fight darkness. Let's build a Territory where the lights stay on, the bills stay fair and the future shines bright for all Territorians, because that is what people deserve. That is what the CLP Finocchiaro government stands for, and that is why I am proud to serve as the Member for Casuarina, to fight for light, fairness and for the future of our Territory. I commend this reform to the Assembly.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support this Bill for my people of Blain and the residents of Moulden, Woodroffe and Bellamack. I will speak about the human impact of eight years of Labor neglect of our power grid in its pursuit of ideology over keeping the lights on.

On Monday 20 October at 7.47 pm, there was a blackout in my electorate affecting the suburbs of Moulden and Woodroffe, and in Driver, which is in the electorate of Drysdale. Power and Water advised that the cause of the blackout was an insulation breakdown leading to a dead short in an underground cable between De Mestre Court and Tiverton Court in Moulden. These are old cables that desperately need updating and fixing, and they have not had any maintenance over the last eight years. This Bill addresses that.

Crews responded rapidly. They quicky isolated the location of the fault and worked hard to rectify it, restoring power by 9.10 pm. I thank the hardworking crews who went out to fix it. Thank you to those hardworking men and women who—instead of being home with their families—were out working hard, serving the good people of Palmerston.

I asked my community what impact this blackout had on them.

Jess, from Moulden, said:

‘It was super frustrating. The six power surges’—as the crews worked to isolate the fault in where it was located—‘were more annoying, as I had to unplug all the appliances so that we did not lose them. By the time the power came back on and the house cooled down, our kids ate a second dinner. They did not go to sleep until after 10:30 pm on a school night, when they are usually in bed by 7 pm. It made for very tired and grumpy kids at 6 am the next morning.’

As a father of three, I understand exactly where she is coming from.

Lisa from Moulden said:

‘Three power outages in a month is crazy. The last one kept me very anxious, as I could not see a thing, and with neuropathy in my feet, I was quite anxious walking around to find a torch. Phone dead. Ended up having to sleep elsewhere.’

John from Moulden said:

‘Well, mate, the last time was hard, but otherwise would have done it harder. The older ones need the power for a lot of reasons. It was a bloody hot night. You can’t open your windows like years ago. People built this, so there’s going to be’—‘stuff-ups’, which are my words, not what he said—‘we just need to minimise them. Cheers.’

Sally-Anne from Moulden said:

‘Couldn’t get my kids to sleep. It was very hot, and we shouldn’t have outages in heatwave conditions. It’s literally a hazard.’

Rachael from Moulden said:

‘I had a sick child with a temperature during the last one. No lights, no air conditioning or fans. We had fortunately already eaten, but keeping a sick child without power was not fun or easy, not to mention losing valuable lesson planning time for school the next day, as a teacher.’

We love and support our teachers. She continued:

‘This is generally done after dinner and family time. Yes, I could’ve used my laptop without the charger or internet; however, accessing the school system to upload resources would have been a tad difficult.’

There is more. Nicola from Moulden said:

‘I work from home, and the outages have impacted my ability to complete some of my shifts’.

This is a brief overview of the human impact that eight years of Labor neglect of our power system and of planning and investment has cause on the residents of Palmerston, and the residents in my electorate of Blain. This Bill has come to the House and will, hopefully, begin to clean up the mess left to us.

Legislative reform of our electricity system and market are long overdue, as has been repeatedly advised by the NT Utilities Commission as the independent regulator. I am a bit of a nerd, so I read these documents. I must say, for years now the Utilities Commission has been warning of growing instability in the Darwin–Katherine grid. Luckily, this was only a short blackout. We have seen much longer ones under the previous government, when they let us run out of fuel and gas.

How about that. I grew up on a farm near Batchelor, and we always made sure when we turned the generator on at night that there was enough fuel in the tank to get us through the evening so when we turned it off and went to bed, we did not run out. It is pretty poor planning if you let the generator run out of fuel. That is embarrassing, but that happened under the previous Labor government.

These Bills establish the framework by which our government can take action to provide affordable and reliable electricity to Territorians at lowest cost. This is in stark contrast to the inaction and negligence by Labor of our vital electricity infrastructure. They were too preoccupied with media releases about their 50%

renewables target by 2030—always with the targets and never about the action or what they are actually doing. Never about the implementation.

That is the difference between that side of the Chamber and this side. That side is always about grand visions and plans. 'We'll have a target for this and a target for that. Don't worry about actually doing anything or getting things done.' On this side, we are about getting things done. We are about delivering for Territorians. That is what we do.

They were too preoccupied with their media releases to bother investing in our electricity network—managing the media instead of managing the Territory. Interesting decision-making, to say the least. For clarity, under the Opposition Leader's tenure as Minister for Renewables and Essential Services, our grid never cracked 20% renewable energy. Further, even though the program of legislative electricity market reform was begun in 2020, by the time Labor was voted out last August it still had not progressed the legislation.

That was left to us—to the Deputy Chief Minister, who took the reins and got the Bills done, and now we are debating them. That is getting things done. In just over 12 months our government has moved faster and further than Labor ever did. We are delivering on our year of action through the debate and passage of these Bills.

We had to move swiftly as our electricity system situation is dire. For example, the Utilities Commission states in its Electricity Outlook Report 2024 that electricity reliability challenges in the Alice Springs grid are an immediate and ongoing concern.

I feel for the people of Alice. Who could forget the shame of a major city in the heart of Australia enduring a multiday blackout? I think it was 2018 when the former Member for Braitling, Dale Wakefield, was the Essential Services minister and Labor charged ahead, making changes to the grid without doing the planning or work. What was the result? It plugged in a big solar farm, a cloud went over and the whole grid collapsed, so everyone in Alice Springs was sitting twiddling their thumbs in the dark and the heat. Then we had the embarrassment of the Electrical Trades Union calling for the sacking of a Labor minister—what a shame—who eventually had to throw the chief executive of the relevant corporation under the bus to save her own skin; that is the way Labor works.

In addition, there is a medium risk of reliability challenges in the Darwin–Katherine grid. Workers at the Utilities Commission are experienced technical public servants, so when they say 'reliability challenges', they are talking about blackouts, and that means there is more mess we must clean up, as underscored by the recent blackouts. Without the system and market reforms these Bills enable, this situation will only get worse, threatening Territorians' energy security and affordability.

The members opposite talked about more targets. I think most people would agree it is common sense to say that energy should be reliable, affordable and clean—and in that order. People want to flick the switch and have the light come on. You should be able to afford to pay your power bill without having to take it out of your groceries bill. Once we have that, we can make it as clean as possible.

I think the NT has one of the cleanest grids in the country; there is no coal in our grid.

Mr Howe: Clean gas.

Mr KERLE: Clean gas—thank you, Member for Drysdale—and a high penetration of solar. I would say, and I am happy to be corrected, that we would have the cleanest grid in the country already.

The increasing solar penetration in our energy mix and the dilapidated state of our electricity infrastructure have brought us to the brink of crisis. Most of us can remember in recent years the Darwin CBD undergoing blackouts for hours at a time. I remember when the lights in the Chamber went out. We cannot have that; we need to fix it. That is more mess we inherited.

We are doing the best we can with what we were left with when we came to government. That is why this legislation sets up the NT Electricity System and Market Operator (NTESMO)—what a cool name—as the statutory body responsible for uplifting our electricity system. It sounds like a superhero; it is like 'Captain NTESMO' is here to save the day. For eight years, Labor let our grid fall apart, but Captain NTESMO is here to save the day. I love that; I do not know who came up with the name, but they deserve a gold star. NTESMO will take a strategic coordinated approach to procuring what we need and when we need it in order to keep the lights on. NTESMO will use the centralised public procurement model to minimise the cost to Territorians.

A question was asked of me by a constituent while I was canvassing for their contributions for this speech. They asked how much it will cost to do this. It will cost less than it would under Labor. Labor shuffled everything off to the CSO—$192m—with the costs going up and up without limit. 'Just put it on the credit card. She'll be right, mate.' Who was the last Treasurer under Labor? Was it Eva Lawler and before that Michael Gunner? 'Just put it on the credit card.'

NTESMO will use a centralised public procurement model to minimise the costs to Territorians and delays or duplications of effort. NTESMO will be answerable to the minister for Energy, the Member for Nelson, and its board will have oversight of all investments in our regulated electricity systems.

While NTESMO is being established, with a final commencement date in early 2027, all urgent procurements before then will be overseen by the energy subcommittee of Cabinet, chaired by the minister for Energy. This ensures strategic oversight and coordination of the activities and expenditure of the individual government-owned corporations ensuring we deliver on our commitment to deliver secure and reliable energy to Territorians.

Our government is taking decisive action to address problems that, for too long, Labor ignored, pushing up Territorians' power bills while our electricity infrastructure crumbled. Blackouts should not be the norm in a First World country, particularly in the Northern Territory, which has an abundance of natural gas and sunlight.

These Bills are long overdue, and I commend them to the Assembly.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Opposition Leader for thanking the Power and Water staff. It is a nice change to hear members on the other side of the Chamber supporting our good public servants.

It is a shame not everybody in the Labor–Greens–Johnston alliance followed suit. We saw them in Question Time, once again, using the power of this place to throw mud at people who do not have the power to respond. If people have an issue, attack the minister. That is what we are here for. It is unbecoming of a parliamentarian to attack those outside of this House who cannot respond.

I support the electricity market reform legislation introduced by the Minister for Mining and Energy. This legislative reform of our electricity system and market is urgently needed and is long overdue to ensure Territorians have reliable energy.

The good Member for Blain has discussed the issues we see in our electorates of Blain and Drysdale, especially the older suburbs of Palmerston where blackouts have, unfortunately, become a common part of our daily lives. I will support any measure to improve the reliability of our energy infrastructure throughout the Palmerston region. Once again, I thank the Deputy Chief Minister for bringing this on so we can restore reliability to the grid.

Our government has scrapped Labor's foolhardy 50% by 2030 renewables target, because 50% renewables by 2030 would have meant the people of Drysdale would be paying humungous dollars they do not have for energy. I will not condemn the people I represent to mountains of debt and huge electricity bills in the pursuit of some vague idea of virtue. I will always advocate for the people of Drysdale who want cheap reliable energy.

Today we discussed natural gas and other fossil fuels. This Assembly should remember that it is not just the Northern Territory; there is a whole world and, right now, according to the International Energy Agency, 750 million people will go without electricity, most or all of them in the most impoverished parts of the world. A further 2.1 billion people will only access energy through dirty fuels, generally being cooking fuels in the form of biomass or charcoal, both of which are toxic to the people using it and far more polluting.

When we discuss energy supply in our own backyard, we must remember what it means to our neighbours. If we have the potential to get cheap, much cleaner fuels out of our Earth and get them to our neighbours around the world, we can get them out of poverty so they can also enjoy cleaner, healthier energy. As citizens of the world, we owe them that. We have a moral responsibility to the rest of the world. The NT's gas reserves are far cleaner than traditional forms of fossil fuel. We have a moral obligation to get these people out of poverty and industrialise them as quickly as possible so they can then afford zero-emission technologies.

It is all well and good for us to sit in this Chamber and talk about how great we are with our Western wealth when people around the world will never have access to the degree of technology we have. We have a moral responsibility to access our gas reserves for people all around the world.

We must adopt a least-cost approach to energy supply, which is exactly what the minister is aiming for, to provide secure and reliable electricity for Territorian homes and businesses. I spoke yesterday about what that means. Cheap energy means we can have manufacturing and people can run their homes cheaper. For the people in Drysdale, that means jobs that evaporated because of the mismanagement of energy in this country.

It means you spend less on your power bills so you can spend more on education, health, going shopping, taking your kids out for the weekend or going camping. This is what our government wants. We do not want you spending unnecessary amounts of money on energy.

Without these reforms, the NT's cost of electricity generation will continue to rise sharply and our community service obligation to subsidise Territory energy bills simply will not keep up. It is like the other side does not want to speak about the plain truth that Territorians face. The fact is, the cost of energy is going up sharply, and without these amendments it will only get worse.

This is not about the ideology of gas versus renewables, because I have spoken many times in this place of the huge opportunity solar presents for the Northern Territory. To be sucked into that argument is a falsehood because we see huge potential in solar, but what we want to deliver is cheap, reliable energy. We want to minimise the blackouts that occur throughout the Territory. For Drysdale residents, particularly in Driver and Gray, who experience regular blackouts, that is what we are aiming to do. We must place downward pressure on energy costs and reinforce the stability and reliability of our ageing infrastructure.

To highlight the age of some of the infrastructure we are dealing with, on Channel Island the gas generators are almost 40 years old. That is older than some members of this Chamber, including the Member for Goyder and me. As the ladies at NT Breast Cancer Voice will attest, I do not move as well as I once did, and I am sure the generators are not functioning as well as they once did.

These reforms are required to legislate the most cost-effective and time-effective way to shore up our deteriorating electricity networks. We are moving quickly to make up for years of Labor inactivity and neglect. Our government is finalising the Regulated Electricity System Investment Plan which we need to implement swiftly to prevent frequent blackouts in this term of government. The people of Alice Springs and Katherine are vulnerable to increased frequency and duration of blackouts in the near term, as reported by the Utilities Commission.

By bringing forth this legislation, our government is tackling our electricity challenges head-on on behalf of Territorians, because that is who we have created these Bills for. We are not ashamed to say that we are backing Territorians so that they can have reliable, cheap energy. Once this legislation is in place, we will have a legislative pathway to accelerate and roll out the RESIP with robust governance and oversight by Cabinet and the NT Electricity System and Market Operator.

This will ensure that taxpayers' money is spent wisely on procuring and contracting what we need, when we need it, with two explicit aims. The first is to put downward pressure on electricity costs for Territorians and the NT Government. That is you at home. We want downward pressure on electricity costs for the people of Drysdale, in my electorate, and the NT Government. The second aim is to reinforce our electricity infrastructure to ensure that Territorians enjoy the electricity reliability that they deserve, keeping air cons running even in the peak of the Wet Season. To do this we must pass this electricity market reform.

Therefore, I commend the minister and commend the Bills to the Assembly.

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I thank the members of the Assembly for their contributions.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about cutting the solar feed-in tariff. She is trying to rewrite history because it was Labor that cut the solar feed-in tariff. It promised to grandfather the existing solar tariff amount, which was about 18c, but it broke that promise because it did not do that at all.

The Leader of the Opposition said that this reform is a great idea and she will support it, and I thank her for that, but she went on to say that work had been done over the last couple years on this reform. After hearing that I read through the Utilities Commission report again. On page 13 in a paragraph it says, 'noting the priority Northern Territory electricity market has not been looked at for a number of years'. These are not my words; this is from the Utilities Commission. I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition is talking about, but I am sure she did not mislead the parliament on purpose.

A bit further on, the report says that works stopped in 2022 and were incomplete at that stage. Considerable effort would be needed to review and update what was developed in 2022. That was two years ago, yet the Leader of the Opposition said only a couple of hours ago that this is a great idea and that work has been done over the last couple of years. I am sure she did not mean to mislead parliament on purpose, but clearly the Utilities Commission said in two separate parts of its report that this has not been looked at and work was stopped in about 2022. To make it clear, this was not a project that the Labor government gave any priority to. In fact, the Utilities Commission said that it stopped that work.

On the other hand, when we came to office last year the Treasurer commissioned a report from the Utilities Commission to look at this immediately, which was in late 2024, only a few months after taking office. It shows that the work in relation to the reform of the electricity market stopped a number of years ago. We came to office and got the ball rolling.

The Leader of the Opposition also spoke about schools having to pay power bills. The Education minister said in this House a number of times that schools will not be worse off, as the department was paying the power bills. Again, I am sure the Leader of the Opposition did not mean to mislead parliament on purpose. The power bills are not coming out of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. The Leader of the Opposition should know this because she was the fourth failed Labor Education minister.

She talked about the CLP doing stunts. At least two political stunts were done by the Leader of the Opposition because, clearly, what she just said in parliament was incorrect. Things are not exactly as they seem, and the Utilities Commission is there to back that up.

I thank my government colleagues for supporting the electricity market reform legislation that I introduced. I also thank the hardworking public servants in the Department of Mines and Energy and the government-owned corporations, especially Power and Water, for all the hard work they have done behind the scenes on these Bills. I thank the Power and Water personnel for their tireless work on the ground maintaining our electricity system and fixing these outages swiftly, as they did in Palmerston earlier this week.

The NT Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025, Serial 35, will establish the NT Electricity System Market Operator as an independent entity that will plan, procure and operate the NT system market. This will be done under a transparent and robust government framework designed to deliver reliable, secure electricity at the lowest cost to Territorians. As part of separation of NTESMO and the model's establishment, in the NT public procurement model there will be a robust change in the management process.

The Leader of Operation asked when it would come into place. NTESMO will be established as a separate structurally entity by 1 July 2027, with interim arrangements put in place between the passage of these Bills and 1 July 2027.

The Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill, Serial 36, will also establish the Territory electricity market as a regulatory environment in which NTESMO will operate its central planning, procurement and system operation functions.

There will be consultation with government and stakeholders by the department over the next 12 months to develop regulations and rules which will govern the electricity market. These are the rules that will apply to the public procurement model that will be administered by NTESMO. This consultation will be informed by industry reference group comprising of key stakeholders so that certainty will be provided to industry and ensure that the market participants in our electricity system are heard and represented. The public procurement model is about providing certainty to industry and ensuring the most cost-effective approach to maintaining and upgrading our electrical networks for all Territorians.

There was commentary from the opposition and crossbench about the lack of the mention of renewables in these Bills. I also note that these Bills do not mention the word 'gas' because they are agnostic; they do not talk about what sort of energy, just what we can do to have the lowest-priced energy for Territorians. Unlike the figures for renewables, which is at any cost, this is about making electricity reliable and affordable for all Territorians. It does not mention any form of electricity. What I am getting at is once this is up and running, any form of electricity will be open to the market, as long as it is at the lowest possible cost to Territorians.

There will be a mix. There is already a mix of solar and renewables in the system. We need to make sure the system is stable and secure, which is what we will do immediately, and then we can look at the lowest-cost electricity. This is about making electricity reliable and at the lowest cost, which may include gas and solar, but above all the mix must ensure that the electricity remains reliable and affordable. The energy mix will be

dictated by government policy under the RESIP to provide reliable energy at the lowest cost, which may include solar and gas, but again it will go back to reliable, affordable energy.

We do not have a crystal ball; we do not know what the energy mix may be and what new energy may come in the future. There may be hydrogen, but I am not sure. I do not have a crystal ball. I am not a leader in this sort of energy. What I can say is that our policy will look at all forms of energy, but we want reliable and lowest-cost energy.

The Member for Johnston said that heatwaves can be dangerous. I agree with her. That is why we need electricity systems that are reliable, even in our peak summer conditions. The Member for Blain listed a whole range of constituents talking about the heat affecting young children. That is why we need to make sure the system is reliable.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about how my report was scaremongering. It was a statement of facts. The facts were provided by the NT Utilities Commission, which is the independent electricity regulator in the Northern Territory.

The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the government was never given advice that our electricity system was in a fragile state. I quote from the advice of the Utilities Commission in its 2024 Electricity Outlook Report:

The Territory's electricity supply … has reached a critical juncture.

It also stated that significant investment is unavoidable in addressing current and emerging power system issues.

According to the last Utilities Commission Power System Performance Review, Katherine residents endured over eight hours without power, spread across multiple power outages in 2023–24. On average, Territorians endure over twice as many blackouts as the rest of the nation. Our blackouts lasted 30% longer than the rest of the nation.

How does that not indicate that our electricity system is in a dire state? Not only the reports, but also the fact that we are getting power blackouts in the Northern Territory show to anyone with a bit of common sense that our electricity system is fragile.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about renewables not being mentioned in these Bills; it is because they are not. No sort of energy is. It is just about making sure that the market system operators are there and that we have the lowest cost and most reliable. There is little point in prioritising solar if we cannot even effectively use or dispatch the solar we already have. We need to get that up and running.

There have been generation restrictions on our network since 2019, and the Labor government was in power from 2019 to August 2024. How does it indicate that our system is fragile and in peril? That is why these Bills represent a shift to establishing an energy mix which above all prioritises reliability at the lowest cost to Territorians.

I have previously said that the passage of these Bills is the first step in providing secure, reliable and affordable electricity to all Territorians.

Madam SPEAKER: We have now concluded the cognate debate, so from here we will deal with the Bills separately.

ELECTRICITY SYSTEM AND MARKET OPERATOR BILL
Serial 35

Madam SPEAKER: The question is that the Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025, Serial 35, be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

ELECTRICITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MARKET REFORM) BILL
Serial 36

Madam SPEAKER: The question is the Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025, Serial 36, be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

PAPER TABLED
Quarterly Members' Fuel Transaction Report – July to September 2025

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Quarterly Members' Fuel Transaction Report, quarter 3, July to September 2025.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Protection of Sacred Sites

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

I propose for discussion this day the following definite matter of public importance: the government's failure to maintain critical protection of sacred sites.

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

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Madam Speaker, this is about the government's failure to maintain critical protection of sacred sites. I have brought forward this MPI because I am disgusted to see how this government is behaving when it comes to sacred sites.

Sacred sites are of great significance in the Northern Territory. The English term 'sacred sites' does not give good understanding of the breadth of what sacred sites embody. Non-Indigenous people might think it is a special place with spiritual importance, and this is true, but it goes much deeper than this. I will talk about these places from a Yolngu perspective to try to give greater understanding.

First, out on country, there is no empty land or sea. To someone who does not know our country, they might think it is empty because there are no buildings, but to the Yolngu eye, the space is full of significance, sacred sites, landmarks, songlines and ancestral creations. It is a busy landscape, just like a city.

I think about New York City and the activity on the ground, beneath the ground with the subway system, in the sky and out into the water. This is what we see when we look at our country—sacred sites are places that are equivalent to a parliament.

Dr Gumana from Gan Gan, my *ngathi* said, 'Your parliament is built on the land; our parliament is the land.' Sacred sites are places where knowledge and authority is given and made clear, a place where the law stems from. They are places which connect to governance now and from our ancestors in the past. The knowledge from these sites is the upper-level knowledge from a university institution. The law connected with the sacred site is equivalent to the laws created here in the parliament where we are standing now.

A week ago, Senator Thorpe stated at a rally that she would burn the parliament to the ground. I do not believe that she meant to do it. I believe that she was saying, 'This is how strongly I feel on this issue'. It was a way of expressing her emotions. But the response from the community was strong. The Australian Federal Police was asked to investigate. This is because the parliament is seen as a sacred place. It is a sacred place for Western culture, and so, the thought of any damage or desecration to the parliament site was seen as a significant threat, something that would not be tolerated and was such a threat that it required police action.

The offence and threat that people felt when Senator Thorpe talked about burning down the parliament is the offence and threat that we feel when someone threatens our sacred sites. In May, when the government brought a Bill to amend the Sacred Sites Act in this parliament—without any genuine consultation other than

with the Darwin Waterfront Corporation—elders, leaders and community members felt worried and threatened by the government. We felt confused that the government would introduce a Bill about sacred sites without consultation of land councils, elders and leaders because sacred sites are our jurisdiction. They are our business.

In response to the lack of consultation, the Central Land Council said that the minister treated them like children. Warren Williams said:

> *He asked us to simply accept that the government's intentions behind the changes are good. He wouldn't give us any details about the changes or how they would work.*

The government's intentions were not good. The minister clearly changed the Sacred Sites Act for the purpose of going around Larrakia elders to secure development permissions for his friends at the Darwin Waterfront Corporation. By doing that he has weakened the law and our capacity to protect sacred sites. By adding other parties to an existing sacred site certificate, he is lighting the match to set fire to a sacred site.

A sacred site is alive. It is a place which must be looked after to ensure that people are protected. It can be serious when a sacred site is damaged or disrespected. When I was a young man, I remember my father becoming unwell. As an elder, his spirit was strongly connected with the land; another family had gone hunting and fishing near a sacred site and they started a fire where they should not have, and they did not put out the fire. After they left, the fire burned deeply into the sacred site area.

My father was at home, about 30 kilometres from the site, and he became unwell with a fever and was burning hot. Some of the senior elders looked at him and told the young ones to go and look at the sacred site to see whether there was a problem. When they got to the fishing spot—the sacred site—they saw that the fire was burning strongly and doing damage. The fire was put out, and my father became instantly well.

The connection that we have to our sacred sites is strong, and like my father, people can become unwell when a site is damaged. From the elders it can ripple out further if the damage is ongoing because we are all connected with the land. When governments change the laws for a sacred site it can have dangerous implications for the people who are responsible for sacred sites.

This is why the Aboriginal people of the NT, the land councils and the board of AAPA were very upset when the minister pushed through changes to the Act. Now we know that the changes were specifically for the purpose of transferring a certificate to a third party so that a new development can be made at the Darwin Waterfront against the wishes of the TOs.

The minister said that this new development will not impact the sacred sites, but I do not believe that the minister is a Larrakia person and I do not believe he has authority to speak on behalf of this land. The Larrakia people of this land say that it will impact the site. This development of an 11-storey building at the end of the Convention Centre has already been knocked back by the Larrakia people because it will interfere with the sacred site.

Yes, there is an 11-storey building already at the Darwin Waterfront, but it does not interfere with the sacred site. A certificate was provided in 2004 because the plans that were shown to the elders did not impact the site. The new development impacts the sacred site, and the Larrakia people have already said no, but the government did not care and changed the law without transparency. The government was asked several times and it did not say that the purpose of the changes was to help a foreign company proceed with a development at the Darwin Waterfront that will damage a sacred site.

Last month the NT Government made an application to add the Darwin Waterfront Corporation and SH Darwin Hotel as recorded parties to Authority Certificate C2004/004, which covers the Darwin Waterfront Precinct. This is a certificate from long ago that was provided by AAPA for the development plans that were given to the Larrakia elders for consultation at that time.

Larrakia Nation CEO Michael Rotumah stated:

> *This decision demonstrates how the voices of Larrakia custodians are being systematically sidelined in matters affecting their sacred sites.*
>
> *Legislative and ministerial interference has eroded AAPA's independence, reducing its statutory authority to a hollow process.*

Larrakia cultural authority is not negotiable, and this development risks irreversible damage to places of profound significance. The Northern Territory Government must engage with custodians, not legislate around them.

I have a zero-tolerance policy for the wilful interference with and damage to sacred sites. I am angry and frustrated by this government and its attitude to sacred sites. Elders strongly agree that sacred sites on any land cannot be damaged. That is why I feel strongly about what is happening on Larrakia country.

We stand on Larrakia land doing business in this parliament. Every morning we acknowledge the TOs of this land, and the minister has done something very wrong on this Larrakia land. He threatened to damage a Larrakia sacred site when he changed the laws, and now he is carrying out that threat by obtaining the certificate and giving consent for an 11-storey hotel to be built in front of Stokes Hill. Look at the Waterfront area: the Larrakia people are not against development. You can see that by looking at what has already been built at the Waterfront.

The minister must fix this situation and protect the sacred site at Stokes Hill and ensure that AAPA and elders are consulted and remain the decision-makers about sacred sites. The minister must not speak on behalf of the Larrakia people about their sacred sites; he must speak truthfully about the Bill that came before parliament in May.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* is important legislation which ensures the protection of our sacred sites and cultural heritage. It is the primary legislation in the Northern Territory for protecting Aboriginal sacred sites, establishing a register of sites and outlining criminal offences for unauthorised entry or damage. The Act is administered by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, commonly referred to as AAPA, an independent statutory authority which requires developers and others to obtain authority certificates for work conducted near or on sacred sites and has the power to prosecute those who damage sites.

Since the Act commenced operation in 1989 there have been considerable economic, political and social developments in the Northern Territory. Despite these developments, the Act had not been updated in more than 30 years, even though PricewaterhouseCoopers undertook a thorough review in 2016.

Since coming into government I have had a number of conversations with industry and stakeholders who have raised significant issues about the exorbitant costs of obtaining authority certificates and the inability to transfer them. Even though authority certificates are issued in perpetuity and are associated with a particular area of land or object or feature on that land, they could not be transferred when the land title was transferred to a new individual or entity prior to our new amendments being assented. The Member for Mulka spoke about them extensively in his contribution.

The other significant issue is that the only compliance tool available for the authority to enforce the Act was to prosecute developers and/or individuals once an offence has occurred. This government wants proponents to get their certificate and look at it as though it is a golden ticket, something that they must work hard to obtain and comply with.

This government is committed to reducing red tape and removing duplication in regulatory processes. We have shown that across the board, promoting economic development while maintaining strong protections for Aboriginal sacred sites. That is why, on 15 May 2025, the NT Government passed amendments to the Act. The NT Aboriginal Sacred Site Amendment Bill 2025 improved the regulatory framework by tightening timeframes and reducing red tape while also enhancing protections for sacred sites.

The amendments provided a concise suite of administrative reforms to improve the operation of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. These reforms strengthen sacred sites protection and improve the efficiency of regulatory processes to support safe and respectful development in the NT. The changes encourage more people to seek authority certificates from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority as a proactive measure to safeguard sacred sites, not to avoid the process.

The reforms added enforceable undertakings, which is a key feature of many other environmental and legislative regimes. Enforceable undertakings are a legally binding alternative to court proceedings and a feature of most modern environmental regulatory regimes in the Territory and nationally. They help ensure remediation and stronger compliance through clear timeframes and monitoring to ensure accountability. Enforceable undertakings also mean that traditional owners can be directly compensated by those who are found to have desecrated sacred sites. This was not possible prior to the amendments.

This was something that representatives brought to my attention at a Central Land Council meeting I attended. They were frustrated that even after someone had been prosecuted for doing the wrong thing in regard to a sacred site, the money that was then paid by the proponent who had done the wrong thing did not end up going to the traditional owners. Through these enforceable undertakings, that is now an option that can be sought.

The reforms clarify practices that were already in place regarding composition of the board of AAPA, which remains at 10 members nominated by the four land councils and two members nominated by the minister. The reforms preserve the minister's right to remove their nominated two members at the minister's discretion.

The reforms introduced a mechanism to transfer an authority certificate to another person for the same area of land and the same works where prior consultations had already been undertaken, importantly, preserving the original protections, limitations or controls on an area of land and addressing process inefficiencies and duplication.

The reforms introduced a mechanism to have additional persons or groups added as recorded parties to authority certificates on application of the certificate holder, while still preserving the original protections, limitations or controls on an area of land. This has reduced the regulatory burden and red tape in long-term projects involving multiple parties and ensuring any conditions required for the protection of sacred sites apply to these additional parties.

These amendments struck a balance between the protection of cultural heritage and economic development, ensuring that sacred sites remain protected while reducing unnecessary delays in approvals.

With regard to the consultation on these changes to the Sacred Sites Act and in addition to the extensive consultation undertaken with traditional owners, industry stakeholders and government agencies as part of the comprehensive 2016 review, I engaged in a face-to-face meeting with the board of AAPA in January 2025, where I gave notice that I intended to make amendments to the Act. I then held a meeting by videoconference with executive members of the four land councils on Thursday 20 March 2025. I travelled to Yulara for a meeting with the full Central Land Council on Thursday 10 April 2025 where I answered a range of questions for over an hour to ensure that TOs had the chance to voice their concerns.

The amendments to the Sacred Sites Act were referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee when I introduced the amendment Bill on 27 March 2025. The committee received 30 submissions to its inquiry, and the submissions were varied. Some were in support of the policy intent of the Bill.

I thank the members of the scrutiny committee for their important work and each member and organisation in our community that made submissions to that inquiry. I acknowledge the advice obtained by the scrutiny committee from their independent legal adviser, Mr Ned Aughterson, who agreed that in his view the proposed sections 24A and 24B are not inconsistent with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act—otherwise known as ALRA—or section 42 of the Sacred Sites Act, being the transfer provisions.

It is important to say again, the independent legal advice obtained by the Legislative Scrutiny Committee confirmed the amendments to the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* were not inconsistent with ALRA, so how can those opposite claim that we are failing to ensure adequate protections for sacred sites across the Northern Territory?

We are strengthening the legislation and processes around it to ensure that NT sacred sites are protected and remain protected. The changes that we made to the Act provided long-overdue modernisation of the legislation to bring it in line with contemporary expectations for sacred site protection and development. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act requires that laws concerning sacred sites must provide a mechanism which takes into account the wishes of Aboriginal people in determining the extent to which those sites are protected.

Regarding the transferring of authority certificates, this process is administrative in nature and all protective conditions imposed at the time of issuing the original certificate carry over to the new party, or as new names are added ensuring continued protection of sacred sites.

This provision is consistent with the requirements of the Commonwealth's Aboriginal Land Rights Act as it does not seek to change any of the protections initially imposed, which would have considered the wishes of the relevant custodians to the extent to which sacred sites are protected. In respect of the same work and use, there is no intent to change the way any sacred site is protected. Where there is a change to the works or proposed use of the land, or a proponent seeks to change the protective conditions that have been

imposed, this administrative transfer would not be available and the proponent must apply for a new authority certificate.

The same applies with long-term, large-scale development projects involving multiple entities. These changes to the Act allow the holder of the existing authority certificate to apply for additional individuals or groups to be listed as recorded parties. Prior to the changes each entity had to go through the process to obtain a certificate, even if it is for the same area of land and the same works.

The amendments now allow for continuity of approved work where there is no change to the nature or location of the work or the use of the land. Most importantly, the provisions do not permit new work, expanded impact or altered activity without further assessment and, where necessary, renewed consultation with custodians.

The suggestion that this prioritises economic development over cultural authority is totally unfounded. This approach is consistent with the principles of the Sacred Sites Act and the Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights Act, which aim to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage while enabling responsible land use. The implementation of an enforceable undertaking regime has introduced a fair and constructive approach to compliance, allowing for negotiated outcomes for minor breaches rather than immediate prosecution, and this is what traditional owners wanted to see. Where there will be benefits to TOs through development, they want to work with the proponent to ensure that any discretions are dealt with and that everyone can move forward. If they are not happy with that, they can still proceed to prosecution.

The changes we made do not reframe or diminish the authority's core role of protecting sacred sites. These changes maintain the authority's fundamental responsibility to ensure that any proposed use of land does not pose a risk to sacred sites, and that custodians are consulted and their knowledge respected before a certificate is issued. These changes were designed to empower the authority and to encourage greater collaboration between proponents and the authority by creating opportunities to resolve issues with respect to sacred sites.

The key performance indicators for the authority from 1 July to 29 September 2025 have seen 27 authority certificates issued. It is important to note the work the authority does and is continuing to do—issuing certificates so that sacred sites can continue to be protected. There were 306 information requests completed and 72 sacred sites were recorded, another important piece of work the authority does. Five sacred sites have been registered, one recorded party's application has been issued, three transfer applications have been received and one transfer application has been issued.

These numbers highlight the important work that AAPA and the Sacred Sites Act do to protect sacred sites across the Northern Territory, taking into consideration the concerns of traditional owners and enabling development to occur.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, the matter of public importance raised by the Member for Mulka is an important topic for this parliament to talk about.

What I just witnessed in this Chamber is utterly disgraceful: the Environment minister whitewashed over the importance of this MPI. For those who do not understand what whitewashing is, it is a process when someone tries to hide the faults, failures or problems with something, tries to tell a different story and tries to sell something to say it is not as bad as it is.

I am sorry, but you do not get to tell an Aboriginal man, a respected elder from the Northern Territory, how he should think and feel about the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority's legislation. He is one of the only people in this Chamber who is connected to every aspect of the Northern Territory, to language, law and culture. It is appalling for a non-Indigenous person to read a speech they probably have not even read before stepping in this Chamber and disrespect an Aboriginal member of this parliament. It is appalling to tell them what they should and should not do and how they should think, and say that this legislation is not a big problem and is not causing faults to Aboriginal areas of significance, when an Aboriginal member has spoken about the direct harm his own family has experienced when sites are damaged.

We are not in 1788; we are not flora and fauna. The Members for Mulka, Arnhem, Daly and I are not fauna; we are Territorians. This government talks like it knows what is best and what needs to happen in the Northern Territory. It is pretty simple; the government needs to start using its brains. Do not wreck things that do not belong to you. Sacred sites in the Northern Territory belong to Aboriginal Territorians. They always have and always will belong to Aboriginal people.

The Member for Mulka brought this matter of public importance to this Chamber because of the echoing calls from the bush, people talking about their anxiety, concern and heartache about places of cultural and spiritual significance potentially being damaged. What they hear is a minister stand up and say that there is nothing to see here; do not worry about it. Just like he says about other projects concerning the environment and country. We are already seeing the devastating impacts of those projects he fails to talk to people about. He comes in here and says, 'Don't worry. If something has a certificate already, it is fine. We will just transfer the certificate.'

Forty years ago when the Waterfront was there, no-one imagined it to be what it is today. The legislation that the minister is talking about actively shuts out Aboriginal Territorians who have connection to that place, who have the right to speak for that place and who carry the story of that place. This government sees Aboriginal people as a pastime. We are not a pastime; we are living, breathing and here every day. Our culture and people are alive. We are evolving.

Aboriginal people who carry the song and storyline for the Waterfront should be involved in decisions about the Waterfront, not told, 'You are excluded because of an agreement that is historical and old,' or 'I have to do a deal for a mate, and I will change the law to make money and not put people first.' That is what we are seeing here. We must keep an eye on it.

The government is now talking about the site of Project Sea Dragon on Legune, in my electorate. That is black soil country. That is sacred land that has stories and meaning to Aboriginal people. We cannot allow this government to erode those important sites that carry language. As the Member for Mulka has already spoken about in this Chamber, a sacred site is not just a place. You do not just drive out to a sacred site on the weekend to see it; it is a living, breathing thing. It is connected to Aboriginal people's stories, their Dreaming and their social and emotional wellbeing. It is not something that can just be dismissed.

We need people to be responsible. The legislation as it was intended was introduced to make sure that Territory sacred sites could be protected; that is when the legislation was passed. When the Self-Government Act was granted to the Northern Territory in 1978, land and cultural heritage powers were also transferred to the Northern Territory to make those laws, including the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites. That is why today we have the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

This Territory legislation no longer supports that important protection. While that responsibility currently sits with the Territory, the Commonwealth does have the ability through the constitutional power under section 122 of the Australian Constitution, which gives authority over the territories to let them override Territory laws and reassert control. I hope to God that the Commonwealth is keeping an eye on this Territory government and that power is considered to be returned to the Commonwealth, because Aboriginal people do not trust this government when it comes to the protection of sacred sites.

The Member for Braitling, who tries to say that he is the most green-credentialled person on that side, is dreaming. He is delusional and distorted if he thinks that he is a green-credentialled and progressive person, because he is not. The changes that the government brought in to amend the sacred sites legislation is from a 2016 review by the previous CLP government, which is nine years old. Things change over nine years. The government is the first to bang on about how there is dramatic change in nine years, but when it suits them, they will pick up a review that is nine years old and cherrypick recommendations through it.

I know firsthand that the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority was working with the Territory's land councils to do a comprehensive reform on the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority legislation to change it, increase penalties for people who do the wrong thing and look at certificates and cultural protection. They were working on that. That work was being done, and that work was good and strong. That work was actual extensive consultation being done on Aboriginal time—clear, concise and not rushing things through.

If the Member for Braitling had the courage and the guts and did not carry on in a cowardly manner, he would have picked up that review and met with AAPA. He would have said, 'You have done this work. Hey, land councils, you worked with AAPA on this work. Let's talk about this review. Let's implement this review.' But he did not. He ignored them and chose a review that had been done nine years earlier.

He came into parliament today and said, 'I met with the land council. I gave them a whole hour.' Whoop-de-doo! An hour is nothing. You are talking about thousands of years of stories, culture, Dreaming and connection, and you are celebrating giving them an hour. He said, 'I spoke to them and I picked a few things up for them,' and he tried to verbal what they said and what he said about them—and to them—in a meeting at Yulara. That is not good enough.

Government members rock up at NAIDOC events, the Indigenous Business Awards and Reconciliation Week events trying to celebrate Aboriginal people; it makes me sick in the guts. The government goes there two-faced, showing up saying, 'We support you,' but in a time of need, when the Member for Mulka has brought this matter to parliament regarding how Aboriginal people feel about the government's law, you have nothing to say, except for the minister, who said, 'She'll be right, mate. I think it's good.'

You are not black, so you do not get to say that. You do not get to diminish the Member for Mulka's contribution. He is telling you there is a problem and that people are getting sick when sites are damaged. The member is telling you that our identities are getting broken when bulldozers drive through something like it is nothing. There are many parts of the Northern Territory where people say, 'There has never been a sacred site there before'. No, dummy. We have never told you that there is a sacred site there for that very reason; it is sacred. It does not need to be known by everyone, but when you want to develop there, work with us and not against us.

Stop saying that blackfellas are opposed to development. We want economic development. We are not anti-development; we just want ethical development that works in partnership with Aboriginal people, the land, our culture and country. That is what we want; we are not anti-development. Many of my mob in the bush want to have businesses and opportunity, but they know they can do it without it coming at a cost to country. Start listening and working with people to enable them to have opportunities for economic development. It does not need to come at the cost of destroying country.

Yesterday the Attorney-General and Tourism minister was talking about people coming here for a cultural experience. That is right—Aboriginal culture. They come here to see the sites, and the government's legislation provides the platform and opportunity for those sites to wither away. This is important, and I acknowledge some of you might not truly grasp and understand that and never will, but at least get out to the remote regions of the Territory and listen, talk, walk and sit in the dirt with people. Do it in the city, too. Meet with Larrakia; they are strong and important and do an amazing job on this place where we get to work. They want economic development in Darwin, but they do not want it to come at the cost of their culture or their social and emotional wellbeing.

You might think that it is black magic, but it is real for us. When you put an 11-storey tower in front of a site that our elders have told you not to, people will get sick. Whether it is the people who build it, the government that approves it or Aboriginal people who are being punished for it being there; people will get sick. People will have to try to heal from that. That is what is at stake tonight. The Member for Mulka is not coming in here because he wants to; he has a cultural obligation and a duty to the law of his people—our people.

A member interjecting.

I hear the mumbling over there. If you have something to say, stand up and say it. It will be silence …

Mr Mackay interjecting.

Mr PAECH: If the Member for Goyder or whoever it is over there wants to say something, then stand up and say it. We hear Aboriginal Territorians who, I remind you, are just as equal as any other Territorian. They want to hear from you. They want to hear what you will do when their people are getting sick. They want to hear from you about how you can work with them on ethical development opportunities that do not come at the cost of country. We need to respect this MPI tonight.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, as a non-Aboriginal person and Independent Member of the Legislative Assembly, I speak to this matter of definite public importance about the failure of the Finocchiaro government to maintain and uphold the Northern Territory's critical system for the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites.

I thank the Member for Mulka for bringing this matter to the Chamber and the Member for Gwoja for so passionately outlining how this impacts on the Aboriginal people we are all here to represent.

This failure strikes at the heart of our integrity as a jurisdiction. It undermines the rule of law because it signals that those with economic power can disregard the law with impunity while those charged with upholding it are left without support. It betrays the promise of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*, a statute that has long stood as one of the most important recognitions of Aboriginal law and belief in Australia.

The Sacred Sites Act is not just another piece of environmental regulation; it is a foundational law of recognition. It acknowledges that Aboriginal people are the traditional owners and custodians of their country and that the protection of sacred sites is integral to the maintenance of their law, culture and identity.

The Sacred Sites Act also forms part of a suite of laws designed to benefit Aboriginal people that includes the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the NT's companion legislation the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1978*, the *Heritage Act 2011* and the *Native Title Act 1993*. These laws not only assist all of us by recognising Aboriginal Territorians' enduring relationship with land, ensuring their legal ownership and control over country and protecting their cultural and spiritual heritage; they also provide a framework through which development in the Northern Territory can proceed with certainty, without controversy and with a social licence.

The Act is grounded in section 73(1)(a) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* which gives this Territory the power and responsibility to legislate for the protection of sacred sites. It does so through the independent Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, a statutory body at arm's length from government with clear duties to consult, issue authority certificates and force compliance. That independence is its strength and provides the all-important certainty for developers and custodians alike. It is that independence which this government has systematically undermined.

In May this year, Acting Judge Steven Ledek handed down a judgment in the Vista Gold prosecution, a case that should have been a line in the sand. Vista Gold pleaded guilty to damaging a sacred site near Leliyn (Edith Falls) on Jawoyn country while conducting drilling operations at the Mount Todd mine. Twelve drill holes were sunk within a restrictive works area, an area the company knew was sacred and where they were prohibited from drilling.

In his sentencing remarks, Acting Judge Steven Ledek described Vista Gold's conduct as:

> *… nothing more than a mercenary exercise, where they had been looking and looking for what they believed was there, but unfortunately found it to be under a restricted works area.*

He said that the offence was driven by everything to do with the price of gold. He also noted that the fine of $160,000 was insignificant compared with the company's projected profit of more than $500m. That is not the failure of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority; that is a failure of political will. The authority did its job; it investigated, prosecuted and secured a conviction. When the judiciary itself tells us that the penalties are 'insignificant', it is the government's job to respond.

Instead, the CLP government has been busy weakening the very framework that allows the AAPA to protect sacred sites in the first place. These changes were pushed through—no matter what the minister says—without genuine consultation. Traditional owners, the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority raised alarm.

The amendments neither streamlined nor modernised the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*. They serve a single purpose, which is to permit one politically convenient project, the Waterfront hotel, despite Larrakia opposition grounded in the protection of a registered sacred site. I am told that the rush of applications predicted by the CLP to justify these changes has not occurred and can be counted on one hand.

The NLC described the Bill as a 'rush job' that undermines the integrity of sacred site protection in favour of developers. The CLC said the government treated us like children, and they were right. By allowing certificates to be transferred or altered after issue, the government has opened the door to regulatory manipulation. It has created conditions where a proponent can obtain a certificate for one purpose and later repurpose it for another without renewed custodial consent.

By introducing enforceable undertakings as an alternative to prosecution, the government risks turning the protection of sacred sits into a private negotiation between developers and bureaucrats, rather than the matter of public accountability under law. This is not reform; it is regression.

Perhaps the most serious failure is this governments systematic erosion of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority's independence. The AAPA is a statutory authority; it is not a branch of government. It was designed that way to protect it from political interference so that it could stand firm in upholding Aboriginal law, even when development pressures mount.

For more than 40 years it has managed and mediated the intersection of Aboriginal cultural responsibilities and the Territory's development ambitions. Every major project, road, piece of public infrastructure and mine has been considered by the authority. The vast majority of those projects have proceeded without and controversy because of AAPA's work in facilitating agreements that respect sacred sites and support responsible development. Only a small number of matters ever reach public attention, and that is a mark of the authority's effectiveness.

The AAPA has quietly managed complexity into outcomes that balance cultural protection with progress, and the Northern Territory should be proud of this institution. Yet, the CLP government has treated the authority as a political inconvenience. It has refused to support the organisation with adequate funding, despite the growing complexity of projects, such as SunCable, AROWS, onshore gas in the Beetaloo Sub-basin, and the Darwin Waterfront hotel development.

It has steadily undermined the authority's standing by reshaping the legislative framework in ways that erode its independence and bring key functions closer to ministerial control. Rather than strengthening the authority, as the minister just said, this government has weakened it and, in doing so, weakened public confidence in the protection of sacred sites.

We all understand the Territory needs development. We need investment, jobs and infrastructure, but responsible development is not the same as reckless development. Responsible development requires proper, respectful consultation with traditional owners, proper respect for cultural authority in Aboriginal law, transparent and enforceable conditions on all certificates and a government willing to stand up for cultural heritage even when it is politically inconvenient.

The CLP government's actions send the opposite message. They tell the world that sacred sites are negotiable and that culture is an obstacle, not a value. That approach undermines not only Aboriginal people but the credibility of the Northern Territory as a responsible place to do business. We know that investors crave certainty and integrity. They want to know that when approvals are granted they are lawful, defensible and grounded in respect. When this government erodes the independence of AAPA and politicises the Sacred Sites Act, we invite risk, controversy and distrust.

This pattern of disregard did not start Vista Gold; we saw it in the Gunlom Falls case where the Federal Court and later the High Court found that the Director of National Parks had breached the Sacred Sites Act by authorising works that desecrated a sacred site. That case was a triumph for the rule of law and for the authority's integrity, but it also exposed the chronic vulnerability of sacred site protection when government agencies themselves fail to comply. Now, under this government, that vulnerability has been codified into policy. Instead of strengthening the system in the wake of Gunlom, the government has chosen to weaken it.

As an Independent member of this Assembly, I say clearly that the protection of sacred sites should not be the plaything of politics; it should be the cornerstone of our legislative integrity. An independent, properly funded and professionally supported AAPA should be a source of pride for every Territorian. It embodies the principle that development in the Territory must occur under two laws—Aboriginal law and Australian law working together, not in conflict.

Every day in this Chamber we hear the Member for Mulka saying, 'Work with me'. Every day he puts that invitation to people in this Chamber.

This is not support; this is sabotage. If we are serious about responsible development, this government must act now to restore proper funding to AAPA and guarantee its independence. It must review the penalty regime under the Act so that fines deter rather than reward corporate risk taking. It must reinstate genuine consultation processes with land councils and traditional owners. It must amend the Act to reverse the recent changes that have weakened protections and commit to full transparency in decision-making so that every authority certificate and condition is open to public scrutiny. These are not partisan objectives; they are essential steps to rebuild trust and uphold the Territory's reputation for fair and responsible governance.

This government has failed to support the authority, uphold the spirit and letter of the Sacred Sites Act, protect the cultural and spiritual heritage of this Territory and show respect to Aboriginal Territorians, including those in this Chamber.

In the Vista Gold case, the judge told us plainly that the fine was insignificant and the conduct was mercenary. That judgement should have prompted legislative action. Instead, this government used its majority to make things worse. Sacred sites are not an inconvenience to be managed; they are the living heart of Aboriginal

culture and, by extension, the living heart of this place we call the Northern Territory. To weaken their protection is to wound the Territory.

I thank the Member for Mulka for bringing this matter of public importance to the House. It is time to restore integrity and respect and put protection before profit and law before politics.

I commend this matter to the Assembly.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Mulka for bringing this matter of public importance to the Assembly.

I acknowledge the Larrakia people, the traditional custodians of the land we meet on in this parliament. Many people see this as a sacred place in the Westminster system. Each year, at the start of this Assembly, the Larrakia people come to this place and welcome all of us, as elected members, to represent every Territorian, and welcome us to their country.

What we have seen from the CLP government is a gutless act by Minister Burgoyne to make changes and weaken the rights of traditional owners. More recently we have seen that in play, taking away the rights of Larrakia people at the Waterfront. That is what was flagged by many Aboriginal organisations, from the land councils to Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, saying that the weakening of those protections will mean that development will go on at all costs. It is disappointing that the CLP government continues to disregard the voices of Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory and, just as importantly, the Larrakia people who welcome us here at the start of each Assembly.

As I have mentioned many times, sacred sites are dotted across the Northern Territory and have a profound significance for Aboriginal Territorians. I spoke earlier this year in the House about how they can be the hills, rocks, waterholes, trees, plains, lakes, billabongs and sky, amongst many other natural features, because they are not disconnected to us; they are all intertwined in who we are as Aboriginal people.

In the coastal and sea areas of Darwin, where the Larrakia people have lived for generations, sacred sites exist, including features above and below the water such as the culturally significant Stokes Hill Dreaming site, which is now under threat because of this CLP government. Because of legislative changes by this CLP government, a multistorey hotel can be built without triggering a new heritage assessment.

Sacred sites are the responsibility of Aboriginal custodians who protect them and whose rights and roles are intertwined through kinship and relationships to this land. Custodians play a vital role in managing the site and ensuring its safety. It is embodied in cultural knowledge, preserves important stories and assumes spiritual responsibilities for the land. This is all essential to honouring and sustaining our heritage. Most importantly, it is an intrinsic part of the continuing body of practice and beliefs for Aboriginal laws and our traditions.

Territory Labor recognises the importance of economic development. We are committing to supporting initiatives that responsibly drive growth in the Territory and create jobs, ensuring all Territorians benefit in the long term. However, it should be economic advancement that honours the Northern Territory's cultural heritage because economic progress and the protection of cultural heritage should co-exist, fostering mutual respect for traditional owners and their rights.

The CLP has consistently shown unacceptable transparency in this regard, especially when we hark back, only a few months ago, to the debate on the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Site Legislation Amendment Bill, a Bill crafted in secrecy without any genuine consultation with Aboriginal Territorians.

Although that Bill, unlike the three Bills introduced this morning, was sent to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee, the government members' performance on that committee was inadequate. The committee inquiry received over 30 submissions voicing concerns regarding the lack of consultation and the limited submission timeframe.

The Central Land Council stated in its submission:

> *There has been no genuine consultation about the Bill with the CLC or the people it represents.*

The committee refused to hold public hearings for 30 organisations, a move that blatantly sabotages the very nature of the appropriate scrutiny process and solidifies the secretive top-down nature of this CLP government, which has continually failed to consult on matters effectively.

Additionally, the submissions to the committee at the time made it clear that the Bill disrespected cultural authority, weakened protections and risks contravening federal law. Instead of strengthening protections, it damaged safeguards and muted Aboriginal voices, risking conflict where there should be consent. We have spoken about it in this Assembly several times. It is essential to talk, work together and create solutions that respect the views of Aboriginal Territorians. They need to be involved from the beginning.

This is the approach that a valid government grounded in integrity and genuine commitment to its people would embrace not conduct tokenistic meetings where the minister merely provides minimal details to check off a consultation requirement.

I travelled across my electorate and spoke with constituents who are infuriated by this government's decision regarding their land, culture and laws. I spoke to many constituents as this Bill was introduced to the parliament and they were completely shocked by what the government was proposing to put forward in the Bill at that time. The CLP tried to make us believe their approach would simplify processes but failed to tell us for whom.

Still, it is trying to cover up the profound consequences for traditional owners. That is because the government has now made it possible for certificates issued decades ago to be exploited by developers who are completely different from the custodians who hold cultural responsibility for that land, failing to acknowledge changes in land use, evolving cultural knowledge and the possibility that some knowledge holders may have passed away, undermining the traditional owners' rights to be heard on their own country. Aboriginal custodians whose sacred sites these certificates are designed to protect would have no say.

Authority certificates are not commercial licences. They must have an understanding. This understanding hinges on the recognition that specific individuals with distant contexts were granted explicit consent to engage in particular activities on sacred land. Aboriginal Territorians struggle with the government surrounding trust in what they say, what they do and how they use land.

I go back to the enforceable undertakings, which is another concerning feature highlighted by submissions which allows companies to privately negotiate outcomes when sacred sites are damaged rather than face prosecution. These deals can be made without informing custodians, without their advice and with no right of appeal, allowing accountability and transparency to be lost, sacred sites harmed and the response handled in secret. If a sacred site suffers damage, traditional owners must be involved in the response.

Territory Labor supports reform that works to empower traditional owners and not undercut their essential role as custodians of sacred sites. Our opposition is not to economic development; Labor supports responsible development that grows the Territory economy, creates jobs and delivers long-term benefits for all Territorians. Economic progress and cultural heritage protection are not mutually exclusive; they must go hand in hand, built on respect for traditional owners and their rights.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the topic regarding sacred sites in the Northern Territory is of importance, particularly when considering that a third of the Territory's population are Aboriginal Territorians.

The issue and the points raised by the Member for Mulka are topical in terms of the concerns from not just Aboriginal Territorians who have been raised with sacred sites, but also the general community, particularly those working in one of the four Aboriginal land councils who are tasked with being the prescribed body corporates of Aboriginal land. The statutory role they have under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act in recognising that 80% of the Northern Territory's coastline, or sea country, and 50% of the Northern Territory's landmass is Aboriginal land. It is safeguarded and cared for by Aboriginal custodians and recognised either as Aboriginal land or Aboriginal Lands Trust parcels.

That is pertinent to the recent issues centred on the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, its duties and its independent role for the care of sacred sites and the balance between what traditional owners want to see on country and proposals for development on country. The worry and mistrust is growing from Aboriginal Territorians as well as those who work in those important fields, particularly the ones we think should be independent.

It has become more of a concern under the CLP government—I say this in a polite, diplomatic way—where the lines of responsibility become blurred and the overreach and overstep of authority and power is becoming more obvious. The CLP does not understand that independent statutory bodies should be just that—independent of government. They should report to and meet with government, but they should not have the influence of government. We are seeing a deterioration of that independence, that perception of

independence and/or real independence—that should be noted for those important bodies, like the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, which has been heavily reported on recently.

The blurred lines between relationships and conflicts of interest that exist for CLP government ministers and members are more public. The more public it becomes, the less we hear from the CLP members, who often have a lot to say in the Chamber but do not answer the questions asked by the opposition and crossbench regarding those specific concerns. It is not something we are making up because we are members of parliament and not in government; they are real concerns that are growing across the community.

We are starting to see a level of activism and advocacy against the government because people feel that the government is not listening and taking their concerns seriously. They feel that they are being dismissed and set aside. These are not areas the government focuses on, pays attention to or provides due diligence and care. We are seeing the government transitioning on to a dangerous and slippery slope.

Many times before the August election in 2024, the CLP promised accountability, openness and responsibility to the people of the Northern Territory. Where are we 14 months later? More questions are being asked, and fewer are being responded to or answered. We see in the media that the government is not responding—a government spokesperson is code for the protection of a minister so that they do not implicate themselves.

Ministers have a sworn allegiance to the Crown, but we are seeing more deflection and turning away from responsibility and accountability. As I said yesterday, and it is just as relevant for this MPI, blaming the former Labor government for the past eight years or deflecting responsibilities and duties from the CLP to the federal Albanese Labor government—will we see this for the next three years? This lack of accountability, openness and transparency is starting to seem like a bad pattern of the CLP.

We do not have a minister responsible for sacred sites. The Member for Braitling spoke in response to the Member for Mulka's MPI, but he does not have that level of connection to the key stakeholders. He has a new connection, and that is fine—I am not dismissing it—but in regard to the relationships and care in those duties of government, the Member for Braitling has provided a small amount of response to the concerns raised. If we looked at it as a pie, we would have a large CLP pie and a tiny 5% slice of information coming out of that pie. The 95% is the big concern for Territorians in general, particularly when it comes to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and the questions not answered recently. This continues to remain a big focus of our community.

As the Member for Gwoja said, the clear connection between development on country, economic growth and social growth is embraced, particularly by our four Aboriginal land councils, but the balance has to be about respect for land, culture, country and of generational custodianship when it comes to sacred sites. By that measure, we know the Bill brought to parliament earlier this year by the Member for Braitling completely failed to hit the mark.

As the Member for Gwoja pointed out, the decision is many years old and things have moved on. It would be great if the CLP government recognised that our Aboriginal land councils have also moved on and matured with some of the areas they focus on, particularly when it comes to development. Some legislation federally has also impacted the Northern Territory, particularly during COVID when the biosecurity zones were enacted, and that was done with the full support of the four Aboriginal land councils to keep Territorians safe during the pandemic.

There is the ability to be agile, contemporary and modern, and there is the ability to recognise the thousands of generations of history and culture, trying to fit it into the parliamentary system. The Member for Mulka said it eloquently from the family member from Gan Gan regarding the law of the land. That really shows the deep connection not just to country but to knowledge and cultural heritage and protection, which is what the Sacred Sites Act is all about.

There is a lack of respect, transparency and genuine partnership with Aboriginal custodians. It cannot be lip service. For any person—it does not matter if you are black, brown, brindle or whatever—trust in a relationship can be broken quickly. It is hard to rebuild trust when it is broken. That could be from a political or personal sense.

The cultural protection the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act should provide is about balancing development and accountability. It is clear with everything that has come out over the last couple of months that the CLP's intention of changing the Sacred Sites Act, limiting engagement in being open and transparent about those changes was purely about one particular development in Darwin, on Larrakia country, as the Member for Mulka has spoken in depth about in presenting the matter of public importance.

At the bare minimum, if a sacred site is damaged, traditional owners must be empowered to be a part of that response. That is why the independence of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority is important. Sacred sites are the heart of culture. If they have been damaged, it can damage years and years of connection to country, language and stories, together with the health and wellbeing of the next generation whose responsibility will be to take on the custodianship of that sacred site. If a sacred site is damaged, ruined or desecrated that damages the current and future generations of traditional owners and custodians because that part of culture, language and story no longer exists.

To put it in a modern European sense, when we saw the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris burning many people around the world, whether they had been there or not, were quite affected. It is an historic building with much story and Western ceremony in being a church. The cathedral took years to repair. It will never be the same, but that damage made a big impact on not only the people of Paris and France, but also people around the world.

When it comes to connection, what does it mean if I cannot see a sacred site or know the stories of a sacred site? Think of it in the Western sense and how it can, hopefully, correlate and transcend cultures to provide an insight into how important it is to have places of such significance that they become sacred. I used Notre Dame as an example because most people in the Western world can understand and connect to that.

Hopefully, that provides the Assembly with a bit of insight into why the matter of public importance by the Member for Mulka has been raised. If you have legislation to protect sacred sites, look at it in the French sense as being about the protection of historic buildings such as Notre Dame. We need to ensure there are provisions, guidelines and ongoing cultural maintenance to balance the needs and aspirations of traditional owners with the healthy growth of the economy and business on country.

I know we cannot change anything at the moment because in the Western political system the government has the numbers; it can squash or pass whatever it wants without any care for what other members of parliament say or do. That resonates to the rest of the Territory and the people we represent in our electorates.

The cultural heartbreak of sacred sites being damaged is not just about heritage, but also the health and wellbeing of those generations who rely on that connection. Sacred sites and protected sites continue to be significant places for traditional owners, clans and tribes who need that connection as part of their culture. This needs to be preserved for the future generations for the health and wellbeing of their family.

I thank the Member for Mulka for bringing such an important matter to the House. Unfortunately, I think it will continue to be a topic that we need to follow closely. Tonight there has been much food for thought for government members to reflect on and think about how to engage with Aboriginal Territorians and respect the independence of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE
Referral to Committee of Privileges – Member for Nightcliff

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from the Member for Goyder written notification of a matter of privilege. I have considered the matter in accordance with Standing Order 229 and determined that the matter should have precedence over all other business.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Nightcliff be referred to the Committee of Privileges for an investigation into the misuse of electorate office entitlements for the purpose of electioneering as detailed below.

On 23 October 2025 from 5.30 pm, the NT Greens hosted a casual information session and ‘Introduction into the NT Greens’ event. This event included discussions on elections, fundraising and more. The event took place at the Nightcliff electorate office, located at Shop 5, Pavonia Way, which is paid for by the NT taxpayer. The purpose of this event is alleged to be for driving recruitment for the NT Greens political party.

This event breaches clause 11.3 of Report and Determination No 3 of 2024, Salaries and Other Entitlements of Assembly Members, which states:

> *The Member must ensure that the office is not used for commercial or electioneering purposes.*

This event also breaches clause 12.5 of the members’ guide and section 10 of the Legislative Assembly (Members’ Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards) Act 2008.

I seek leave to table three screenshots of the event.

Leave granted.

Mr MACKAY: The event was advertised as, 'A talk about decision-making, policies, elections, fundraising and more. Please come along to this casual info session.' On the event page, it talks about 'the ways you can get involved with our growing movement'.

It is incredibly important that we use our electorate offices for their purpose, which is helping our constituents. For the NT Greens to have a political event hosted at a taxpayer-funded office is unacceptable.

Madam SPEAKER: I inform the Assembly that about 20 minutes after I received notification of this motion, I tried to contact the Member for Nightcliff. I managed to get hold of her and inform her that this was occurring, out of respect for her in this case.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Ms BOOTHBY (Brennan): Madam Speaker, I will talk about an event that I went to a couple of weeks ago, which was the Vietnamese Mid-Autumn Festival, or Children's Festival, as they call it. In Vietnamese it is called Tet Trung Thu.

I was joined at this great event by my colleagues the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Member for Casuarina. When we arrived all the children were dancing to a host of well-known classic songs, such as *Gangnam Style*, *Macarena* and *Nutbush City Limits*; the kids were having a ball. The committee members were up and dancing, leading the way.

I missed it, but my colleagues got up on stage with the children to hand out gifts of little red envelopes with a coin in each one, because it is the Children's Festival. It is a strong Vietnamese tradition.

A big thank you goes to the Vietnamese Community in Australia NT Chapter Inc. This organisation is a not-for-profit. It is led entirely by volunteers who work hard to try to bring not only the Vietnamese community together, but everybody.

On that night there was a number of families from across the Top End, not just Vietnamese people and politicians. It was wonderful to see everyone celebrating the Children's Festival together.

I give a big shout-out to Mr Thien Le, president; Ms Hong Hai, vice-president; Mr Quan Tien, secretary; Mr Hieu Cao, treasurer; Ms Phuong Le, public officer; and committee members, Mr Viet Trang, Mrs Thuy Nguyen, Mr Hiep Cao and Mr Hieu Hoang.

A special shout-out goes to Ms Phuong Le, because she is a wonderful master of ceremonies. She has so much energy and passion; she encourages everybody to get up and get involved. My colleagues and I were asked to be judges of some dancing competitions, and it was hard to choose because they were all enthusiastic.

Dinner was served, and we ate mooncakes. It was wonderful to try different flavours of mooncakes that Phuong had organised for the guests in the crowd. Thank you to everybody at the Vietnamese Community in Australia NT Chapter.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, I will make a joyful announcement at the end of my speech, but I need to give a bit of context as to how we get to this joyful announcement.

I have reflected that we all need survival skills to deal with the cut and thrust of parliament. We are generally here for good purpose, but we occasionally have a go at and get to each other, so we need survival skills.

I recall the Member for Daly and I having a little conversation saying that you need thick skins here, and that is good. My wife and I have developed …

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! I note the clock did not start at 10 minutes, so we will give him another 10.

Madam SPEAKER: That is generous.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: Thank you. I do not want this videoed too much, and you will understand why.

My wife and I have probably gone through the biggest test, along with other people in this Chamber, of developing survival skills that will take us through. This is probably the hardest test that anyone can do. I got through this survival test, not with flying colours, and I probably have a lot of battle scars.

What is that survival test? Simply surviving a two-year phase of a growing teenage daughter. I guarantee if you can do that you can survive anything. As you know I have a lovely son, Fergus, and my darling daughter, Nadia. I have spoken much about Fergus and how he has become a fantastic paramedic. He was like every other boy; boys are just linear in the way they develop. They become a pain in the arse at times, may I say. They become lazy and messy, go off with their mates and all that stuff. Some of them go off the rails a bit and then they come back on, but it is linear.

I reflect on the Member for Blain, who has three young boys. You and your family will have challenges, Member for Blain, but you will get through them, including the teenage years.

A daughter is totally different. It is not linear; you get 'Miss Chaos'. She is wonderful. Let me explain. Until she was 11 years old, I was probably the best thing since sliced bread. Then overnight, I am the biggest dag in the world. It just flips like that. I do not know what happens, and I am sure it has something to do with puberty and hormones and all that. For some reason—I do not know whether it happens with all the girls, but it happened with mine—they almost go into Greek mythology, as the Member for Drysdale would say. She seems to become an incarnate out of Hades, spawned by, I do not know, Medusa combined with Freddy Krueger. That is what you end up with.

The Member for Drysdale has two lovely young children. He has been in the services and has done a lot of testing himself. All I can say is be afraid—be very afraid.

Mr HOWE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! My daughters will be the most beautiful daughters forever and always be the shining light. That will never change.

Madam SPEAKER: I hate to say this, but that is not a point of order.

Mr O'GALLAGHER: That is okay; I fully understand. Let me continue.

How did I describe this two-year phase? I had to think what the characteristics were. I think it was the slamming-the-door phase. I do not know whether you have had that, but you could not do anything right. They would walk out and slam the door—bang! How do you cope with this? My wife and I learned how to cope with it. When the door slammed, you could say, 'Right, now is a good time to get a gin and tonic and jump in the pool', and let them think they upset you. Or they would send you to Coventry, 'I am not talking to mum and dad'. That was a great time to pretend we were sulking, but actually go out on a date night. We finally got it.

You have to do these things. She went through a phase early on when she did not want anything to do with yucky boy germs. She was with her girlfriends. I would drop her off at school and say, 'Love you, Nadia. Enjoy your day at school', and suddenly it became, 'Could you drop me 100 metres back and I'll walk up there, dad? Don't you come anywhere near my friends.' This is what it was. They get past that.

For some reason, this devil incarnate suddenly gets transformed again—metamorphosis. Suddenly they become the most loving person ever. They want to do everything to look after you—probably after money at the same time, may I say—but it is fantastic. My lovely daughter got over her aversion to boy germs and delivered us a wonderful grandchild who is the darling of our heart, Arlo.

I celebrate that Arlo is seven today. On behalf of my family, we wish Arlo the happiest birthday.

My darling daughter, Nadia, who I love, has posted about her son turning seven with a series of photos. I will read what she wrote. It is a simple paragraph, but it describes the love that people have:

‘Seven years of giggles, cuddles and lessons in joy. Seven years of you. My heart could burst. My sweet boy with the biggest heart and gentlest soul, you are my greatest inspiration and my purest joy. Happy birthday, Arly bear. I love you.’

Nadia, I also love you.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I will speak about the events and wonderful things that have happened over the last couple of months.

I acknowledge that the Member for Goyder last night highlighted the wonderful work of Paving the Way NT and the difference it has made at the home of rugby, the Territory Rugby League Stadium. As minister for Sport and for Disability I sincerely thank Melanie and Terry Moore and everyone involved in this terrific community effort. By creating an accessible pathway between fields 1 and 2, they have made sure that people with disabilities, seniors, parents with prams and families can enjoy the game together. This is the Territory spirit at its best—people seeing a need, stepping up and getting it done. My heartfelt thanks goes to Paving the Way NT for its generosity, compassion and leadership in making sport more inclusive for everyone.

I have attended many multicultural events and meetings since our last parliamentary sittings. I was honoured to join the Catholic Diocese of Darwin’s Eucharistic procession as part of the Jubilee of Hope, along with the Member for Port Darwin. The streets of Darwin came alive with faith, culture and community, with parishioners carrying banners, grouped in traditional dress and the true spirit of unity. It was a moving celebration of pilgrims of hope in our jubilee year.

It was an honour to attend the Shilanyas Mahapuja Vidhi foundation stone laying ceremony, on behalf of the Chief Minister, for the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Darwin. I took part in laying foundation bricks on the land on which the temple will be constructed. This was a significant moment for the BAPS community, and I thank the Members for Port Darwin and Casuarina for being actively part of the event. I thank Keval Patel, Anand Panchal and the team at BAPS for the invitation to the grand celebration.

It was a pleasure to attend the 2025 Multicultural Cup football match, a fantastic event promoting men’s wellbeing through sport. I was delighted to support an inclusive and positive initiative that brings our community together. Thank you to Edwin and all the volunteers from the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory.

I had a fun evening with the Vietnamese community at the 2025 Lantern Festival at the Darwin Waterfront. The evening was filled with colour, culture and community spirit—from children’s lanterns and laughter to families sharing traditions across generations. Thank you to the president, Lan Anh Dam; vice president, Ben Nguyen; and the Australian Vietnamese Family Association for bringing this beautiful celebration to life. I thank the Members for Port Darwin and Karama for being there to celebrate this special occasion with the Vietnamese community.

I was honoured to join the Hindu Society of Northern Territory for the grand reopening of the Hindu temple, marked by the Kumbhabhishekam consecration ceremony. The vibrant and spiritual celebration was led by president and founding secretary, Mr Sabaratnam Prathapan. It was a proud moment for the community. I thank the Member for Karama for representing the Chief Minister and handing over a plaque to the community, and the Members for Casuarina and Wanguri for being there.

I thoroughly enjoyed a musical tribute to the legendary S.P. Balasubrahmanyam at the Ilaya Nila Isai Kuzhu concert at CDU, with an incredible performance by Keshav, Rajkumar, Saanvi, Sanjeev Patel, Girish, Padmaja, Dr Satbit Aulakh and many other talented local artists. It was a wonderful event. Local talent entertained with Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu and Kannada performances celebrating music from our Indian community. Thank you to Raj Kumar and team at Ilaya Nila Isai Kuzhu Darwin.

It was great to attend the Miss Multicultural NT 2025 High Tea for High-Value Women with the Members for Brennan, Port Darwin and Wanguri. The Miss Multicultural NT initiative is dedicated to empowering women from diverse cultural backgrounds who live in the Northern Territory. I look forward to attending the coronation ceremony in November.

A big thank you goes to everyone who joined us at Parliament House for the Yogan Sathianathan Multicultural Awards. It was a privilege to open Parliament House and welcome so many esteemed guests as we honoured Yogan’s legacy of service and commitment to multiculturalism. Since 2017 the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory has carried on this tradition. It was inspiring to see individuals and organisations

recognised for their contributions to building an inclusive, harmonious community. I extend my thanks to all nominees, supporters and attendees for making this a special celebration of Yogan's enduring impact. I thank the Members for Barkly, Port Darwin, Fannie Bay, Karama and Wanguri for being there to support and congratulate winners and finalists.

I was humbled to represent the Northern Territory Government alongside the Member for Wanguri at Jervois Park, paying tribute to the young lives tragically lost and the thousands injured in the recent devastating events in Nepal. We stood with the Nepalese community in mourning to offer our deepest condolences and to reaffirm our government's support and solidarity during this painful time. Being far from loved ones in moments of grief is never easy. The vigil reminded us of the strength of community, the importance of compassion and the deep connection Territorians feel with their families, near or far. To everyone affected, we are with you. May those who lost their lives rest in peace and may healing begin for the families and friends who carry their memories forward. I thank the President of the Nepalese Association of Northern Territory, Prativa Devkota Sharma, and President of the Non-Residential Nepali Association NT, Sanzeev Gorkhali Dhakal, for bringing the community together during this difficult time.

I had a wonderful time representing the Chief Minister to celebrate the Durga Puja with the Puja and Cultural Association of Northern Territory. The performances, food and warm hospitality beautifully reflected the spirit of tradition and togetherness. I thank the Members for Brennan and Casuarina for being there to celebrate with the community. Thank you to Dr Swadhin Paul, Debabroto Roy and the entire Puja and Cultural Association of Northern Territory team for putting together this event.

I visited the Khmer temple in Marrara with my family to pay our respects at the Pchum Ben Festival. Pchum Ben, also known as Ancestors' Day, is a sacred Cambodian tradition to honour and remember loved ones who have passed, through offerings, prayers and acts of kindness. It was a privilege to share this moment and to meet Venerable Vanessa Koy at the temple.

I had the opportunity of celebrating Tet Trung Thu, the Vietnamese Mid-Autumn Festival, with the Vietnamese Community NT Chapter. It was a fun atmosphere. It was special to be invited to hand out the lanterns to children and take part in their parade. It was a hard job to crown the best dancers on the evening, as the Member for Brennan said earlier. I thank Mr Le, president, and Phuong Le for a terrific evening, and the Member for Casuarina for being there as part of the celebration and spending time with the community.

I thank Mithun Keesara, Naresh Reddy and Bitla Srinivas from the Telangana Association of Darwin for inviting me to the 2025 Bathukamma Festival at the Kalymnian Brotherhood Hall. Bathukamma is a unique cultural event that beautifully symbolises the creativity and unity of Telugu women as they pay homage to Gaura Devi, the patron goddess of women and womanhood.

Thank you to the Jewish community of the Northern Territory and Chabad of Rural and Regional Australia for welcoming me to the Pre-Rosh Hashanah Shabbat dinner. It was a privilege to share in this special occasion. I thank Vida Goodvach for the invitation.

I was honoured to join the celebration of the 80th anniversary of Indonesia's Independence Day on behalf of the Chief Minister. I enjoyed the evening with our Indonesian friends and community. Thank you to Consul Bagus Hendraning Kobarsih for the warm hospitality and to all the wonderful dancers celebrating Indonesian culture. I thank the minister for Asian Relations and the Member for Wanguri for celebrating along with the community.

The Navratri festival at Marrara was a spectacular evening of colour, rhythm and joyful dancing. Thank you to Hiranch Patel of the Gujarati Cultural Association of Darwin for inviting me to share in such a vibrant celebration.

Congratulations to the Multicultural Sports Association NT for successfully hosting the first-ever T10 cricket cup in Darwin. I congratulate all the organisers, players and volunteers who made this milestone event possible.

I was delighted to join the Darwin Malayalee Association for the Onam celebration. I thank the president, Monsi, for welcoming me. I was privileged to represent the Chief Minister for the evening function. I thank Monsi from the Darwin Malayalee Association and Thejas from the Darwin Malayalee Forum for attending the event at parliament and celebrating along with the community.

It was a joy to pop into the Moon Festival celebration with the NT Timor Chinese Association. Thanks to the president, Tim Mu, and Kivi Lay.

Ms CAHILL (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, I recognise three members of the Port Darwin electorate who were recently awarded the prestigious status of Senior of Excellence in the Northern Territory.

This award was established by well-known Territorian Mike Foley OAM and recognises and celebrates senior Territorians aged 65-plus who have given, and in many instances still give, significant amounts of their personal time volunteering for charities, community service organisations and other events. These are people who do not expect or seek, and most often do not receive, recognition for their contributions to a grateful community.

A big congratulations goes to John Whyte, Valma Eaton and John Pudney on being elevated to a Territorian Senior of Excellence.

On 18 September I attended St Mary's Catholic Primary School's performance, *Emotion Commotion*. It was a wonderful production that blended music and movement to tell the story of Miley, a student navigating an ordinary school day filled with change, challenge and self-discovery. Miley journeys through a colourful landscape of emotions, learning along the way how all emotions are important and that how we express and manage them defines the kind of person we grow up to be.

There were energetic performances, and it was clear that the students from St Mary's had worked hard with their teachers to bring Miley's journey to life. When I attended the school assembly a couple of days later, some of the children were still wearing their costumes from the night, so clearly it made a big impression.

I congratulate all the students, teachers and parents involved, with a special mention for the talented team who played Miley and her emotions: Pearl Adamson; Carter Evans; Maya Abidrabbu; Maddy Nash; Ekaagar Sandhu; Lincoln Barwell; and Esther Chin. It will be a hard act to follow, but I cannot wait to see what the students do next year.

I also congratulate students from St Mary's who recently received my citizenship award, including Jazmine Broom for always showing care and compassion by checking in on others and supporting their wellbeing—her kindness helps create a positive and caring environment for everyone—and to Ekaagar Sandhu for showing empathy and leadership by welcoming all students and ensuring everyone feels included and part of the group.

On 15 October I was delighted to be a judge for the Brew Dreams Coffee Training Latte Art Smackdown 2025. Hotly contested by 30 of Darwin's best baristas, this was the third year of the competition. After almost two hours of tense competition, it was finally down to three: Nelson Lin from Meow Waffee—Meow Waffles and Coffee, located in the Vic Arcade, Darwin city mall; Lucky Salvador from Laneway Coffee, Parap; and Jianeta Lambert from The Rabbithole, Darwin city mall.

There can only be one winner, and for the second year in a row Nelson took out the title of Latte Art Smackdown Champion. Lucky placed second and Jianeta, third. Well done to Alex Phan from the CBD's Harvest Press who was named the competition's rising star.

A big thank you goes to Prabin Maharjan, the entrepreneurial owner of Dukes Cafe + Eatery and founder of Brew Dreams Coffee Training, for his vision in establishing the competition celebrating Darwin's cafe culture—something I am sure will continue.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate several outstanding educators from schools in the Fannie Bay electorate who have been named as finalists in the 2025 World Teachers' Day NT Awards.

These awards celebrate the excellence, dedication and innovation shown by teachers and school staff who go above and beyond for our students and communities. This year Fannie Bay has four remarkable finalists.

Cimarra Stephenson from Parap Primary School is a finalist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator of the Year. Cimarra was recognised for her leadership in culturally responsive teaching and her deep commitment to strengthening connections between community and school.

Tyson Colmer from Darwin Middle School is a finalist for School-Based Support Person of the Year, acknowledged for his invaluable role supporting students' learning, wellbeing and inclusion.

Aaron Dalgleish from Darwin High School and Tina Nugent from Darwin Middle School are finalists in the Secondary Educator of the Year. They each exemplify the highest standards of teaching practice, innovation and care for their students' success.

These educators are not just teachers; they are mentors, leaders and role models who shape the future of our young people and the Territory. Their recognition as finalists is well-deserved and I thank them for the passion and professionalism they bring to their work. I ask the Assembly to join me in congratulating Cimarra, Tyson, Aaron and Tina on their achievements.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs ZIO: I also congratulate the other nominees and finalists. Unfortunately, the others are not lucky enough to be from the amazing Fannie Bay electorate, but I know their schooling communities will be proud of them.

I celebrate and thank all of those who make the education of our students their career and who nurture our young people.

A program that gives me immense pride is the 2025 Youth Parliament delivered by the Y Northern Territory. It is a nonpartisan leadership and advocacy initiative that provides an extraordinary opportunity for young Territorians to experience parliamentary democracy firsthand and to research, debate and develop practical solutions to real issues affecting our communities.

From 23 to 25 September, 29 inspiring young people took over Parliament House for NT Youth Parliament Sitting Week. Over three days participants debated Bills and presented two petitions. It was a week full of energy, ideas, collaboration and genuine passion for making the Northern Territory a better place. Each Bill reflected the insight and maturity of our Territory's youth. There were amazingly talented public speakers, debaters and potential politicians.

Two strong petitions were presented and one of them, which took a little piece of my heart, was from Alpurrurulam School. It called for a solution to the Lake Nash Station bore issue to ensure access to safe drinking water—a problem that has been ongoing for more than 14 years with no fix. The Minister for Essential Services has ensured me that he is working hard to find a solution to this, so watch this space. Special recognition goes to the youth press gallery, which captured every highlight of the week through photos, interviews and stories, ensuring that the voices of participants were seen and heard far and wide.

I also thank and acknowledge the dedicated team at the Y NT for their exceptional work. Its leadership and mentoring has provided the foundation for this entire program. Thanks also go to the volunteers and expert mentors.

I thank the generous corporate donors who ensure the program is successful; Phillips Foundation; the NT Office of Youth Affairs; Qantas Regional Grants; Airport Development Group; and Co-Ground. Their continued support has ensured that Youth Parliament remains accessible and impactful. A big thank you goes to the mentors and my parliamentary colleagues who took time to chair sessions in the Chamber. I personally supported students, two from Darwin High School and two from St John's Catholic College, to participate in the program. It was a privilege to see the next generation of civic leaders in action.

A few words from some participants perfectly capture what Youth Parliament is about. One young person said, 'I realised how powerful my voice is and how I can speak with conviction even when I am nervous. It made me feel like I could really push for change.' Another said, 'It was amazing raising awareness on issues special to me, being supported and hearing others share their ideas. I am overjoyed from the experience.'

The young Territorians who stepped into the Chamber for Youth Parliament have shown intelligence, courage and heart. They remind us that the future is in excellent hands, and I thank and congratulate them for their brave contribution.

For the formal record, I want to name the participants in the program. Students from schools in Alice Springs were Preet Kaur Gill, Ryan Hayward and Benjamin Chavez; from Carers NT—somebody who many of us have met—Mr Christopher Sampson; from CDU, Hajrah Kamran, Amina Salha, Hriday Nayyar and Gilbert Tanoto; from the northern suburbs schools, Peta Gibson, Demelza Gikopoulos, Hannah Baczynski, Charlotte Harn, Ryan Carpenter and Sean Hagan; from Darwin High School, Zachary Giles, Indiana Grimes, Anh Huynh, Zoe Francis, Supipi Rathnayake, Pak Chan and Nokthor Tripura; from St Johns, Afia Azam, Virginia Dias Quintas, Harnoor Kaur and Patricia Sefu; from Alpurrurulam, Malcolm Billy and Tarrant Anderson; and from Tennant Creek High School, Maleah Presley and Shakina Frank. Thank you to all those children.

On 12 September I was part of the unveiling of a new mural at the Darwin Ski Club that I helped to sponsor, and I have a nice little plaque there to say thank you. I am proud to say that some of the donations went to

AusTurtle Inc, a sea turtle research and conservation program that does amazing work in the Territory. The artist for the mural, Mary Franklin, did an amazing job around the pool. It would be good if you go and have a look and acknowledge her work.

The Member for Fong Lim mentioned in his adjournment speech earlier this week that on 5 September we had a community movie night at the George Brown Botanic Gardens, which was awesome. It brought together people from across the community, with three different electorates represented. It was a good night for the community.

Next Friday, Halloween, will be my next community event in Parap. Last year about 350 people attended, so this year we will make sure that we have enough sausages and lollies for the kids. We will have Fairy Jill, face painting, balloon making, a sausage sizzle and that sort of fun stuff.

On Saturday I went to my first event as patron of the Waratah Football Club, which was the first home round for this year. It was good. There were jumping castles, and Dane Swan also came to play for the Waratahs.

I am also the patron for the PINT Football Club. I look forward to this season, which is the club's celebration of 10 years with the women's premier league. I am working with the club to develop the team of the decade. I played for PINT Football Club in my younger years, so we will see whether I make the list—probably not.

I am at the Parap market every week. I open my community room from about 8.30 am or 9 am through to 1.30 pm. People come in to have a chat and eat their laksas in air conditioning, so please come down and say hello.

On 9 September I attended the Pathways to Politics for Women graduation, a program I took part in a few years ago. It was nice to see those ladies graduate. If anybody ever wants to join that program, I highly recommend it; it gives good insight into the world of politics, and you make some friends along the way.

As some in the Chamber have mentioned over the last two weeks of sittings, I took part in the AFL Masters football competition from 28 September to 4 October. It was an amazing event. So many people came to the Territory, spent money and built the economy. It was good. It was hot, it was hard, and I think I hurt myself more than anybody else hurt me—I gave myself a corky, which is pretty hard to do.

On 19 September I attended the Deckchair Cinema to open the Darwin International Film Festival with *Top End Bub*, an amazing eight-episode series. It was good. Thank you to everybody who brought that to the Territory.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is great to talk about the 2025 AusArt giving day. I had the pleasure this morning of coming to work and wandering over with the Leader of the Opposition, Selena Uibo, to make the first few calls at Brown's Mart as part of its phone-a-thon for AusArt Day. It is still going, so everyone still has time to whip out their phones, go to creative.gov.au and make a donation to a Territory arts organisation. It is an opportunity to support our amazing arts organisations and to remind us that we should not just have one day; we should, at every opportunity, make donations and a commitment to supporting Territory arts.

The Leader of the Opposition and I went over this morning, got on the ringer and started calling people. Donations were coming in. I think a few people were surprised to get a call from the Leader of the Opposition or the Member for Gwoja asking them to donate to a wonderful, worthy cause. Those phone calls were friendly, and the donations were coming through. It was not your standard calling that many members in this parliament do; it was great.

It is an amazing opportunity to recognise and celebrate how fortunate we are to live here surrounded by creative Territorians who showcase the arts. There is a plethora of arts organisations to which people can donate. From our Top End cities to our regional towns—Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and across the bush—we see creative energy and projects coming together.

AusArt Day is a reminder that every contribution counts. Even a small one helps artists create work, young performers get their start or community projects launch and get new audiences. I continue to look forward to supporting our artists. We might be small in population, but we are big in creativity. Our art community goes above and beyond, showcasing the talent of the Territory on national and international stages.

Recently, I joined the Papuan community in the Northern Territory to celebrate 50 years of Papua New Guinea's independence—a milestone of pride, strength and identity for our neighbours and friends from across the sea.

The 50th anniversary celebrations were full of music, joy, love and culture—a true reflection of the rich diversity that makes up Papua New Guinea. From the traditional dances to beautifully crafted songs and dress, it was a celebration of spirit and resilience and a reminder of the deep and enduring connection between our communities.

The Northern Territory Papua New Guinean community is strong and shares strong ties through geography, history and many families who now call both places home. We are connected by sea, culture and shared respect for community and tradition. As we marked this golden jubilee, we celebrated not just 50 years of independence but of progress, self-determination and nationhood—a remarkable journey for the people of Papua New Guinea in sharing and shaping their own destiny.
I acknowledge the NT's members of the Papua New Guinea Association of Australia and all community members who volunteered and made it such a powerful celebration. The pride, unity and warmth shown through the festivities is nothing other than a true, important and powerful reflection of our multicultural community.

As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to the next 50 years of friendship, partnership and shared opportunity between Papua New Guinea, Australia and the people of the Northern Territory. To all who celebrated this moment, congratulations and a happy 50th anniversary to Papua New Guinea.

I recently joined the Malayalee community in Darwin to celebrate Onam with the Member for Sanderson, Jinson Charls; the Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling; and the Member for Wanguri, Oly Carlson. It was a joyful, vibrant festival for the Indian community. Onam is an important time in our community, a celebration of colour, culture and community that brings families together. Neighbours share food, music, dance and tradition. It is a festival that reminds us of the values of generosity, unity and gratitude—things that speak to the heart of what makes the Northern Territory special.

The energy and hospitality of the Malayalee community were on display, and I acknowledge the Darwin Malayalee Association President, Monsi. From the stunning traditional dances to the incredible feasts—the food was incredible—it was a celebration that reflected the deep cultural pride and inclusive spirit that defines our multicultural Territory.

I acknowledge the Darwin Malayalee Forum and all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this event a success. Events like this strengthen the bonds with our community and remind us that the Territory's greatest strength is diversity. To everyone who celebrated Onam, thank you for sharing your stories, culture and joy with us. Onam is the festival of harvest and is a major festival in Kerala, and it was wonderful to share that celebration with many in the community. I look forward to future events with the Malayalee community to celebrate that vibrance.

I recently attended the Tangentyere family fun day, an event in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) that celebrates community, culture and connection. Hosted by the Tangentyere Council at the Alice Springs Aquatic & Leisure Centre, it brought the community together—it was community spirit at its best. Town camp community members came together to celebrate with the rest of the community, showcasing town camp pride.

The family fun day had stalls, cultural and community events and a barbecue where everyone shared a feed. CAAMA Radio was there doing a live broadcast, and our brothers and sisters on stage gave a stellar concert performance for the community. We were celebrating what it is like to come together for these important events.

I acknowledge the organisers, Tangentyere Council, all the volunteers and everyone who contributed to making this day such a success. Your dedication ensures that families across our community and our town camps have a safe and welcoming space to come together and celebrate.

Events like the Tangentyere family fun day show that our greatest strength is our people. I thank the community for inviting me to share in such an important occasion, along with the wonderful Mayor of Alice Springs, Asta Hill, and Larissa Ellis, an Alice Springs councillor.

I want to give Tangentyere Council a plug. It often gets talked about in the media. It is a large organisation that looks after town campers and cares for kids, youth services, aged care, looking after town campers, strong leadership, men's behavioural change programs, strong women's and men's groups, the Future Yayes

group and municipal services such as Tangentyere Construction, Design, Job Shop and Artists—Tangentyere is there for our community through and through, proud to stand up for town campers as they have for over 40 years.

If members of this parliament have not had the opportunity to share and celebrate a Tangentyere family fun day, make sure you chuck it on the list for next year. You will not be disappointed; it is a great day. I give a big shout-out to my family. My uncle Bayden Williams, who was the MC of the Tangentyere family fun day, did a great job.

A lot will happen. We are hearing tonight about the great work across all the electorates, and I look forward to hearing more of those positive stories when we come together in November for the last sittings of this year.

Mrs HERSEY (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, yesterday the Member for Fannie Bay, Laurie Mrs Zio, and I attended the Darwin High Achievers' Lunch.

I congratulate all the high achievers who attended to celebrate their dedication and commitment to their studies. To the families and carers who have supported the students through their studies, I wish them the best in their upcoming exams. Thank you also to Principal Joe Hewitt and Assistant Principal Sevi Redwood who shared stats on the success of the VET training courses.

It was interesting to hear that quite a few of those high achievers had done their Certificate III as well, which was quite smart of them. Some of the courses will allow them to get part-time work while they are studying at uni.

We gave out certificates to students, and they had a beautiful cake. I did not get where the cake was from, and I am not sure if the Member for Fannie Bay did, but it was magnificent.

Thanks to all of the Year 12 teachers and support staff. Their dedication and commitment to their students is to be commended. Good luck to all the students in their quest for academic excellence. I wish them well in their upcoming exams.

Last Friday we attended the Chief Minister's Awards for Excellence in the Public Sector, a fantastic night at the Darwin Convention Centre. They recognise the ingenuity, resilience, capacity and hard work of the people and teams that make up our incredible public sector. There was a lot to celebrate on a night recognising many members for their significant contribution to the public sector.

The Rebuilding the Territory's Economy Award went to the Tax and Homeowner Grant Reforms for Rebuilding the Economy from the Department of Treasury and Finance.

The Restoring the Territory Lifestyle Award went to Swimming and Water Safety in Schools, Department of Education and Training. You know how passionate I am about education, but the fact is that the Territory offers an amazing lifestyle with so many people who get out in our waterways. It is important that kids learn to swim in school, and that was an election commitment that we rolled out across the Territory.

The Safer Territory Award went to the 'Reducing Crime' Legislative Reform, Attorney-General's Department.

The Outstanding Partnerships Award went to Safer Care, NT Health.

The Excellence in Frontline Service Delivery award went to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre's Looking to the Future: A review of SARC's Model of Care, NT Health.

The Inspiring Innovation Award went to the Array Digital Games and Esports Centre, Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations. I am not sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, if you have been to the Array, but it is a fantastic place in the mall.

The Empowering our Communities Award went to Celebrating 25 Years of Youth Week in the Territory, Department of People, Sport and Culture.

The Spirit of the Territory Award went to the delivery of the Workforce Services HR Service Centre, Department of Corporate and Digital Development.

There were two finalists who received highly commended awards, projects that reflect the principles and values of the government's priority pillars. The Excellence in Frontline Service Delivery highly commended

award went to the Berrimah Correctional Centre Commissioning Project with the Department of Corrections in partnership with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure and NT Health.

It was a great joy to congratulate Katherine School of the Air Principal Donna Bryant, Assistant Principal Jess Screaigh and teachers Madi Stubbs and Sara Miller on their highly commended award. The Education department won two awards. I was proud to congratulate them on the hard work they were highly commended for, which was KSA Connect for the Inspiring Innovation Award.

Ronald Kirk was recognised for more than 50 years of service to the Northern Territory Public Sector. That is a wonderful achievement and acknowledgement of his dedication and contribution.

Eight Chief Minister's public service medals were presented. The 2025 recipients were Mrs Eva Kafetzis; Mr Anthony Shelley—Tony as we all know him—Mr Don McKinnon; Ms Angela Brannelly, who until recently was the executive director at Katherine Hospital; Ms Lorraine Corowa; Ms Neva McCartney, the executive director of Parks and Wildlife—a fun fact is that I reckon about 30 years ago I taught her daughter, Leshea, swimming in Katherine when I was a swimming teacher—Ms Naomi Hanson for outstanding Aboriginal leadership; and Mr Terrence Guyula for outstanding Aboriginal leadership.

It was a fantastic night. I thank all public sector employees for all the hard work they do.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, an important program has just been put into Wadeye. I was there with Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, to see the new Wadeye DigiHub facility. I shout out to the Wadeye Women's Centre that has been advocating to the government for this project to come to fruition. We are living in a digital age, and that includes our remote communities. The DigiHub was funded by NIAA, by Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, and it means that people will now have access to online banking, assistance with their resume or the internet to do their everyday business like we do in Darwin. It was also pleasing to see Maurice Karui, a Kardu Diminin traditional owner from Wadeye.

Their computer has photos that go back to when Wadeye (Port Keats) was first established, and the different men's and women's ceremonies that have happened over time, and from when Father Docherty first went there in the 1930s. It restores their history of first contact for the area of the Thamarrurr region and ensures that the ceremonies are kept there for the next generations to see and to help keep their culture alive and strong.

The DigiHub has also established an impressive training classroom. The Batchelor Institute came to run training programs for Wadeye mob. It lets people stay in their community and on country to do their training. A concern that came from the women's centre and its board was that when people went to town or to Batchelor or interstate to train, they sometimes had cultural obligations to be home. It was hard for people to finish courses because of the other responsibilities and obligations that they had for their families. Having this new training facility based in Wadeye means institutions such as Batchelor or TAFE can now be used for people to do their training. At the Garma Festival, Anthony Albanese announced the new remote TAFE space that allows TAFE to go offsite and provide training for people in remote and rural areas. It was wonderful to see how proud the community was.

It was wonderful to see the Batchelor Institute providing training for people in Wadeye. A special shout-out goes to the acting CEO, Tracey Leo, who has been working behind the scenes, negotiating with government and writing grant applications. Her work with the Thamarrurr Aboriginal Women's Council does not go unnoticed. Thank you, Tracey. The traditional owners of the Thamarrurr region, of the 22 clan groups that are in Wadeye, highly respect you for the work you do. Thank you to all the women who sit on the Thamarrurr Aboriginal Women's Council for your leadership and vision and seeing the great outcome for all the community of Wadeye come to fruition.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, on 7 September I attended the Humpty Doo Community Garden working bee and AGM. On the first Sunday of every month, the Humpty Doo Community Garden gets together and has a working bee. People have individual plots, but there is also a community section of the garden. I enjoy going there on the first Sunday of each month and giving them a hand; they often rely on me to do some of the heavy lifting and the stuff that some of our senior citizens cannot get around to. I have to say I am not cut out for it.

I congratulate the longstanding president, Yvonne Peckover, for returning as president for another year, and welcome David and Jo as new committee members joining the returning committee members. Well done to all of them.

World Pharmacists Day was on 25 September. My office helped me deliver platters to Chemist Warehouse Coolalinga, Pharmacy + Co Coolalinga, Alliance Pharmacy Berry Springs, and TerryWhite Chemmart, Humpty Doo. Our pharmacists are often the front line for medical advice in the Territory and do a fantastic job.

Special tribute goes to the pharmacist at TerryWhite Chemmart Humpty Doo, Dzung Tran. I went to school with his younger brother, Matt. After about eight years in that facility serving rural Territorians he is heading off on an extended, well-deserved holiday. He is an incredible man and pharmacist. There were lots of sad people who heard that he was going on a break. He is a staple of the rural area, and I wish him well wherever he ends up.

I also attended the COTA NT Rural Expo at Coolalinga, which was a partnership between COTA (Council of the Ageing), NBN Co and Litchfield Community Library. It was on Friday 10 and Saturday 11 October with more than 30 stallholders and 15 presentations. It was great to see so many services and providers coming to the rural area and engaging with our seniors community, who were stoked to have seen them there. A special tribute goes to the Wildcare table. I was telling everyone I met there, 'Don't let them lie to you. There are five joeys sitting under that table in the Wildcare; you just have to ask to see them' They were cute. Well done Barb and the Wildcare team. I also pay tribute to the inaugural Rural Women's Day event held on Sunday 11 October, connecting and inspiring NT women with guest speakers Annette Howie, Maree Bredhauer—who used to be the Mayor of Litchfield Council and also my primary school principal—and Jolene Walsh. It was a great event. Well done to those who organised it in connecting rural women.

Last weekend I also attended the NT Thai Association AGM. You would know well, Mr Deputy Speaker, the fantastic work behind the Thailand Grand Festival. I am told the festival next year will be an exciting two-day event held, I believe, on the Esplanade—I am hoping that is not confidential. It will be an exciting celebration of Thai culture.

My electorate has lots of Thai people involved in the farming industry. The pride they have when they do their dances and songs and get involved—the whole family, generations, are there. There will be four or five generations of the same family participating, and it is wonderful to see. Well done to acting president Nim for chairing the meeting. I believe president Tou is continuing.

I pay tribute to Country Women Association's Litchfield Branch, which held its fifth annual High Tea on the Verandah event on 17 August. It raised an impressive $11,500 for the McGrath Foundation. I heard it was a tremendously fun and exciting event. Well done to everyone involved and the fantastic work they do.

I also pay tribute to all the young cricketers in the Territory. Last month the Darwin & Districts Cricket Competition junior and senior award nights honoured the club's top performers and contributors. Southern Districts Crocs players and volunteers featured prominently. There is an incredible range of great cricketers coming out of the rural area.

Senior players include Tim Shaw with a batting aggregate of 312 runs at 34.67; Vida Lyon with a bowling aggregate of 12 wickets at 15.75; Samuel Hayward with a bowling aggregate of 29 wickets at 10.41 runs; and the club cricketer of the year, Shane Moon. Well done.

The Women's Team of the Year included Rachel Andrew, Hannah Armstrong, Louise Johnston and Sam Quinn.

The A-Grade Team of the Year included Ryan Hammel and Dylan Mullen.

In the junior awards, the Under 12 Red winners were Western Rolls with a batting aggregate of 386 runs; Sergio Berno with a bowling aggregate of 23 wickets at 6.48 runs. I would not like to be a batter coming up against those numbers.

The Team of the Year included Logan Pemble, Western Rolls and Sergio Berno—no surprises there.

Sergio Berno was also the Club Cricketer of the Year with 311 runs, 23 wickets, three catches and 14 runouts—what an incredibly talented young man.

For the Under 12 Blue Awards, Lincoln Clarke scored with 18 wickets at 8.39 runs; well done.

The DDCC Team of the Year included Lincoln Clarke; the Under 15 Red Awards Team of the Year included players Will Branson and Clem Hill; and the Under 15 Blue Awards Team of the Year had Eli Hayward with a bowling aggregate of 23 wickets at 6.04 runs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I know you love your cricket as much as I do, and that is an incredible effort. Well done, Eli.

The Under 15 Blue Awards Team of the Year included Nate Watson, Branden Gawthrope and Eli Hayward.

Rebecca Doevendans was nominated for the Junior Volunteer of the Year award, while Junior Cricketer of the Year went to Nate Watson.

Well done to all involved.

I also pay tribute to six fantastic schools in my electorate of Goyder.

I recently attended 'Treasure Beyond the Cosmos', the school musical from Sattler Christian College.

I was blown away by the stage, props, acting and memorised lines. I am trying my best with my little acting videos, and it takes quite a few takes to get six words right; these kids are getting up there delivering monologues. Well done to the school. It has a fantastic principal and arts program, and I look forward to seeing their production next year.

The school also held a Global Leadership Summit, empowering the next generation of young people. The Members for Fannie Bay and Drysdale also attended, and we saw 400 kids get together from all the different Top End Christian schools

It was all student-run, organised, emceed, catered—everything was done by the youths. It was all about empowering the youth. It was incredible to see them all sitting down and paying attention. We cannot manage it with 25 adults in this room sometimes, but they got 400 kids to engage and that is something that everyone who was involved in that event should be proud of.

Lastly, I pay tribute to the Girraween Primary School.

Girraween Primary School, where I went when I was a young pup, had its field day. It is engaging with kids about everything from animals, land, environment and everything else you could think of. They had little volcanoes. They spoke about natural disasters and the gardens. They showed me their chickens, which they were proud of. Unfortunately, they have no goats—which they had when I was a kid—but they are getting some soon, so that is exciting.

I also welcomed the new principal, Emma Hansen, at the Girraween Primary School field day. Well done to all the parents, teachers and volunteers involved in making that all happen.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, I rise to adjourn on several important events that I attended in Darwin.

The Member for Gwoja—who ran out of time in his adjournment—asked me to acknowledge the great work of the Indonesian community in the recent 80th anniversary of Indonesian Independence Day, which was held on 19 September 2025.

The Member for Gwoja attended alongside other members of parliament and federal members, and they said it was a fantastic celebration. Well done to the Indonesian community—*bagus sekali*! It is fantastic to celebrate those milestones in such a diverse and wonderful multicultural community.

I attended the Diwali Festival of Lights celebration on Sunday, held by the Brahma Kumaris group in Leanyer at the Australia China Friendship Society NT's home base. The Member for Wanguri attended, as did the Member for Johnston, Justine Davis; the Lord Mayor of Darwin, Peter Styles; and Darwin City Councillor and President of the Multicultural Council of the NT, Dr Edwin Joseph.

It was an important celebration and beautifully timed between a heavy two weeks of parliamentary sittings. The meaning of Diwali is 'light over darkness' and conquering good over evil. I thought it was a beautiful event, and I thank Sister Praveen for the invitation. It was a wonderful way to connect with people and think about the way we impact each other, the light and darkness that people may carry within and what we exude on the outside, which is important, particularly in a role where what we say here matters.

I thank the volunteers for the beautiful vegetarian food and the celebration at the end. It was fabulous to attend and feel that sense of connectedness, community, light, joy and warmth. Congratulations to Brahma Kumaris for a beautifully organised event for Diwali.

Also on Sunday, the Cyprus Community of the NT held its first Greek market day. Congratulations. It is not easy organising any event for a community group and association, particularly when it relies on volunteers and is in the difficult weather of the Build-Up in October. It was a good idea to have it inside. I arrived in the afternoon and apparently the morning was busy, but the afternoon was quiet. It was great to see local artists showcase their talents at the first Greek market day. I look forward to supporting the community if it decides to hold a second event next year and continue to grow the celebration, connection and support of local businesses and community members. Well done to the volunteers for a lovely community-oriented event.

National Survivors' Day will be held on 12 November 2025. I hosted an event this week at parliament in honour. It is the only public-facing day to recognise, commemorate and support survivors of sexual abuse, institutional harm, whistleblowers, families and community. Whilst this can be a sensitive topic for many community members, I pay tribute to the brave souls and survivors, and I acknowledge those survivors who are no longer with us.

I thank those advocates who provide support to Territorians each day, who bravely voice their lived experiences and have survived sexual abuse in the Northern Territory, other parts of Australia or the world. I acknowledge there may be people who cannot voice what has happened to them. We stand with them and acknowledge that trauma does not go away. It is important to support each other and bring light to some of the darkness that happens across our community.

It was an honour to support and host the event. Thank you for the heartfelt words that were conveyed by National Survivors' Day Ambassador Schyler Kennedy and the work she does with Ruby Gaea in the Northern Territory, particularly supporting the youth advocacy group through the organisation. Thank you, Schyler, for your bravery, courage and continued work in supporting fellow survivors.

Joining me were Northern Territory Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, the Minister for Indigenous Australians; Luke Gosling, the Member for Solomon; and my parliamentary colleagues Dheran Young, the Member for Daly, and Manuel Brown, the Member for Arafura. Thank you to the Member for Johnston, Justine Davis, and the Member for Nightcliff, Kat McNamara, for also supporting that important event and helping to grow awareness of support services.

It can be difficult to access those support services in our regional and remote communities, so continuing to support the work of these organisations in some of the most remote parts of the Northern Territory is important.

The ambassador, Schyler, also wanted to remind people—you may have seen some of the posters around Darwin—about Reclaim the Night. It is a night specifically focused on women and safety and will be held on Friday 31 October, starting from 6.45 pm in Darwin, meeting at the corner of Daly Street and the Esplanade.

Young voices will lead the way, and everyone is welcome—men and women—to come together as a community and support each other. It is an important thing to do, especially when we see some of the horrible things happening around the rest of the world. It is important that when community events bring people together, we honour, support and partake in them. It is important for us as members of parliament to hear these important issues.

Tomorrow is the Mataranka School's Great Rubber Duck Race at Bitter Springs. There is still an opportunity to support the fundraising at Mataranka School—they do this every year—and to purchase a rubber duck. You can jump onto the Mataranka School's website; they have a trendy little online app. Hopefully you can still do it, because they may have run out of ducks.

They float the ducks down Bitter Springs tomorrow. Each duck will have a number and if the duck with your number reaches the end of the springs you will win some great prize money.

Please support a fantastic and fun school initiative. Events like this help support schools like Mataranka. This year students went to Canberra to visit Parliament House and some of the institutes and galleries, and they shared it in their newsletter and on their Facebook page.

The more regional and remote schools that run their own initiatives, support fundraising and have kids out and about experiencing the bigger world, the better and stronger our kids will be. Better engagement and support for kids to get to school is positive.

If you have not already bought a rubber duck from Mataranka School, get online and support a great cause. Fingers crossed one of our ducks will get across the Bitter Springs line.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I honour the 2025 NRL NT life member inductees. Life membership at NRL NT recognises individuals whose service to rugby league has been extraordinary and enduring.

A pillar of the Palmerston Raiders community is Chuck Norris. I will start with some light humour. Chuck Norris was once bitten by a king cobra. After 10 excruciating minutes, the cobra died. When Chuck Norris does push-ups, he does not push himself up; he pushes the Earth down. When the bogeyman goes to sleep every night, he checks his closet for Chuck Norris.

This is not a joke; Chuck is a real member of the Palmerston Raiders. He is grateful to his dad for giving him that name—I think we all know who it was in honour of back in the day.

Chuck celebrated his 300th game at the Palmerston Raiders home game for the Indigenous round on 9 August. I was there that day, and what a day it was. I think they were up against the Litchfield Bears—if I recall correctly, but I could be wrong. They got a win that night, and the energy coming off that field was electric and amazing.

Chuck first played for the Raiders when he was eight years old, playing his first A-grade game when he was 15 years and nine months old, against the Katherine Cowboys. He has now clocked up 30 years with the senior team, ever since they were at the Archer Oval. Not only did he battle the Litchfield Bears and the Darwin Brothers; he also battled the Archer Oval's midges.

This year he received the 2025 Senior Coach of the Year award in his first year of coaching the A-grade senior team. He brought the group together, built belief and led the side all the way to the final rounds. His leadership, determination and passion made a huge impact this season.

Chuck's name has been synonymous with the sport in the Territory for more than three decades. His achievements include representing the Northern Territory at junior and senior levels; winning the Frank Johnson Medal in 2008; coaching junior and senior teams—including leading the under-16s to a premiership in 2024—and serving as a life member and committee member.

What makes Chuck truly special is the way he mentors younger players and leads by example, consistently giving back to the community. His presence has had a generational impact, inspiring those he has coached and those who have simply had the privilege to watch him play and lead.

He has dedicated his life to the growth and success of rugby league in the Northern Territory, and his legacy continues to grow every time he steps onto the field, coaches or lends his wisdom to the next wave of players. It is well deserved.

Gordon Hounslow of the Northern Sharks Rugby League Football Club received a life membership from NRL NT. Few names resonate more strongly with the Northern Sharks. From starting as a ball boy in 1976 to serving as club president for the past seven years, Gordon's contribution spans almost five decades.

Highlights of his service include playing for the Sharks at junior and senior levels; serving on the committee for more than 20 years including seven as president; providing financial support to save the club from exclusion in 2015 and steering it into stability; sponsoring the club for more than 20 years; volunteering tirelessly on game days in everything from ground management to fundraising; and supporting players with employment opportunities and mentoring. Awarded a Sharks life membership in 2012, Gordon remains the heart of the club and is respected across the Territory for his leadership and unwavering commitment.

Life membership recognises individuals whose service to rugby league has been extraordinary and enduring. Chuck Norris and Gordon Hounslow exemplify these qualities, each leaving a legacy that has shaped clubs, competitions and communities. I congratulate the newest NRL NT life members and thank them for their incredible contribution.

Also at the Raiders' presentation, women's team coach Shannon Harvey was awarded Senior Coach of the Year. Shannon has led the side with passion and commitment, creating a strong team culture and guiding it to an impressive season. His leadership was instrumental in the growth and success of the squad.

I also congratulate the Raiders' Junior Coach of the Year, Josh Parker, who has gone above and beyond this season, dedicating his time and energy to developing our young players. His passion, leadership and commitment to help the players grow on and off the field have made a lasting impact. Thank you, Josh, for everything you do for our juniors. It is well-deserved recognition

Today, with my colleagues the Minister for the Arts and the Members for Casuarina and Fannie Bay, I went to the Brown's Mart phone-a-thon in honour of AusArt Day 2025, fundraising to support the arts. I thank general manager and co-CEO Liz Rogers for warmly welcoming us into their space and giving us a chance to hop on the phones, make a few calls and try to fundraise. They had an organised operation going.

Brown's Mart has long been an institution. I remember going to plays 25 or almost 30 years ago, such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, where friends of mine from high school were performing.

I thank the team at Brown's Mart for the work it does keeping that institution going and providing for the Territory.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I give a shout-out to people in my community starting with all the amazing teachers and educators across Johnston. There are six wonderful schools and, like lots of people in this Chamber, my favourite thing is hanging out at school. It is always great after a week of parliament to know that on a Friday morning I can go to an assembly and get a taste of the real world.

There are five nominees from Johnston for the World Teachers' Day NT Awards: Yarren Stewart from Casuarina Senior College nominated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher of Year; Janelle Thorne from Alawa for Primary Educator of the Year; Neisha Schilling from Moil school for Primary Educator of the Year; Noella Goveas from Millner school for Principal of the Year; and Jodie Gonzadi, representing Moil school again, for School Based Support Person of the Year. Thanks to all the teachers and other staff who work in schools and go above and beyond for our children.

I have been involved in other things since the last parliamentary sitting. It was International Day of Peace on 21 September and this year the theme was Act Now for a Peaceful World. There were various events, including some in my electorate. There was the World Peace Cup, which is just outside my electorate but I half claim it. The United Nations Australian Young Professionals organised an amazing soccer game in the rain—lots of mud, skidding around and fun.

There was also an event that the Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory organises called Walk Together, which has happened for many years. The theme was Everyone is Welcome.

Other MLAs were at both events celebrating our amazing, diverse community and how we value all the people who have chosen to come here. We need to do everything we can to make them welcome.

On the same theme, Vibrant Diverse Cultures held an event at Moil Preschool. It was run by a woman called Yolanda Kunyai who many people in this Chamber would know. She was recently elected to Palmerston Council. Her organisation runs a program called Raising Multicultural Kids, an eight-week program for newly arrived young parents.

We were a sponsor of that program and went along to some of it. It was wonderful helping young mums and dads connect with the community. It was especially great going to the graduation at the end—always my favourite thing—with great food and songs, lots of joy and people valuing what they got out of that program, both in learning about what supports they can get in the community and connecting with other people.

A couple of weeks ago was World Sight Day which works with people who have limited sight. I was grateful to my friend Bridie who often hangs out with me at the markets on Sunday. They had a stall in the mall and were giving the experience of what it would be like to walk through the mall if you had very limited sight. I do not know if anyone else here had a go of that, but they had special glasses you could put on for what it might be like if you have, for example, macular degeneration, and then walk through the mall with some support with a cane. It was an interesting experience. A big shout-out goes to Bridie and all the work that that group does.

Community safety is an ongoing concern for everyone including people in my electorate. I have regular meetings with our local superintendent, Neighbourhood Watch and Victims of Crime and work to connect them with the community. We have community events and pizza nights where they come along and connect with people in the community, and the feedback I get from people is that they value being able to connect directly with either the police or services that are there to support them.

I give a big shout-out to Youth Parliament, which the Member for Fannie Bay has already covered. What an incredible, inspiring experience. We could all learn from looking at how those young people conducted themselves. The amount of research and the work they did for the speeches and petitions that they made, the way they conducted themselves in the Chamber and the level of passion with which they spoke when they made their speeches I found moving and inspiring. I was grateful to be part of that.

I was also part of the Pathways to Politics program, which is for women who are interested in finding out more about being involved in politics. The Members for Fannie Bay, Nightcliff and I participated in a panel and had some interesting and challenging questions from women who are thinking about what it might be like to be involved in politics, and that was a great conversation.

I also went to the Northern Territory UN Youth Conference. Another shout-out goes to the wonderful Palmerston Mayor, Athina Pascoe Bell. I got to talk to the NT UN Youth representatives about their questions on how politics works, which was interesting and inspiring. It is wonderful to be with young people who are engaged, care about what is going on, have questions and want to be involved in creating their own future.

I was also at a couple of other events. I attended the Brahma Kumaris Diwali celebration, which was beautiful: It involved singing, dancing, wonderful food and a chance to share in a meditation and reflect on the fact it is a festival of light, both without and within, reflect how we conduct ourselves in the world, and reflect on what is inside and outside us.

It was a beautiful occasion. They had heaps of food, and there was a lot left over so I was grateful to take and share it with people in our community who do not have food. A big thank you and shout-out goes to them for sharing that food.

Last weekend was the Great Northern Clean Up so I got down and dirty and savaged by mosquitoes at Rapid Creek, cleaning up a lot of rubbish. It was good after a week of parliament to be out there putting rubbish in bags and getting rid of it; it felt great.

I also did some phone calls this morning for AusArt Day and for Brown's Mart. A big shout-out goes to all our incredible arts workers who bring so much to our community in so many ways.

I have met with all our new councillors. I am lucky to span three wards, so I have lots of councillors to meet with. We have spoken about how we will work together. So many of the issues that people bring to us are actually local government issues, and it is great to figure out how we can work together and help people address what are often the daily bread-and-butter, nuts-and-bolts things affecting their lives.

I have been grateful in the past for good relationships with local councillors and being able to get stuff happening, so I am looking forward to that into the future.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.