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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Message No 4 – Assent to Bills Passed in March 2025

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received Message Number 4 from His Honour the Administrator notifying assent to the Bills passed in the March meetings of the Assembly. The message is dated 17 April 2025.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Mulka

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I have been asked by the Member for Mulka to seek leave of absence for him on medical grounds.

Leave granted.

VISITOR
Samara Laverty

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of Samara Laverty. On behalf of all members, I welcome you to this sitting of the Assembly.

Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY CHIEF MINISTER
Death of Linford Feick

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, this extraordinary sitting of the Assembly has been called following the tragic death of Mr Linford Feick, a husband, father, grandfather and much-loved leader in our community. On Wednesday last week Mr Feick went to work, never to return home.

Before we commence business today I propose that the Assembly, in solidarity with the Member for Nightcliff and the community she represents, observes a minute's silence to honour Linford's life, express our deep grief at his passing and show our united condolences to his family.

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I ask you to join me in standing for a minute's silence in honour of the late Mr Linford Feick.

Members stood for one minute's silence as a sign of respect.

MOTION
Routine of Business

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that notwithstanding anything in the standing and sessional orders:

1. The routine of business for today will be Government Business.

2. The Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 24, may be presented to the Assembly without notice and will be treated as an urgent Bill following its first reading.

3. The tabling of committee reports sent to the Speaker pursuant to Standing Order 200(4) will be deferred to the next sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

BAIL AND YOUTH JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 24

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled the Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Serial 24, and table the explanatory statement.

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

This Bill is introduced in extraordinary circumstances requiring me to recall parliament to consider this Bill through all stages on urgency today.

I do not believe there is a single member in this House who is not devastated by the events of last Wednesday at the Nightcliff Friendly supermarket. Seventy-one-year-old Linford Feick, a devoted husband of 51 years, a father and a grandfather to seven, tragically lost his life inside the business he owned and loved for decades. Mr Feick's life was taken allegedly at the hands of an 18-year-old who was on bail. His death should not have happened, and the teenager has since been charged with murder.

Mr Feick was a much-loved Territorian, not just by his family but by the wider community. The many heartfelt tributes on social media and those left outside the store are evidence of the depth of feeling permeating through not just Nightcliff but the entire Northern Territory and beyond.

On Thursday I, like so many others, along with the Deputy Chief Minister, laid flowers in front of the Nightcliff store. On Saturday night I, along with my colleagues, joined the Feick family and the community at a very peaceful and beautiful vigil at Nightcliff Jetty as the sun set. It was a spectacular sunset paying tribute to his life. Hundreds of people gathered together in solidarity around the family.

One of the many simple messages summed up by so many was that this is so wrong on so many levels. Territorians have a right to feel heartbroken, frustrated and angry. I know I felt all of those things.

This is why we are here today, and this is why I have recalled parliament—something that last occurred during the COVID pandemic. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing this to take place so that we can further strengthen our bail laws and Declan's law and protect Territorians.

In October 2024 I introduced the Bail Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 as part of a suite of reforms with our reducing-crime package for Declan's law. I acknowledge that Samara Laverty is joining us again today in the gallery.

That Bill streamlined and strengthened the *Bail Act* and implemented our specific election commitments relating to bail. Declan's law made a presumption against bail for all serious violence offences, regardless of whether a weapon of any kind was used or threatened to be used during that alleged offence. Declan's law introduced a presumption against bail for alleged repeat offenders, including those who are accused of reoffending while on bail. It further reinstated the breach of bail condition offence for youths, and it required electronic monitoring if an alleged repeat offender is granted bail or is accused of reoffending while out on bail.

Despite these strengthened laws serious offences by people on bail have continued, prompting the Northern Territory Chief Justice Michael Grant to highlight New South Wales' tougher bail test where bail must not be granted unless the court has a high degree of confidence that the accused would not offend again. As a result, we got to work on including this in the youth justice rewrite which we have been working on, and the work on that rewrite continues.

This Bill I put before the parliament today further strengthens Declan's law and those amendments that we made to the *Bail Act* in October 2024. This Bill makes further amendments to the *Bail Act 1982* to change how bail is determined for certain offences and in doing so provides for community safety to be the paramount consideration.

Therefore, when considering applications against bail for serious offending where there is a presumption against bail, community safety will now be the paramount consideration in deciding if bail should be granted. This is the first hurdle for an alleged offender in seeking bail.

The types of offending where the presumption against bail applies include where an accused person has at least two prior convictions within the last two years. The prior offending may be for prescribed offences, such as a breach of a domestic violence order or offences involving harm, or it may be for a serious offence, which is an offence punishable by imprisonment for five or more years. Examples of a serious offence include theft, robbery and threats to kill.

The presumption against bail also applies to serious violence offences which include assault with intent to steal and sexual offences such as indecent touching or act.

The criterion for considering the risk to the safety of the community is now expressly included in the criteria as part of the bail application. It is the paramount consideration for applications for bail following serious offending.

This Bill also changes the test for the offences that the presumption against bail is applied, to require that bail must not be granted to a person unless the court has a high degree of confidence that the person will not, if released, commit a serious violence offence or prescribed offence or endanger the safety of the community. This means that for applications for bail for offences which previously only had a presumption against bail applying, there is now a further test requiring the court to have a high degree of confidence in the person themselves in order to grant bail.

The Bill also makes amendments to the criteria considered in bail applications for youth to remove consideration and the principle of detention as a last resort and any stigma that might attach to a youth on bail.

In summary, we are moving further than the New South Wales laws and requiring that the court or the police, whoever the decision-maker is, must place community safety as the paramount concern when considering bail. The court or the police must only grant bail where satisfied to the standard of a high degree of confidence that the accused will not commit a serious violence offence or endanger the community, which is a standard we based off New South Wales.

Our legislation goes further because our goal today is to have the toughest bail laws in the country. The key differences between the laws being proposed today and the New South Wales model are that we have a broader list of prescribed offences or serious violence offences than New South Wales, meaning more offences are captured by our law. Our law will apply to both youth and adult offenders; in New South Wales it only applies to youth.

Decision-makers, both the police and the courts, must be satisfied to a high degree of confidence that the accused will not pose a danger to the community or commit a prescribed or serious violence offence, and the court will be required to make community safety the paramount consideration, so a double community safety test.

These reforms strengthen and build on the protections already introduced under Declan's law, which has already reduced the opportunity for serious and repeat offenders to obtain bail. Our expanded wanding powers we gave police in October last year mean 5,063 people have been wanded in the Northern Territory, and that important work continues. I thank our police.

The amendments to the Act as a whole strengthen the presumption against bail and reinforce that the starting point is that there is no bail for serious offending.

I turn now to the specific clauses in the Bill. Clause 4 omits section 7A(2) and inserts a new 7A(2), along with two new subsections, being section 7A(2AA) and 7A(2AB).

The notes in 7A(2) make it clear that the court must refer to sections 24 and 24A in considering an application for bail and should bail be granted that conditions must be imposed that minimise risks that may result in the accused being on bail.

New section 7A(2AA) provides that the paramount consideration in deciding whether to grant bail is the risk to the safety of the community if a person accused of an offence is released on bail. Community safety is therefore the paramount consideration for the decision-maker.

New section 7A(2AB) provides a further hurdle to an alleged offender being granted bail. Even if the court is satisfied after considering the matters in section 24 or 24A and the paramount consideration of community safety, bail must not be granted unless the court has a high degree of confidence that the person will not, if released on bail, commit a prescribed offence or serious violence offence or endanger the safety of the community.

It changes the test in the *Bail Act* from one that provides a presumption against bail, which means that bail should be refused unless the accused can show good reason to grant it, to a higher risk test. The new risk test focuses on whether there is a risk that the accused if released would pose a danger to the community or pose a risk of reoffending. The test examines whether releasing the accused on bail would create a significant risk and the court must have a high degree of confidence that there is not. Various factors are considered in applying this test.

The Bill also makes amendments to the criteria to be considered in a bail application to omit certain criteria for youth. Section 24A(2)(a) is omitted, which relates to detention as a last resort, and 24A(2)(e) is omitted, which relates to potential stigma. These criteria will no longer be a consideration in youth bail applications.

The Bill further provides for transitional provisions for the application of these amendments.

The government acknowledges that in relation to bail, individuals concerned are entitled to and have the benefit of the presumption of innocence, but this needs to be carefully balanced with, and not at the cost of, community safety.

This next wave of our reform makes community safety the paramount consideration in bail decisions, establishes consistency across adult and youth matters and requires courts to place the safety of the community paramount when assessing bail conditions.

We do not do this lightly, nor do we take any pleasure in it, but history shows us that it must be done. Ideally these laws would not be necessary, and tragically they are. The level of violence in our community is abhorrent and unacceptable. Our government and Territorians expect the laws to be stronger, and they will be. They expect their leaders to make the right decisions even when they are tough decisions to make.

Our stronger bail laws will ensure the Territory has the toughest in Australia. We have also pulled other justice levers, including giving police greater powers across a range of areas. We have added over 500 new beds to our prison system, and that will continue to grow. We have addressed long-term issues with an overburdened court system and a lack of funding to Legal Aid.

We inherited a system that places too much emphasis on the historical trauma of perpetrators, rather than focusing on the ongoing harm to the community. The pendulum has swung too far, and we are working hard to reset it. In eight months we have achieved significant reform, but we have always said this is just the beginning. Even after today the work continues and more will be done. The terrorisation of innocent people, particularly at the hands of those on bail for serious offences, needs to stop.

To all those law-abiding dedicated Territorians who love our home, we will never give up fighting for you and the Territory that we know and love.

I again extend my condolences to the Feick family. Sadly, nothing we achieve here today can bring Linford Feick back, but we can make sure that community safety is not just the number one priority of our government, but it is the number one consideration of the courts when granting bail.

I am pleased to commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

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

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the Nightcliff Friendly Grocer has always lived up to its name. For many decades it has been the place for the freshest produce in Darwin, but it has always been much more than that. I have been told by many that it is a place where a smile, a kind word or a bit of a laugh is guaranteed—a place that leaves you feeling good, connected and part of a community.

Linford and Margaret Feick and their family are responsible for creating this welcoming and much-loved space in the community, not by chance but through a deliberate and genuine desire to contribute to the community with their wonderful selection of products, exceptional customer service and flat-out kindness.

That is the man Mr Feick was. It is the way he will always be remembered: a much-loved husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend; a successful businessman; a respected industry representative; and a cherished member of the Territory community who enriched the lives of so many people around him. This is his lasting legacy.

Mr Feick should still be with us today. His presence is still at his shop. He should still be doing what he always did so well, with such genuine passion, care and humanity; but he is not. It is an absence and a loss that will endure for his family and many in our community, but so will Mr Feick's incredible legacy. This is what we can continue to remember and celebrate, even as the community mourns his passing.

I joined with hundreds of other community members at the jetty in Nightcliff last Saturday to remember Linford and support his family at this terrible time. It was such a beautiful example of what our Territory community is about: kindness; compassion; having each other's back; being ready to lend a hand, share a laugh or story; and give a shoulder to cry on. It was a privilege to attend and pay my respects on behalf of my team directly to Linford's son, Ben.

In dark times it is easy to forget that there are so many wonderful things about the Territory. First and foremost, the people who live here—whether you were born here or chose to make the Territory your home. We are strong when the Territory stands together, and now is no different.

I acknowledge everyone who came to Mr Feick's aid on that tragic day last week, including those in the shop at the time, frontline staff who responded to the call and the many who have supported the family. We know how tough it will be for them, and we thank them for all the care and compassion they have continued to grace the Territory with.

On behalf of our Labor opposition team, I pass on my deepest condolences to Margaret and the entire Feick family. I acknowledge other Territory families who have lost a loved one as a result of senseless and violent crimes. Many other families have been impacted in the same way and are still grieving. We send the message that today is also for you and your families. May all these loved Territorians rest in peace. I also acknowledge Samara Laverty, who is in the Chamber today.

Our Territory Labor opposition is prepared to support this Bill today in line with community sentiment and expectations that parliament will work together and not against each other; however, we have genuine reservations about how effective it will be in strengthening community safety. That is our number one concern—concerns that have been backed up by global evidence from experts in the field.

My team received a briefing on this Bill only late yesterday, after 4 pm, and have only seen the Bill now; it was handed out at 10.14 am. We are acting in good faith, as I said I would, as a constructive opposition working in partnership in parliament, which is what Territorians expect us to do when it comes to positive things to make a difference for our fellow Territorians. Unfortunately, we had little to no time to consider any of the detail.

These amendments seek to give more weight to the consideration of community safety—which is why we are supporting it in good faith—when bail decisions are made. Courts will also need to apply a second test in regard to whether they have a high degree of confidence that a person will not reoffend if released on bail. Currently, courts need to consider a range of factors in bail applications, including any risk that the accused person will commit an offence while on bail, breach the peace or breach the condition of their bail.

Effectively, community safety and the risk of reoffending already exist as key considerations in Territory bail applications. We accept what the government has put forward. It seeks to give more weight to these considerations through these amendments, which is why we will act in good faith on behalf of Territorians.

These amendments also seek to remove custody as a last resort for adults and young people. Prior to yesterday the Labor opposition was not aware that the amendment would extend to include young people. We had anticipated that the details proposed by the government would happen later in the year, to allow us to do our work as opposition members to go through the detail and consult with Territorians and the broader legal fraternity on any changes. Unfortunately, we have not had that time. We were not informed yesterday directly by the government that this would occur; we learnt this detail through media interviews.

There is a strong sentiment following a spate of violent incidents involving people on bail across the Northern Territory, and rightly so. However, rushing through legislation comes with significant risk not only for this parliament but also through the impact and unintended consequences. As members of parliament we want to do our job to the best of our ability, which Territorians expect. We will continue to act in good faith on this matter. The more detail we have the better we can do our jobs to ensure that there are better outcomes for our fellow Territorians.

This does not take into account expertise, legal advice and the strong evidence about the impact of tougher laws without corresponding prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation measures. No opportunity has been afforded to the community, frontline organisations that work in this area, experts, victims of crime, police, legal fraternity and, indeed, courts to give their views on whether these changes will have the impact that the government claims and to be part of the broader conversation about other community safety measures driven by local solutions. These should also be considered.

We will support these amendments, but we will make the point strongly that there are many gaps in the government's approach to community safety. Many people in the community agree on that. We will continue to be a voice for constructive work in this space.

The Chief Minister has made it clear in media and in the House that her sole focus is on strengthening bail laws and making them the toughest in the country. She has effectively staked her leadership on it. However, sadly, we have already seen the evidence that tougher bail laws on their own are not having the impact on violent crime that the Chief Minister said they would.

Unfortunately, the horrific incident that happened at Nightcliff last week is not an isolated incident in the Territory. Earlier this month Mr Trevor Miller was violently assaulted in his home in Woodroffe by a person who was on bail. There has been a number of other horrifying assaults and incidents involving edged weapons in the past week alone across the Northern Territory, including Alice Springs. These incidents happened after the CLP's stricter bail laws came into effect on 1 January 2025. The latest police statistics show that the number of violent crime and domestic violence offences have not gone down.

I note, Madam Speaker, that even you, on your MLA Facebook page, suggested that we may indeed need a rethink when it comes to justice. I agree that we have to step back to look at the whole picture and ask whether the current approaches to crime and antisocial behaviour are having an effect for the better, as the Chief Minister promised Territorians they would. What other solutions will she put forward?

Preventing reoffending is part of the short-term solution, which is why tougher bail laws may help and why the Labor opposition is acting in good faith today. However, ultimately, this is a bandaid solution that fails to address the broader systemic issues of community safety, antisocial behaviour and youth crime.

In my first speech to parliament as the Leader of the Opposition in October 2024 I raised concerns that the CLP government members did not appear to have a plan to prevent offending or to break the cycle of reoffending. Unfortunately, it appears eight months later that they still do not. Bail laws are only part of the solution; they fix the symptom, not the causes of crime. They do not help in getting offenders back on a good path. It is why we are not seeing any let-up in crime in the Territory, particularly violent crime.

This is what I hear from people across the Territory community, including the business community, when I talk to them about community safety. They acknowledge that some of the measures the CLP government has brought in have helped in the short term—I congratulate the government for that—but they also know that, unfortunately, this will not fix the problem in the long term. That is the real challenge.

Evidence from around the world backs this up. What is the CLP proposing when it comes to more children and young people being imprisoned? We do not know what support they will get when they are imprisoned. What is the CLP's plan to make this better for everyone? The CLP simply does not seem interested in rehabilitation or investing in programs or justice services other than short-term bandaid solutions. What are the CLP's long-term community safety measures?

We know—all the evidence from around the world tells us this—that the vast majority of young people who end up incarcerated go on to reoffend in their community. Unfortunately, most of these young people enter prison with a history of mental health and cognitive disorders. Prison makes most of those problems worse; ultimately that makes these young people a greater risk to the community when they are released. In contrast, we have seen massive reductions in youth crime when there is a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, particularly with locally led programs.

Programs like GEBIE GANG on Groote Eylandt in my electorate were established to support young people who had come in contact with the justice system. It has led to a massive 95% drop in youth crime in that community, particularly for Anindilyakwa young men between 17 and 25 years of age. Through this program alone we have seen children and young people connected with local role models, being supported to build their own life skills and undertake work experience across the archipelago, including short courses, getting their driver's licence, learning to cook and learning the routines of work and education. These kinds of programs build confidence and pride in young people and their families. It lets them see another more productive path for themselves, rather than a life of crime.

I implore the CLP government to look at investing in expanding these types of programs to get kids excited about a positive future, not one where they see themselves—and outsiders see them—stuck in a life of crime and escalating criminal behaviour.

So much groundwork has already been done in this space. The Aboriginal Justice Agreement has bipartisan support in this parliament. The CLP government has committed to continuing to implement the measures under this agreement, and I applaud it for that. I know there is much work to be done, and we will continue to offer Labor's constructive partnership on that.

Many people in the Territory community have been asking about Aboriginal leadership in addressing community safety concerns. If they look back, year on year they will see that Aboriginal leaders across the Northern Territory have been consistent with their messaging. This is what the Aboriginal Justice Agreement is about—Aboriginal Territorians taking responsibility for and supporting real community-based solutions for addressing, reducing and stopping crime and antisocial behaviour through programs like GEBIE GANG on Groote, the Nja-marleya law and justice group in Maningrida and the Bagala traditional owners law and justice group in the Barunga and Wugularr communities. These programs are focused on diverting young people from crime and poor behaviour.

There is so much more we could do to prevent crime in the first place, intervene early and address social determinants that lead people to poor choices and down a pathway to being a young offender or an adult offender. It is much harder to do this work, but our community deserves no less. By all means, do the quick fixes, but also get on with addressing those deeper issues underpinning our unacceptable crime rates across the Territory.

The former Labor government laid some of the significant groundwork in this space, but it is a long-term project. It must be the first thing on our mind when we think about how we can make the Territory safer. I can be the first to say that it may have not been enough; we know it was not enough. However, there is a solid base to continue working from; you do not need to reinvent the wheel and start from scratch. We need to put aside the politics and take on board the existing evidence-based programs and approaches that are community and solutions-focused to keep building on these foundations if we are ever to see long-term change in the Territory.

As well as focusing on intervention and prevention initiatives, we encourage the CLP government to continue with a strong and sustained focus on building more and better housing, roads and other infrastructure, as well as delivering services out bush and in regional areas to improve the living conditions of fellow Territorians and reduce the need for people to travel where they do not need to. This is a significant investment that has already been committed; the CLP just needs to continue with it. The CLP also needs to continue to focus on:

- supporting the work and investment of the federal Labor government in delivering more meaningful training and employment opportunities in our regional, remote and very remote areas, particularly when it comes to the 3,000 jobs for the Territory

- rolling out the record investment in education that our former Labor government secured for the Territory in partnership with the federal Labor government, because education is the tool to get people on the right track to lead to a better life

- rolling out domestic violence funding to the sector and making sure partnerships are positive, working and constructive, allowing the DV sector experts to address the terrible scourge of domestic, family and sexual violence

- teaching respectful relationships and other positive behaviours to put a stop to the cycles of crime and violence, particularly domestic violence

- identifying and getting the right support to vulnerable families who need help with substance abuse, mental health issues—particularly from a remote perspective, which is challenging—and those other key health areas in order to stop them being contributing factors to this outcome we see in the Territory.

We want constructive solutions to ensure that all members of our community can be positive and contributing members of society.

Before the election, the CLP said that it had plans to tackle the root causes of crime—for example, setting up boot camps for at-risk young people—but all of them seem to have dropped off the radar so far. I am keen to hear the update on that. The CLP government needs to be focused on investing in crime prevention, community policing, youth diversion and tackling domestic violence and substance abuse. Unfortunately, the government has stopped talking about all these things, let alone taking action on any of them. There does not seem to be a plan beyond more bail laws.

Recent violent incidents involving offenders on bail demonstrate that there are much bigger systemic issues at play that are not being adequately dealt with across the Territory. There are more people on remand in our prison system than convicted criminals. Two in three people in our Corrections facilities are on remand. This means that people are waiting for their matters to be heard and more victims of crime are left in limbo, unable to have their day in court or see their perpetrator face the consequences of their actions. We have heard that a few weeks ago, prisoners on remand hit that peak 60% of prison population.

It is taking on average 461 days for a Supreme Court matter to be finalised, hence the skyrocketing number of people on remand. Cases are being further held up because the prisons are so overcrowded that lawyers and legal services cannot access their clients; it is often difficult to free up Corrections officers to escort people to court in time to meet with their lawyer and prepare for their matter ahead of the hearing. Thus, the backlog continues.

These are signs of a justice and Corrections system under enormous strain and starting to reach breaking point. It is an overburdened system unable to keep up with the cases before it, which poses further safety risks for the community. This is not new information; legal experts and others involved in the system have been saying this for months. We need violent offenders to face the consequences for their actions much sooner, rather than being left to pose further risk to the community.

In the tragic Nightcliff incident the alleged offender's prior charges should have been finalised much earlier, most likely resulting in a prison sentence. Victims of crime are also being left in limbo, waiting for justice and carrying additional emotional burdens that they should never have to bear. If the Chief Minister is serious about keeping Territorians safe and violent offenders off our streets she should have no hesitation in supporting a measure which ensures that offenders are dealt with sooner and that justice is delivered for victims. This needs urgent attention and investment, and we will support the government if it focuses on this.

There is only one thing we can learn from the senseless death of Mr Feick; that is, we are stronger when we stand together and support each other. That is what the community expects of their politicians. People want us coming together, working on solutions and challenging each other in a productive way to ensure that we meet the challenges that face our community. We are all part of the Territory community, and crime and bad behaviour impact all of us. Together we need to stand up to it.

I do not make these comments for the sake of opposition or to play politics; we are beyond that. I make them because I am genuinely concerned that the missing pieces of the puzzle in addressing crime and poor behaviour are not being put together by the government.

As the Acting Police Commissioner and others in the field have said many times, we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. We need to put as much focus on early intervention and diversion for young people as we have on the acute end in order to get them away from a life of crime. When young people face court we need to ensure that they get the assessments and treatment to address and, maybe for the first time, discover the underlying key health or cognitive issues they may have faced for years without anyone's care or knowledge. This is not about being soft on perpetrators; it is about doing all we can to stop people from living a life of crime in the first place.

It is time for everyone to work in partnership to address community safety and the challenges that we face. We all have a role to play, particularly with the eyes on parliament today, to support the systems that need to be improved or invested in, such as the judiciary, legal community, police and frontline workers, domestic and family violence prevention workers, elders in our community and organisations on the front line that work on community solutions. We are stronger when we work together. From everything I have learnt about Linford Feick, I am sure he would want that too.

We thank the government for bringing forward its amendments. We will act in good faith—as we saw the Bill only this morning at the moving of the first reading by the Chief Minister—because Territorians deserve that.

Mr MALEY (Corrections): Madam Speaker, I support the Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. This Bill strengthens Declan's law and ensures that community safety is front and centre when determining bail.

The Bill also amends the *Youth Justice Act* in relation to detention as a last resort. I put on record that the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the briefing, so when she said that it was not brought up, that was incorrect. It was brought up at the briefing. I correct the record about who attended the briefing. This is an important matter. When people say things about a briefing when they were not there—they did not even bother to turn up—it goes to show how much they really care about this.

Our government has taken urgent decisive action because we are committed to fighting for a safer Territory. The Bill aims at striking the appropriate balance between the future risks on one hand and the presumption of innocence and the right of the accused to be at liberty on the other hand; it is a balancing act. Many things need to be balanced, but we are saying that community safety is paramount.

The safety of the community must come first. It must be the guiding principle in every decision about bail. This Bill makes it clear, in black and white, so that the courts can use this legislation as a guide to determine who should and should not be granted bail. It means that when a judge is considering an application for bail for serious offending, when there is a presumption against bail community safety is the primary consideration.

This is a fundamental shift. It means that community safety is not just one of many considerations; it is the starting point, it is not negotiable, and it is enshrined in law. This establishes an overarching primary test for our courts—community safety must come first. The court must have a high degree of confidence that the accused will not commit a serious violence offence or a prescribed offence or endanger the safety of the community. This is the second test that the court will be asked to impose when it is considering bail.

Our number one priority is always keeping Territorians safe. Territorians expect tough commonsense laws, and it is our job to make sure that our laws are clear and meet community expectations.

Judges require discretion, but it is important that our laws are as tight and strong as possible. This means community safety cannot be sidelined or overshadowed in the decision-making process.

The Bill also removes the consideration for detention as a last resort for youths. When we see two youths accused in previous matters of violent crime charged with nearly 300 offences and bailed 35 times, it is obvious that our court system and legislation are failing the community.

We have been exploring these options for some time as part of our broader *Bail Act* and *Youth Justice Act* reviews, but we are acting urgently because Territorians demand that, and it is the right thing to do. Delaying these reforms would mean more victims and even more pressure on our police.

We are sending a clear message that we are prioritising victims and our frontline workers, not criminals. We will not allow repeat offenders to continue terrorising Territorians.

Let me be clear: this will not fix everything overnight. After eight years of chaos the Labor government has left our CLP government in a terrible position. Young offenders and offenders in general think that there are no consequences and they can do what they want and they will get a slap on the wrist. This is because of eight years of the previous Labor government's failings.

This is a strong, urgent and practical step forward. In addition to law reform we are focusing on addressing the root causes of crime through education, school attendance and family and parental responsibility. I am sure my colleagues will speak more about that as we move through the day. Ministers Cahill and Hersey are leading those important changes. We know that just locking up someone will not solve the problem; we need to get to those root causes through education and parental responsibility. There needs to be a consequence for people's actions.

Governments can change the laws, but laws are not strong enough by themselves; there needs to be behavioural change and parental responsibility. There must be consequences for people's actions. To those who continue to offend, we are making it clear there will be consequences; we say, 'We will find a bed for you in our prison system'.

Our prison system is overcrowded in a very challenging time. Over eight years the previous government failed and neglected infrastructure, which ended in overcrowded prisons, with prisoners flowing into watch houses. We are dealing with that. In fact, in the eight months we have been in government, we have effectively opened a new prison in Berrimah with more than 400 beds for offenders because it is far better to have offenders behind bars than out on the street committing crime and terrorising Territorians.

Since August 2024 we have seen the prison population increase by about 600. This demonstrates the horrific level of crime our community was suffering during the eight years of Labor government when it neglected Corrections, the police, the courts and, of course, the community in general.

Territorians are also paying an economic toll. It costs approximately $350 per day to put someone in prison. What about the emotional toll on victims and families? What about the harm it is doing to the reputation of Territorians? With record prisoner numbers of about 2,830 Territory taxpayers are forking out approximately

$1m a day, but what about the emotional cost to victims? What about the cost to the Territory? Spending so much money is not sustainable—something must be done—but community safety is paramount.

The NT prison population has grown faster than that of any other Australian jurisdiction in the past 20 years, and there is a high rate of reoffending. I put that down to the failed previous Labor government. It failed to deal with the crime crisis and failed to show that there would be consequences for offenders' actions.

We understand that these changes will add pressure to our Corrections system, but there is a focus on programs, education and employment. I shout out to the prison officers and staff in Corrections who are doing a wonderful job in a challenging environment. We acknowledge that and are working with them to do what we can, considering we were left with such a mess and chaos nearly eight months ago.

In the past eight years under Labor the education and employment programs in prisons declined. I am determined to ensure prisoners are engaged in proactive programs whilst in custody. In fact, the RAGE program, which is a family and domestic violence program, had 12 participants in 2023–24 under Labor. In the last eight months when we have been managing this program, 41 people have participated. Under the previous Labor government, in 2024 there were 553 participants in education programs in general. In this year alone 671 people are participating, so we are breaking the cycle of offending. Since being the Corrections minister, I have been to the prisons and sat down and watched prisoners going through the education programs. The Treasurer has firsthand experience of how these programs are essential to rehabilitation, not to mention the prison industries.

We are focusing hard on breaking the cycle of reoffending. I have instructed the Corrections Commissioner to provide weekly reports on the progress of increasing program capacity in prisons. The 'sentenced to a skill' initiative, which will focus on developing work readiness among the offending population, will be a benchmark policy of this government, and we are working towards that. We are providing education programs and skills through industries. I have been to the industries. I have seen prisoners welding, working on cars and doing mechanical work. That gives a purpose for these people who are in a bad situation.

Community safety is paramount. I truly believe that getting a good education and having a job will help people make better choices, treat others with more respect and find real purpose in their lives. To paraphrase a former Prime Minister, it is hard to read, write and do maths if you do not go to school. It is hard to get a job without basic education, and it is hard to live well without a job. That means we need to educate people and give them the basic skills to go out in the community and become better people. That is what we are doing. We are increasing the programs I mentioned earlier. More people have gone through those programs this year than in the previous year. We are working on breaking the cycle of reoffending.

We have already delivered an additional 500 beds in the prison system in the Territory. When we came to office we were left with delays and cost blowouts. The 96 modular beds in Alice Springs were delayed, and there was a cost blowout. The youth justice facility at Holtze had delay after delay and a $75m blowout. Imagine how many programs there could be and how many people could be re-educated with that money.

Unfortunately, the previous government did not manage those projects, and there was blowout after blowout. That affected the prison population and rehabilitation, which caused prisoner numbers and offending to go through the roof. We are here dealing with that now as an urgent matter.

The Department of Corrections is working closely with the department of Logistics to keep increasing capacity as we move forward. We are in a challenging situation, but we are working to make sure there will be space.

I feel like a parrot—community safety is paramount. I will say that over and again because that is how important it is. We have always said that a crisis demands a crisis response. We will continue to act urgently and make sure Territorians are safe.

Since the Chief Minister announced these changes last week I have heard from many Territorians. They have said things like, 'It should be a no-brainer that community safety comes first when deciding whether an accused offender should be back in the community or waiting for their time in court'. I have done many bail applications; I understand the system. This will make it harder for people to get out on bail. Again, community safety is paramount. The people who talk to me are shocked that the overarching principle of community safety is not the number one consideration when judges decide bail.

In 2019 the previous Labor government watered down youth bail laws, eroded consequences, removed accountability and acted completely out of touch. The community expects laws that are relevant and up to date, which is what the CLP government is doing.

Under the previous failed Labor government, breach of bail was removed as a criminal offence for youths. That is right; there were zero consequences if someone breached bail. No wonder we were left with a crisis to deal with.

In eight months we have made the community safer. We are here today on an urgent basis. The Chief Minister has spoken to many people in the community, as have many people in this room. This is what they asked for, and this is what they will get—decisive, urgent action by this government.

The police were stripped of their powers and arrest became a measure of last resort, not a real tool for frontline officers. This government, led by Lia Finocchiaro, is turning that around and supporting police and Corrections officers. More importantly, we are supporting the community.

Labor's changes focused on the offender. Labor prioritised the rights of the accused over the rights of victims. Labor ignored the damage being done to the community. Labor made it harder, not easier, to protect Territorians. For too long there has been no accountability or consequences for youth offenders, particularly repeat offenders.

We are sending a clear message that victims and frontline workers are our priority, not criminals. Repeat offenders, not the people they terrorise, will feel the consequences. We want to make sure that there will be consequences if people terrorise Territorians. It will be harder for repeat offenders to get bail.

Our government is doing things differently; we are putting Territorians first, not the offenders. That is why we are tackling this crisis on every front with immediate enforcement and long-term reform. We are backing our police, courts, community, Community Corrections system and our Corrections officers.

We know that tougher bail laws will mean greater demand on our Corrections system. That will be a challenge and we are working to make sure that challenge is met. We will find beds because Territorians have made it clear that they want safer streets and to be safe in their homes and their community. They want accountability and real consequences for those who do the wrong thing.

Territorians want a government that will act and not make excuses. That is exactly what the CLP government is delivering. This Bill is just a part of our plan, but it is an essential part. We are acting decisively to ensure that community safety is a top priority when bail is considered. We are undoing the damage Labor caused by weakening our system.

I thank the Attorney-General's Department for working hard in the last week to get this Bill prepared. I thank Parliamentary Counsel.

I thank the community members who reached out and spoke to me and everyone in this room to relay their concerns. Territorians want decisive action, consequences and a safer community. That is what we are here to do.

I thank all the MLAs. I am excited to hear what they have to say about this because we are spread across the Northern Territory. Community members talk to us in our offices, in the street, at the dump and on the side of the road. I am sure we are all hearing the same things—community safety is paramount, they want action, and they deserve it.

Territorians will get that with this government. We are putting Territorians first, and we will not stop until the Territory is safe.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, we stand in solidarity with the community and the Feick family, who last week had their husband, father, brother and uncle taken from them tragically and too soon. Territorians have every right to feel heartbroken, frustrated and angry and be grieving over this recent tragic event.

I acknowledge Samara Laverty in the Chamber today. For the last two years she courageously fought for Declan's law in the hope that she could spare anyone else from going through the horrendous and unbearable pain that she continues to live with. Samara, I thank you for returning to Darwin to support our community at this time. I know it is a huge emotional investment for you and your family. I thank you for assisting us with Declan's law last year and with the information to help us with these new laws.

Our government is acting urgently to ensure that community safety is the number one priority. This is why we are here today. The Chief Minister recalled parliament urgently to build upon Declan's law and make our bail laws the strongest in the country.

Within eight weeks of coming to government last year the CLP introduced major law and order reforms, including Declan's law, which included stronger bail laws and knife-wanding powers. Declan's law has contributed to having more than 600 extra prisoners. They were already in the system. Since these reforms began, knife-wanding operations have scanned more than 5,000 individuals. We introduced mandatory sentencing for assaults on workers. We reinstated breach of bail as an offence for youths. Public drinking laws were strengthened, with more than 227 fines issued. There have been 10 individuals charged under the post-and-boast legislation. Already 19 youths and five adult offenders have been charged under the ramraid legislation we introduced.

The pace at which we introduced and passed all these new laws upon coming to government was unprecedented.

Declan's law introduced a presumption against bail for serious violence offences and mandatory electronic monitoring for repeat offenders. It expanded the presumption against bail to apply to youths and reinstated breach of bail as an offence for youth offenders.

We have always known that there was more work to be done, especially after the first crime package we introduced eight weeks after coming to government. We were already working on the rewrite of the *Youth Justice Act* and the *Bail Act*. However, after the recent tragedy and community frustration, anger, grief and being fed up, we brought forward the changes that we thought could have the biggest impact.

We know the types of violent offending happening across the Territory is not limited to the tragic events of last week. There are many victims of violent offending, which is not acceptable. We know this, and that is why the Chief Minister recalled parliament urgently and quickly to introduce new laws to respond to community expectations.

Madam Speaker, you would know that recalling parliament urgently is not a decision taken lightly. In fact, in the previous eight years under the Labor government, despite community pressures, parliament was not recalled urgently to deal with the crime crisis, nor was any meaningful new legislation brought in by Labor to keep serious violent offenders off our streets.

Make no mistake: the ideology of those who place the historical trauma of offenders before the rights of victims is why we are seeing such acts in our community. Our CLP government has been clear for a long time that we will put the rights of victims and the community above the rights of offenders. If that means violent offenders are sitting in a watch house or prison, so be it. It means that they are not out on our streets able to commit more crimes.

The new reforms will maintain Declan's law for the presumption against bail for serious violence offences or repeat offences and all the conditions in section 24 that must be considered. This means that the offender must convince the decision-maker, being either the police or the court, that they should be granted bail. If they manage to convince the decision-maker, they have mounted a good case. Then two further tests under these new bail laws must be applied. The first makes community safety the paramount or overarching consideration in all bail decisions. Then, even if the decision-maker still thinks the community will be safe and consideration of bail is granted, a test must apply which is when the decision-maker must ask themselves whether they are satisfied to a high degree of confidence that the accused will not offend again or endanger the safety of the community if bail is granted. These three tests applied will now be the strongest and the toughest in the country.

The amendments to the Act strengthen the presumption against bail and reinforce the starting point of no bail for serious offending. They are modelled off the current strongest laws in Australia, which is the New South Wales bail laws. However, the Territory and our government will go even further, because our new law applies to a broader range and a much longer list of serious and prescribed offences. It also applies equally to youth and adult offenders. In New South Wales it does not apply to adults. It ensures community safety over offender rights and a high degree of certainty regarding community safety and risk of reoffending.

In addition, these new tests create consistency between adult and youth bail tests and consistency in the way decision-making occurs by police and the courts.

These amendments also remove the detention as last-resort principle for youth bail matters and remove the court's ability to consider the need to minimise the stigma to a youth resulting from being remanded in custody.

I note the Leader of the Opposition said that she did not hear about this until she had seen the Bill, yet it was covered in great detail in the briefing yesterday.

The inclusion of the provision for detention as a last resort was an original recommendation from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory eight years ago. The implementation of those law change recommendations ultimately led to the watering down of bail and youth laws, with the rights of offending youths put well above the rights of community. Some offenders who, eight years later, are now adults were youths when these laws began to be watered down. They may never have had consequences for their crimes. Some of these crimes are serious and violent. Given the principle applied to bail was that detention should be a last resort, it was rare for a youth to be remanded even if the crime was serious, heinous and violent. We are removing that principle with this legislation.

I pick up on a couple of areas that the Leader of the Opposition talked about today. She spoke about the remand pressures and how there are so many people on remand sitting in watch houses and in our prison system. Our government acknowledges that it is an imperfect system. It is an inherited mess that we came to a short few months ago—I think it is now nine months. A lot of work has been done in that time. There has been the Corrections master plan, meaning new beds are being found every week across the Territory to ensure there are places for people to go if they are not granted bail and need to be remanded. We will put community safety as everyone's priority.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the average time that a case sits in the courts. I think she referred to a figure in the Supreme Court. I have that data here. It is interesting that she has such a short memory, considering she was a minister for a long time in the previous Labor government. In fact, she was the Attorney-General, so she would be well aware of these numbers. In 2019 the average time of someone sitting in remand at the Supreme Court was 275 days. In 2020, still under Labor, that grew to 302 days. In 2021 it grew to 401 days. In 2022 it grew to 419 days. In 2023 it grew again to 458 days—all this under the Labor government's watch. In 2024, which is the year we came to government, it dropped slightly by two days to 456 days. The stats I have for 2025 is 453 days.

As you can see from those stats, it used to be lower. It increased over time and then we have started to turn that tide. We want to invest in the justice system. There have been eight years of Labor not investing in the justice system. In fact, Labor believed that jailing was failing. We do not agree with that. Violent offenders will be out on the streets committing crimes, so they need to be in prison. There is no special other place that they can go to.

In the last few months we have invested in our justice system. We appointed an additional full-time Local Court judge and more court staff. This is the largest judicial complement that the Territory has ever had. We have more people working in the system than ever before. We recruited four new prosecutors and additional support staff because we needed to boost prosecution capacity. There were 20 DPP staff on temporary casual contracts for years; we have made them permanent because we need them to stay here to assist with the justice system, rather than us worrying about retraining new people.

In the few short months since we have been in government, we made a critical decision. We launched the Targeted Intervention Group – Early Resolution taskforce. We call it the TIG-ER team for short—everyone loves an acronym. This team is within the Department of Public Prosecutions to look at all the cases and fast-track remand cases. This work has never been done. It reduces court backlogs. Since the end of January we have finalised more than 200 cases. The TIG-ER team has reviewed 290 remand cases, finalised 213 of them, and 87 were guilty pleas. The team works with prosecutors, the defence and police to ensure all the information is there to work out early pleas. This brings the system forward; it means justice can be served quicker and those on remand who are innocent can be dealt with.

The team, which has been working only since the end of January, picked up one case that had sat in the system since March 2024. The team resolved it in one day. There is a backlog of cases that have been there for years. That is the reason why people are sitting on remand for so many days. This is now being worked on. This change is true reform and a true investment in a justice system which sits in the middle of Police and Corrections. This is important. We will make changes and we will not stop there; this is just the beginning.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about alternatives to custody and the need to invest in that. A couple are already set up; I know that because I have seen them. However, in eight years Labor did not assign any

investment to any programs or facilities. They are expensive to run, and the investment going forward was not there.

With the state of our economy we must prioritise the funds. We have to get violent offenders off our streets. They have to be dealt with by the courts, and if they are on bail they cannot live on the streets; they need to be behind bars. We need to keep our community safe. That is where our investment is going. We believe in rehabilitation and finding better ways for people to be educated. We need the right behaviour change programs so that they can then lead a life beyond crime. However, we are not at that point, which is why we have invested in the front end of everything. That is our priority.

There was an attack on us for not addressing the root causes, and we heard that we need investment in those spaces, but we are doing that at the same time. The Education minister and the Minister for Children and Families have worked tirelessly with their teams to stand up a bunch of things; we have been successful in that.

Our Education minister has truancy officers across the Territory talking to students about getting back to school and telling parents that there will be fines if they do not send their kids to school. It is working, and we have more kids in school. To break the cycle we need to address the root causes and get these kids educated.

The Circuit Breaker Program that the Minister for Children and Families is working on has been a fantastic start, but that is all it is—a start. There are 120 cases being worked on across the Territory. The parental responsibility agreements are now actually happening. I remember sitting in opposition for four years listening to the Minister for Territory Families at the time talk about family responsibility agreements, but none had been done; it was all talk. Our minister is doing this, with 75 agreements already signed up. That is 75 families involved with these kids, addressing the root causes and ensuring that they will not grow up to be adult criminals. That is fantastic. This is just the start. Remember that we have been in government for about eight months.

We recalled parliament because this is urgent. This is how important community safety is to us. It is the priority of not only our government and the community but also everyone in the justice system because we are enshrining this in legislation. Every decision-maker in the police and the courts must put community safety as a priority and satisfy themselves to a high degree of confidence that the offender will not endanger the community or reoffend. That is the highest threshold in the country.

This Bill places community safety at the heart of our bail system. That is what our community expects and it is what the community deserves. Everyone knows that to be true. I support our community and government in bringing forward these important law and order reforms.

I extend my deepest condolences to the Feick family.

I thank Samara Laverty for being here today to support the community.

As the Corrections minister said, people in the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and the Attorney-General's Department worked day and night this week to bring this forward urgently. I thank them greatly. A lot of work needed to be done and they did an exceptional job.

I thank the police and those who were on the front line on that dreadful day last week. Know that we support you as well. The work you do is thankless. There is nothing we can say to show our gratitude.

I cannot go without thanking the people in Corrections. It will be tough. We have a tough couple of months coming up once this is implemented. It is imperfect, and we acknowledge that.

In advance, I thank the people in Corrections, Police and our court system. We will get through this. We went through this before, at the end of last year, and we will do it again. We are much better prepared this time because we have already been through it. Many systems have been stood up and we have worked through that together. As a government we will continue that work.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

K McNAMARA (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I wear the deep distress and sorrow of my electorate. This past week has been a gut-wrenching time for everyone in my community. It is a time when words feel inadequate, when all you want to do is take away all the pain that people are feeling.

A tragic event happened, and I extend my deepest heartfelt sympathies to the family of Linford Feick and all their wonderful staff at the Friendly Grocer. These lives were changed forever in one terrible moment. Children and grandchildren have been left without a beautiful father and grandfather.

I thank the first responders, including many bystanders who rendered assistance, and I recognise the trauma that they are also now dealing with.

I recognise Samara Laverty in the Chamber today. I recognise how painful this must be for you.

I note that the Feick family have made it clear that they do not want their tragedy to be politicised or used, so I hope we can all keep that in mind today and moving forward.

Today I do not speak on behalf of the Feick family; rather, I speak to the sentiments of the broader Nightcliff community.

Linford and Margaret's groceries, the Friendly Grocer or the 5 Star, is a well-loved, central part of Nightcliff. Many locals have been shopping there for decades. It is much more than just a corner store. The staff all make you feel a part of their team and the family. Many people have been saying that over the past week, but it is true. I got a message from as far away as Guatemala this week from someone who is distressed, saying they loved the Friendly Grocer in Nightcliff. It is a well-loved business and family.

One of my experiences has always stuck in my mind. I think of this often. It was a short conversation that happened years ago during COVID, in the early weeks when everyone was fearful as no-one knew exactly what the disease was. It was stressful for those working with the general public and in retail particularly. At that time I was heavily pregnant with my second child and was terrified of being out in public.

I was shopping at the 5 Star. As one of the staff was stacking shelves, I walked past and we had a brief nod and said hello. He then stopped and turned to me and said, 'Oh, wow, this must be a stressful time to be pregnant. How are you doing? Are you okay?' I think of this moment often and it has come back to me now. He must have been under incredible stress, but he stopped and took a moment to check on me, a complete stranger. It was such a simple act of kindness—a simple but empathetic act of reaching out to someone he did not know—and of human connection at that time. It has left an impact on me. I am not the only one who holds deeply loved and grateful memories of that family and the grocer.

Over this past Christmas, when another smaller store and cafe in my electorate—Porkin'—unfortunately closed suddenly, Lin and Margaret reached out to the staff who had suddenly lost their jobs before Christmas to offer them employment in their store. From what I understand they did not need more staff; they felt it was the right thing to do. It was an incredible kind action that speaks of the community spirit and care that the Feick family has. Running a small business is not for the faint-hearted and they worked hard to provide for the Nightcliff community. They still are; they are open again.

Nightcliff is hurting. There is sense of shock about the senselessness of the crime. There is also a feeling of despair because we have all seen dysfunction in our society that has been left unaddressed for too long. We have seen the police and frontline services overwhelmed with an unmanageable workload. This is not the Territory we want to see.

There are certain parts of my electorate that are hit hard and are struggling with experiencing antisocial and criminal behaviour on a regular basis. I know because I have lived in four different locations in the electorate over the past seven years and some are definitely less safe than others. I know what it is like to hear noises in the night and feel terrified that someone is trying to break in, just like many people in the NT who have been the victim of crime. I am incredibly worried that these experiences with crime and antisocial behaviour and the general feelings of being unsafe are making it more difficult for our communities to unite and work together to overcome the hurdles that we face.

Ever since my election, crime and community safety has been a core issue continually raised with me. It is something my staff and I work on every day in the office. I know many others here would too. The community is feeling unsafe and desperately wants to see the Nightcliff area and Darwin more broadly become a place that is safe, where all people can thrive.

I have previously written to the Police minister on behalf of my constituents to request that the Nightcliff Police Station hours be extended and the capabilities of the station be increased, as well as an increased number of foot patrols through the Nightcliff shopping precinct area. I still have not received a response from the Police minister.

I repeat that call for my community today. We know it was a broken promise by Labor, but the CLP is now in power. Listen to the voices of my community and open the station properly.

I understand the limitations for police, but surely there are others ways that we can utilise that station space to help community safety, particularly vulnerable people, and use it for preventive measures. People have come in all week to suggest ideas to me. They said to put in a young parents' training and support group there; put in a return to country office like the one they have in Casuarina; or put in a youth engagement program. I urge the CLP to show some vision and use that space to help my community.

Over the past seven months in my role I have organised and facilitated numerous meetings between housing providers and tenants in regard to ongoing safety issues in public housing. I am also in ongoing contact with the security firm at Litchfield Court. I do numerous site visits, speaking to tenants there to hear directly from them. We also have ongoing one-on-one support for many of the tenants in our public housing and residents in surrounding areas. I have been communicating feedback from the community to other organisations such as St Vincent de Paul and Ozanam House and have been there to visit the people running the service.

In the Nightcliff shopping area, where my office is, my staff and I constantly liaise with different business owners and their staff about antisocial and criminal behaviour and then relay their concerns to the appropriate authorities. Like many others, I have walked across the road to the police station to ask for assistance when an incident is occurring, and I have been told that no-one in the building can come and to call the non-emergency line.

I understand the severe resourcing issues that police are facing, but I also understand that having a police station where members of the public are constantly told that there are no police to help them is immensely frustrating to many of my constituents.

Over a month ago I held an open meeting with local businesses to discuss what else we could do and what was within our powers to come up with a bit of a plan. The local business owners decided they wanted to request the government to fund private security in the Nightcliff shopping precinct, such as what we see in the city and at Bundilla Beach. As our shopping village is not under a sole landlord but instead is a series of separately owned and tenanted shops, the plan was to get everyone to join the Nightcliff Traders Association to strengthen their voice and speak as one. Then they wanted to create a petition, which I would table in parliament.

That was the plan we were working on for the Nightcliff shopping area before this incident occurred. It was not only that; local business owners and their employees felt like no-one in the government was listening to them, so I was trying to get representatives from the local police to meet with them and hear their concerns directly. The most recent email I wrote was, tragically, that morning—mere hours before the attack happened. I will read out that email because it almost foreshadows what was to come. I wrote:

'Hello, I am writing on behalf of some of the shop owners here in Nightcliff shopping village who I have been meeting with regarding antisocial and criminal behaviour in and around the shops. They are regularly experiencing theft, damage, harassment and littering on their premises and say that it is having a severe impact on their businesses and customers. They were hoping to organise a meeting with you and a representative from the police station to relay their experiences and discuss some possible actions to combat the behaviours we are experiencing. Whilst I understand the larger issues at play, such as social drivers of crime and the limitations on police resourcing, I am hoping that the local businesses here can work together with police to help mitigate some of the impacts of the crime and antisocial behaviour we are experiencing.'

I have been working every day since the attack, and from these conversations I know that much of the community wants immediate action to make them feel safer. It is my duty as their elected representative to listen to the community members, so I will support these amendments.

It is reasonable and, indeed, necessary that the judiciary takes into consideration the safety of the community when considering bail. However, I hold deep reservations about the changes to the *Youth Justice Act*. I was briefed on these changes yesterday evening and have only seen the full amendments this morning. I, therefore, have not had the opportunity to engage in proper consultation with experts, frontline workers or my electorate in regard to these specific changes.

I was initially unaware that there would be changes to the *Youth Justice Act*, and now I am deeply concerned about the consequential change in removing the detention-as-a-last-resort provision. Detention as a last resort does not mean no-one is ever detained. I understand that there are children and young people who

have been so damaged in their short lives that they are a danger to those around them. Detention as a last resort does not mean we let those kids go; for their own wellbeing and that of the community, they need to be detained and rehabilitated.

I do not think we need to remove that principle, but I am concerned because there is endless evidence that the more children are locked up under punitive measures without rehabilitation it increases the likelihood that they will reoffend. This makes our communities less safe, not more. We all know—those opposite have even said it—jailing is failing. This will significantly increase the number of inmates on remand. Figures from the last quarter show that 44% of the prison population are people on remand, and I have heard it might now be as high as 55%. These figures will rise significantly with these changes. Where will we keep these people?

Alongside members of the crossbench I visited Holtze men's prison and saw firsthand that it is already beyond its capacity. There were mattresses from wall to wall in rooms where people were not even supposed to be sleeping. We have already had significant reductions in the access to bail, yet we are seeing high crime rates. Does it not show us that this approach is not working?

This morning I heard the Chief Minister on radio talking about programs in prison. She mentioned a number—I think it was 40—for completion of a domestic violence program for offenders. That is a minuscule number compared with the number of offenders who are in there for domestic violence offences. The other elements to this are: what are the wait times to get into these programs; what is the eligibility; and what is the completion rate? Numerous staff from the sector have talked to me anonymously about this crisis. They say that there are barely any programs and barely any prisoners have access to them. I trust the word of these frontline workers far more than the mealy-mouthed lines coming from our Corrections minister. This situation is unacceptable.

Probably one of the biggest issues is remand times. This is a crucial thing that a lot of people in the public do not understand. When people are on remand they have no access to programs that target problem behaviour. This is because it is often seen by the court as an admission of guilt, but there are so many beneficial things we should be doing for people on remand—drug and alcohol rehab for a start. Why is that not happening?

The big problem these staff raise with me is that because many inmates are serving their entire sentence on remand, they have zero access to programs and supports to set them up well. When they eventually get to their court date, which had been delayed because the government has not put in supports to the system to cope with the extra prisoners, they have already served their time, and often served more time than their sentenced amount. They are then released without any rehabilitation—none at all—and they come out angrier and more dangerous than they were to begin with. I honestly do not understand how people opposite can stand there with a straight face and talk about community safety when the people in prison who spend their whole sentence on remand are not getting any rehabilitation. It is not good enough.

Even those who are sentenced have few support programs and opportunities to change their life; instead, we are institutionalising them. The NT has the highest rates of recidivism in Australia, with six out of 10 prisoners returning to jail within two years of being released. It is no surprise that the rates are so high when adult inmates are spending 23 hours in their cell and only one hour outside. As one Corrections worker I know mused, 'Of course people come out of prison angry. Being locked up without work or anything engaging for 23 hours a day will make them angry.' We are failing the people who are incarcerated and the broader community, as we are not creating any pathways for rehabilitation. If you want to truly make the NT safe let us actually prevent crime.

It has been found that there are eight social determinants that increase someone's likelihood of incarceration. These are: having been in and out of foster care or home care; receiving a poor school education; being Indigenous; having early contact with the police; having an unsupported mental health or cognitive disability; problematic alcohol or other drug use; experiencing homelessness or unstable housing; and coming from or living in a disadvantaged location. By making investments in these eight areas we will be able to reduce crime. It is a proven method of preventing crime, rather than punishing those who have already committed crime.

Finally in 2025 we have heard the CLP utter the phrase 'addressing the root causes of crime', decades after frontline services, police and other experts have been calling for this. Government members can say these words, but it means nothing without action. We are yet to see any action on addressing the root causes.

Domestic violence organisations have contradicted the lines we have heard from our DV minister and Attorney-General on their supposed consultations. The people dedicating their lives to protecting women and

children are saying that they are not being consulted, have no assurances about funding and are turning away women and children from shelters every day. This is not good enough.

I want us to support young parents so that children are set up for a bright future; a good education is part of this. This is one of the areas we should focus on. Research in youth justice in the NT last year found that 94% of incarcerated children had reported notifications of exposure to family violence and 77% had mental health needs or a cognitive disability. That is a huge percentage. Almost half of the study group had multiple diagnoses of cognitive disabilities, including ADHD and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We are failing these young people through our failure to strengthen families and social supports and our health systems.

Should we not be seeking to rehabilitate and support young people, rather than institutionalise them? As stated by the Law Council of Australia and the Law Society Northern Territory last year when the bail laws were first brought in:

> *There is overwhelming evidence that locking children up does not make our community safer and seriously harms the children concerned. In passing these Bills, the new Government spoke of jail time as being an opportunity for rehabilitation, but these laws appear to only focus on punishment, not addressing the disadvantage a child might face and helping them to turn their lives around.*

In my electorate in the last Territory election between me, the other progressive Independent and the Labor incumbent, we received 75% of first preferences, which means that overwhelmingly my electorate does not want the CLP's anti-evidence punitive measures on crime. The CLP talks about a mandate, but it does not have a mandate in my electorate. People in my electorate want evidence-based measures that will work; we just want something that will work.

I recognise that we need both short and long-term solutions. Short-term solutions need to include greater capacity of the prisons so that there is room for inmates and the vital programs in prisons can be run. I stress that there is not enough funding and resources in our prisons to rehabilitate our prisoners. This is a massive failure. I know that we want to deliver immediate results for our communities, but if it was simple we would not be seeing high rates of crime in the NT.

We need to begin these longer-term investments now. More policing is not the only solution. Unfortunately, we know that a greater police presence does not necessarily translate to a reduction in offences. NT Police Assistant Commissioner Travis Wurst, on Katie Woolf's show this week, stated:

> *… the way in which this incident transpired was such that police could have been standing out the front of that shop and it may not have prevented this unnecessary death from occurring …*

We need to stop forcing our police to pick up the pieces from failed government policies on crime prevention. It is not fair on them and it is not fair on the community.

It is important for me to call out some of the truly disappointing and harmful language and responses we are seeing in response to this tragedy. I am sure many people in this Chamber have seen comments or have had conversations with people in their electorate who have been painting all First Nations people with the same brush and calling for more heinous violence. Violence begets violence, and as parliamentarians we have a duty and responsibility to say that we will not accept those calls in our communities. I and many others in my community have been deeply distressed by the racism and divide we are seeing.

Sadly, instead of showing leadership and cracking down on these unacceptable calls for violence, the CLP government is not only silent on this but some seem to be playing into this divisiveness. In the Chief Minister's speech this morning she stated:

> *We inherited a system that places too much emphasis on the historical trauma of perpetrators, rather than focusing on the ongoing harm to the community.*

The sad reality is that we never dealt with the deep historical trauma that Aboriginal communities have. We have not, and that is the truth of the matter. There has not been a deep reckoning or structural investment in supporting the severe ongoing trauma of colonisation and dispossession. Generations of Aboriginal people have been brutalised by our systems, and no-one in this government seems to want to educate themselves or to understand what this has done to vulnerable people in our community and why this is happening.

By continuing to have a punitive justice system that provides no means of true rehabilitation we are condemning a generation of young people to incarceration. It does not make us any safer, and it makes me deeply depressed for the future of this place.

I close with a quote from Larrakia Nation CEO Michael Rotumah. He stated:

> *We will not allow the actions of a few to define the many. The overwhelming majority of Aboriginal people live with pride, purpose, and cultural responsibility. It is time for all levels of government to partner with us to build a future based on prevention.*

Mr CHARLS (People, Sport and Culture): Madam Speaker, I support this Bill.

I acknowledge the presence of Samara Laverty in this Chamber. Thank you again, Samara, for your ongoing support for Territorians.

One week ago today Linford Feick began his day as he always did, taking on the daily challenges of running a successful family-run business that has long stood as a cornerstone of the Nightcliff community, receiving orders, stacking shelves, filling fridges, ensuring that the fresh local produce for which his business is known was on display and, most importantly, meeting and greeting customers as a vital cog of the community. Linford; his wife, Margaret; their son, Ben; daughter, Jo; and their extended family and the dedicated team around them could never have imagined the horror that would unfold later that afternoon.

I know many people in the suburb of Nightcliff, and to say that this community is shattered is an understatement. Whether you knew the store as the Friendly Grocer, 5 Star, IGA or Rite Price, it held its place as the rightful hub of the community. It was not just Nightcliff; the grief has rippled across the wider Darwin and Territory community, as we saw during the vigils held at the store and the jetty last week.

Since that day, the community has been asking why—'How could this happen?' There is a deep and growing sense of concern—a genuine questioning of whether the system is functioning in the way people expect.

I found myself reflecting on why I am here in this Chamber, almost exactly two years since I made the decision to enter public life. That decision was shaped by tragedy too—the devastating loss of Declan Laverty and Md Ishaqur Rahman Sifat, an international student in Darwin. The grief of their families and the public outcry stirred something in me. It compelled me to step beyond my professional life and stand for office, believing that I could bring both perspective and resolve to the growing challenges in our community.

Earlier this year during a visit to my family I travelled to Dhaka in Bangladesh to meet Sifat's parents. I made that decision long before I was elected as the Member for Sanderson, and it was something I felt I had to do. It was not an easy interaction; emotions and tears flowed from all of us. Sifat's parents had only one plea—they wanted justice. They asked me to ensure the court process would be fair and transparent. I took the time to explain how our justice system operates in the Northern Territory, which was unfamiliar to them. With the help of one of their family members acting as an interpreter we had a heartfelt honest conversation. Their dignity and pain will stay with me forever.

Once again, I am deeply troubled by another tragic event which has left a family broken and a community searching for answers.

During our campaign we focused on three critical themes: reducing crime; rebuilding the economy; and restoring the lifestyle the Territory is known for. These are not just aspirations; they are promises to the people of the Northern Territory.

It is astonishing to once again hear members of the former government criticising this government for not eliminating crime within eight months. This is not only disingenuous but also offensive to the Territorians living with the consequences of Labor's inaction. Let me be clear: under Labor's watch the environment was created where crime could flourish. Labor's policies enabled offenders to operate with impunity and in doing so allowed criminal elements to recruit and groom vulnerable young people. Those very children, who were once failed by a weak system, are now on our streets, terrorising Territorians and taking the lives of hardworking innocent people.

In just over eight months this government has acted decisively. We have not accepted the status quo. Within eight weeks of taking office this government introduced sweeping reforms, including Declan's law, which delivered stronger bail provisions and knife-wanding powers that empowered police to act earlier and more effectively in preventing violent crime.

We oversaw the strengthening of public drinking laws; new post-and-boast legislation, with 10 individuals already charged; plus new ramraid legislation, with 19 youths and five adult offenders charged.

We implemented mandatory sentencing for assaults on frontline workers, because those who serve and protect our community deserve to feel safe while doing so.

We are investing in targeted youth interventions and tougher breach consequences, while also addressing the root causes of crime through better coordination between police, health, education and social services.

These reforms are not symbolic; they are substantial. Although no law can undo what has happened, we owe it to families like the Feicks and the broader community to act with resolve and without delay. This Bill builds upon those foundations. It signals our commitment to public safety and community confidence. It says clearly that violence has no place in our streets, our shops or the Territory's way of life.

We are a resilient people. We grieve together and we support one another. When tragedy strikes we do not turn away; we stand up and say, 'Enough'. No family should have to endure the heartbreak that Linford's family is going through.

We find ourselves here in an extraordinary recalling of parliament to take further urgent action in an effort to make our bail laws the strongest in the country. Territorians have been let down by a justice system that has placed offenders ahead of community safety for too long. We must protect Territorians first, putting the rights of Territorians above those of offenders.

The key elements of this Bill as outlined ensure:

- community safety must be the paramount consideration in all bail decisions
- courts and police must be satisfied to a high degree of confidence that an accused will not reoffend or endanger the safety of the community before granting bail for a long list of prescribed offences and serious violence offences
- removal of the detention-as-a-last-resort principle for youth bail matters and the court's ability to consider the need to minimise the stigma to a youth resulting from being remanded in custody
- consistency between adult and youth bail tests.

These new changes will build on the already tough reforms introduced under Declan's law, ensuring stronger protections for the Territory community.

I am determined, along with my colleagues, to contribute to finding a fix to this broken system and restoring safety in the Northern Territory.

I recounted in my maiden speech a little over six months ago that I firmly believe that the chronology of one's arrival on this great island—whether thousands of years ago, hundreds of years ago or in recent times—holds no bearing on our shared commitment to enhancing the Northern Territory. What truly matters is our collective dedication to improving our community. We are all part of the fabric of this Territory; each thread is equally important regardless of how long it has been woven into the tapestry. Our diversity is our strength, and it is this diversity that will enable us to build a better Northern Territory together.

I also noted that true strength in leadership emerges not from effortless victories but from the resilience built through facing and overcoming challenges, knowing that each hardship endured and obstacle surmounted fortifies my resolve and enhances my ability to serve effectively. I restate that principle today and stand committed with this government to introducing stronger laws and protecting community safety.

This government promised action, certainty and security; we will not stop until we do just that. Every Territorian deserves to feel safe, whether at home, at work or walking along the street. We must do everything in our power to prevent a repeat of these tragedies—for Declan, Sifat and Linford.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I offer my condolences to the family, friends and community members of Mr Feick, who was taken from his community.

I acknowledge Samara Laverty who is with us today.

I also acknowledge the eight Aboriginal women who have been brutally murdered in the Northern Territory this year alone.

This issue remains one of the most pressing challenges we face. The issue of crime and antisocial behaviour in every community across the Northern Territory impacts and affects us all. I have seen firsthand the complexities of the issues and the need for bold innovative solutions that go beyond the traditional approaches of the past.

During our time in government we worked to implement measures to address both immediate concerns and the underlying causes of crime. We introduced a range of initiatives, including enhanced monitoring provisions, strengthened laws in regard to domestic and family violence to protect victims and introduced programs within the prison system designed to address offending behaviours, which were co-designed with the sectors. Importantly, we established law and justice groups to elevate Aboriginal leaders and elders to work with the judiciary on appropriate sentencing options for members of our community.

We invested in expanding prison capacity, not as a standalone solution but as an acknowledgement that prisons are one piece of the puzzle. They provide necessary space for accountability and public safety, but let me be clear that incarceration alone, in and of itself, will never solve the challenges we face. People do not stay in prison forever. If we do not address the root causes of the offending and criminal behaviour and do not offer pathways to rehabilitation and reintegration, we are simply denying the problem and denying solving it. There will continue to be victims of crime and challenges to community safety if we look at prison as the only solution; it will not solve crime completely or address the root causes of crime. If incarceration was the answer the Northern Territory would already have some of the lowest crime rates in the nation.

To break the cycle of reoffending we need robust programs and alternatives to custody. We need initiatives that help people to rebuild their lives, reduce recidivism and, ultimately, create safer communities. This is why we have to continue to establish, fund and extend behaviour change programs and post-release support initiatives. These measures are designed to ensure that when individuals return to society they are better equipped to contribute positively, rather than returning to the behaviours that caused their incarceration.

I am not for a second suggesting that one person or party has the answers, nor am I suggesting that one person or party is solely responsible for the issues we face. As a matter of fact, everyone here is responsible as legislators, regardless of our party alliance or our positions in or out of government. We are all responsible and all have a role to do better. What is clear, regardless of political allegiance, is that numerous attempts from all governments and oppositions to call for different programs, reforms and approaches are not seeing the results we all hoped for.

This should not be seen as a failure; we need to understand why. Why are resources not having the impact we want? Do we have the right mix? Are we looking outside the box? Are we innovating and stepping up to meet the challenges our community faces? The answer is that we can all do better, and we must.

The government has incarcerated an additional 600 people since August last year. Here we are, eight months later, with crime still increasing. Many Territorians are saying that crime is worse than ever before.

The proposed amendments before us attempt to apply a level of weighting against granting bail once all the other criteria have been met or considered. Although this brings in an additional measure, it will not stop the individual from being granted bail; it simply adds an additional consideration that the courts must have confidence in granting bail. The measures in this change should already be considered by the judiciary.

The change to the *Youth Justice Act 2005* proposes to remove the general principle that a youth be kept in custody for an offence as a last resort. We have seen this introduced similarly in other areas. In the New South Wales jurisdiction this change saw a 32% increase in the number of young people being held in youth detention.

The longer that a young person is held in a youth detention facility the earlier that person's lifelong connection and journey with the criminal justice system starts. It is where they become institutionalised and learn from other people how to become better criminals.

We agree that there must be consequences for all, but we must not ignore the evidence that tells us we need to do more when it comes to diversion and steering young people away from the criminal justice system. The

government needs to be clear about the additional resources that this will require, such as additional beds, training, services, Corrections staff and, importantly, programs to help young people be diverted.

We have heard harrowing tales from Danila Dilba staff who talk about the conditions people are subjected to and how their anger continues to grow in the youth detention centres because of the lack of programs.

The previous government tried to address community safety concerns and reduce crime. We took important steps to empower law enforcement, strengthen legal protections and provide targeted interventions. We introduced legislation that allowed police to impose curfews during public disorder. We enhanced police powers to effectively allow wanding to be carried out in our community. I acknowledge that the Northern Territory's Chief Minister has expanded those powers. We have seen a range of reforms from all governments over the last three decades.

To support businesses and the broader community we listened, and we passed trespassing laws that provided greater certainty for issuing trespass orders. We implemented a presumption against bail for all serious violence offences involving a prohibited and a controlled weapon. When the new government was brought in last October the Chief Minister made a suite of changes and built on those provisions. We delivered a $570m investment in the police force, ensuring there were more officers on the ground and additional patrol vehicles could be deployed to enhance community safety.

We focused on trying to break the cycle of reoffending by introducing enforced Corrections orders and mandatory behaviour change programs. Additionally, we established bail support accommodation to ensure compliance with bail conditions and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

The new CLP government came to power and introduced a series of legislative measures in an attempt to curb the crime waves. After all that we have been promised and all that has been introduced we continue to experience unacceptable levels of crime in our communities. The crime rate has continued to grow. Territorians continue to be victimised, injured and, tragically, losing their lives.

We must all stop now and look forward together. We must meet in the middle and find common ground. I acknowledge that will be a challenge for some of us, but we owe it to our communities to all do better, come together and look forward together. It is clear that we need to embrace new ideas on both sides and work collaboratively to build a better system.

One of the most promising opportunities is the development of an alternative first responder model. This model would deploy teams of professionals, mental health experts, social workers, crisis intervention specialists and community language speakers who are all trained to address situations, such as mental health crises, family disputes, community tensions and public disorder. By responding to these scenarios with care and expertise we can de-escalate crises, provide meaningful support and reduce the burden on our police force, allowing them to focus on enforcement and public safety. At the same time this would allow those relationships to be built. We look across at other jurisdictions—Norway, New Mexico, America and New Zealand—and see that they are all adopting this alternative first responder model.

At the same time we must rebuild and strengthen the presence of police in remote communities—community safety affects everyone—as this is vital for monitoring, enforcement and fostering a sense of safety for all residents.

There are important investments needed. Work has been done at the federal level, by both parties over a number of years, on the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment. The recent NTRAI funding, which was signed by Northern Territory Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, the Aboriginal Affairs minister, and Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro, comes into effect in July. This is an opportunity to look at innovative ways of increasing safety in the bush, which in turn flows into safety in our towns. This package delivers increased funding for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service, community development, mediating and peacekeeping—measures that the Member for Mulka and I have long advocated for.

These measures will work because we are seeing that across the bush. They have been delivered for years in our communities; the Southern Tanami Kurdiji group, the Kurdiji group in Lajamanu, the Groote Eylandt youth diversion programs and the elders program in Yirrkala are all tangible examples.

Building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve is crucial to creating a cohesive and safe environment. To achieve this goal we need collaboration across all levels of government, between political parties and, most importantly, the communities themselves. Cities, towns, communities and homelands all deserve to be safe and free from these issues. Together we must prioritise early intervention,

prevention and innovation over the repetition of strategies that have failed to deliver long-term results. The safety and wellbeing of our communities should be our highest priority. By investing in solutions that address the root causes of crime through empowering communities with the resources they need and reimagining how we respond to and deal with crises, we can build a safer and fairer community for all.

I understand the feelings of frustration and even, to an extent, some of the fear many in our community are experiencing, and it is not okay. I have been physically assaulted, being punched in the face multiple times a few weeks ago while trying to help de-escalate a conflict in my home town of Alice Springs. Friends and family have had their homes broken into, and their belongings and vehicles stolen. We are all sick of it. I have heard the harrowing accounts of people who have been subjected to horrible events and incidents, and I have seen countless people sitting in watch house and jail cells waiting to be released with few to no programs and little to no support offered to turn around their lives.

We all must do better with this. We got to where we are because of what we have been doing, and it is safe to say that where we are is not good. We cannot expect things to change if we do not do things differently. Of course people should be incarcerated if they do the wrong thing, cause harm and are a threat to the community; no-one is denying that. There must be consequences for bad behaviour, but we must also be realistic; we cannot just lock up people and throw away the key. If we keep putting people in a facility where they are out of sight and out of mind, we cannot expect them to change and emerge as model citizens.

We have heard that it costs anywhere from $300 to $350 a day to have someone in prison. Based on the current population of 2,600 to 2,800, we are spending around $1m a day. That is a huge expense, and we are not any safer for it. The Corrections minister and the Treasurer acknowledged that jailing is failing, yet the only solution we hear from the Corrections minister is to lock up people, knowing that he is failing Territorians. We need to look at how we can better spend money on initiatives that will reduce this level of horrendous crime and antisocial behaviour. Making tweaks to legislation and ordering people to consider things they should already be considering is not the best answer. It is an immediate answer that will deliver, hopefully, immediate results, and I acknowledge the work being done by the Chief Minister and her government.

I speak about the root causes of crime and antisocial behaviour all the time, and I will do so again today. We need to address them to stop crime before it starts. If people are stealing, why—for what purpose—are they stealing? If people are out on the streets, why is that? Is it not safe at home? Indeed, do they have a home? If people are resorting to violence, why? If people are hurting others, we must work to understand why they are doing this. If we want to fix the problems we need to understand the drivers, the causes and the issues before we can bring in solutions and measures. We need immediate solutions—I acknowledge that—and action. We are all here today willing to work with the government to provide those immediate solutions.

However, we must not also forget that in order to change the trajectory that we see in our communities we must invest in our future, putting in the appropriate support services and education to help our children. Our children are our future. They are the generations we can work with now to ensure that their journey and pathway is one that leads them to a happy and fulfilling life, not a life with a deeply embedded relationship with the criminal justice system.

We need to do the work with whoever the Commonwealth Government is after this weekend's election to ensure that everyone is on the same page and we can invest in the appropriate support services.

It is a reality that so many of our young men and women in our communities have never been on any form of social welfare or social support, thus further putting pressure on their relatives and families and contributing to a lifetime of crime. When we improve economic and social conditions for the most marginalised and disadvantaged people I believe we will truly begin to see a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour.

There are so many in our community who would have you believe that this is an Aboriginal only issue. I do not agree with that sentiment. I believe that this is driven as a class issue—us and them, the haves and the have-nots. It is not a town against bush or black against white issue; it is an issue about class.

When we look at the crime that is being committed and who is committing it, we see that crime and antisocial behaviour are largely driven by people living well below the poverty line and in disenfranchised communities across the Northern Territory. We need to look at how we can respond to this situation in a manner that improves everyone's economic and social conditions, creating empowerment, voice, jobs, opportunity and a community free from crime and antisocial behaviour. We do not need drawn-out processes to tell us what we need and already know. People commit crime for a variety of reasons—some say poverty, boredom, they are dared to do it, loss of purpose, anger and resentment. These are all matters that we can address.

We must not be afraid to stand firm on a number of key investments, like fully funding NT schools. Kids attending school are less likely to be caught up in crime and antisocial behaviour. Kids who have access to early education and care are far more likely to be ready for school and to succeed. Families who have intensive support services and access to safe, secure and affordable housing are less likely to be caught up in crime and antisocial behaviour. Our community members who have access to meaningful employment are less likely to be caught up in a world of crime and antisocial behaviour.

I acknowledge the work that is being done in this space and the Commonwealth Government's investment in 3,000 jobs in the Northern Territory.

Corrections is looking at the establishment of community work camps, not in towns or rural areas but in our remote regions of the Northern Territory. I am willing to work with Minister Maley to look at the establishment of work camps across the bush so that people can work in their communities and show people that they are contributing and helping them. Well before any member in this parliament's time, many positions existed in the bush before the Northern Territory emergency response. We had probation, parole and Community Corrections positions in the bush.

I support the Chief Minister on any measure that delivers economic opportunity in the bush, particularly community probation and parole. It is important.

These matters are before the court, so I will be careful in my remarks. When we look at people who are out in the community and the seriousness of the offence, some say that person should have been in their own community, but that community does not have the resources to support the intense work that people need.

When I look at our remote communities I see strong places of love, law, culture and language and the happiness of people, but I also see that there needs to be more resources to better respond to people with complex needs and challenges. There is an opportunity to do that through NTRAI.

The $250m delivered to Central Australia included money for early screening of young people who may have a disorder such as FASD or a learning difficulty. This helps them not to spiral and end up in the criminal justice system. When we can identify people with those disorders we can put in the appropriate support and services and try to curve their trajectory away from the criminal justice system.

I support any call by the Chief Minister to advocate for that funding to be increased so that screening can be delivered across the Territory. If we can get in early to understand the complex learning difficulties and cognitive disorders people may have we can put in place services to prevent this escalating growth of crime and antisocial behaviour in our community.

None of these issues are too big to deal with. They may feel as though they are, but they are all preventable. These measures are examples of how we can work together to overcome these challenges.

There are ideas from communities themselves, and that is where we will see solutions. Communities hold many of the solutions, so we need to listen to them, act and not shy away from change. We need non-Indigenous organisations, social services, Indigenous organisations, community groups and government at all levels—local, Territory and federal—to put aside historical differences and come together to share ideas, solutions, the work and the success. Let us be bold and build a system that genuinely delivers reform for the people of the Northern Territory.

We have heard over recent months lots of comments about appropriate sentencing options and making sure that there is a level of relevance. A tangible solution is to work with the judiciary. The judiciary holds an annual or biannual conference which brings together members of our judiciary, hardworking police, legal community and social services organisations. Those people get around the table and share lived experiences of issues that can be addressed. The Attorney-General could attend that to hear about where there are bottlenecks and challenges and where there is a need for legislative reform. That would show the community that you believe in bringing everyone around the table to hold important conversations and understand the challenges, differences and issues.

We have spoken many times in parliament about justice reinvestment initiatives. When the dust settles after the federal election—hopefully there will be a Labor government—we can hit the reset button, work with the incoming government and look at ways to address some of those issues.

When I was the Deputy Chief Minister, towards the end of our term of government, Chief Minister Lawler and I met with the Commonwealth to talk about options. Chief Minister Finocchiaro has also spoken about the need to consider and build on those elements.

We need to understand that when people are paid social welfare, it often goes into their bank account at midnight. There is no supermarket open at midnight. There is no place to buy kimbies or milk, unless you can get to a 24-hour store. We need to see whether we can change that to 7 am, when the shops open, and encourage people to access those goods and services.

We talk about alcohol, and people are still accessing it. There are positive campaigns such as Dob in a Dealer, in regard to the black market, which is something we can all do. Past campaigns included Living With Alcohol.

There are multiple pieces to the puzzle, and today we are putting a piece into it, but we need to work together to find the rest of the pieces to reform the Northern Territory's justice system to address crime and antisocial behaviour in our communities. We must see investment into the social determinants.

Being on the street, talking to young people and community members—I know lots of urban members are regularly on the doors, talking to families and friends.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr PAECH: It does not matter what party you are in, doorknocking gives you a sense of what is going on and how the community is feeling. People say they want us all to work together; I have taken that on board.

I support the Chief Minister with this Bill. Like many others, I have some reservation in regard to the changes to the *Youth Justice Act*, but between now and the minister responsible for youth justice bringing in the legislation—I think it is flagged for June—to make those changes, we will have a sense of any fluctuation in youth remand numbers that we can work with and understand, which is important.

Programs—people call them boot camps, rehabilitation camps and country camps—are good, and they work. I worked with the local community in Yuendumu, which is an amazing community. The Mount Theo project, which aimed to reduce sniffing, was a successful program that ran there many years ago. It was done on a homeland not far from Yuendumu, working with the Brown family. It did some important work. If we look at those solutions we see that it had positive impact in the local community.

The alternative-to-custody facility for women in Alice Springs has been amazing. It is going through the process, as it was under our term—it is still happening under this government—to expand the site to further grow its capacity to deliver therapeutic programs and responses for women. There is also the program rolling out on Groote Eylandt. There is work we can do. We can target areas in the Territory where violent crime is happening and stand those up. The alternative first responder model is good. Can we develop something like the TRG, but with a different lens whereby we develop plans and strategies to respond to particular communities and areas?

I make it clear that people who make the assumption or suggestion that Aboriginal people are not worried or concerned about, or experience, crime and antisocial behaviour every day is incorrect. I work with leaders from my local communities every day. They might not be in the media or Facebook posts, but they are working every day to try to bring harmony, mediation and peacekeeping to their communities.

Our role as a parliament is to support any appropriation for a dedicated budget line or program for return to country. The support services for elders to do that work is important. So many Aboriginal elders and leaders are doing that work, but they are restricted. Many of them do not have a vehicle to get to town to talk to community members to help bring them home. Many of them do not have those resources, so anything we can do at the Territory level and the federal level to work together to help the Aboriginal leadership have the resources to expand on their work is important. I will support that in all stages.

The Minister for Corrections spoke about it. I was the Corrections minister for a time. The Elders Visiting Program in our correctional centres is important to strengthening people when they get out. That is all work we can do together that will begin to see a shift in our communities.

Please, no-one think that I am verballing them, but I found it is useful to jump in with the patrols. If you are in Darwin you can go with a Larrakia patrol. When you go out with a patrol—Larrakia in Darwin, Tangentyere or a remote community patrol—you see firsthand many of the experiences they come into. One thing that we should not be afraid of is being bold and innovative. The Northern Territory was the first jurisdiction to establish night patrols; we are world leading. Therefore, we have demonstrated that we have the ability, capacity and capability to be innovative and provide solutions. Let us work together to do that. It is important. When you are travelling with a patrol you get to hear from the driver, patrollers and youth workers about the easy tangible things that we can improve. That is another example of how we can all do it and work together.

As many others have done today, I acknowledge the community response when there have been heinous and horrendous acts of violence against people and loss of life.

I also acknowledge the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services for the work they do. Police do incredible jobs. Our paramedics often have to respond to horrific sights and incidents of violence. Acknowledging them is important as well.

I am appreciative of the opportunity to speak to this. As I said, I am not in any way, shape or form blaming any individual, government or political party. Over decades we have all tried to do things. Some measures that the previous CLP government looked at were worthwhile, but some were not.

Today is a sign of true bipartisanship, which is what our communities have been calling for. I make the point, which I made some time ago, that I do not want to attack the government about the domestic and family violence statistics because, as we heard from the sector, those statistics will continue to rise as people feel more comfortable to come forward and disclose violence. We can all work to do better.

This is important legislation, and I thank the Chief Minister for bringing back parliament to pass this. We have drawn a line in the sand today, and I hope that we can continue to walk forward together in the interests of the Territory. There will be times when we will go off in different directions, but if we maintain strong relationships with one another and common goals for the benefit and betterment of the Northern Territory we will see transformative reform.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, like other members I extend my sincere condolences to Margaret and Linford's family and friends on this sad occasion. I will not claim to know the severity of the grief you are going through, but I pray you are comforted by the overwhelming support you have received from our local community. I and some of my colleagues, including the Members for Port Darwin, Fannie Bay and Goyder, witnessed this outpouring of sympathy at the vigil last Thursday evening, when our community laid flowers and lit candles around a large tree adjacent to Linford's Nightcliff supermarket.

I support these amendments as a means of ensuring that community safety is paramount when considering bail applications for serious offences. Before I go on, let me congratulate the opposition members for indicating that they will support these amendments, notwithstanding they may have reservations about certain provisions. It will be beneficial if this Assembly can act unanimously on these important reforms to ensure that community safety is paramount.

Many in our community, including constituents in my electorate, have expressed confusion and anger that this tragic death occurred. They also question why this alleged offender was allowed to be on bail. I am not a lawyer—personally, I am glad that I am not—so let me share some of my thoughts from a layman's perspective, in a language that I hope people can easily understand.

Let us go back to first principles. Under our system of government and law alleged offenders are innocent until proven guilty. As part of Australia's democratic system and Constitution, governmental authority is divided amongst three distinct branches—namely, the legislature, being the parliament or the Assembly which makes laws; the executive, being the government which administers laws and carries out the business of government; and the judiciary, being the courts that interpret laws and resolve legal disputes. This separation of powers is designed to ensure that no single entity holds all the power; it prevents potential tyranny by allowing each branch to check the actions of the others.

We rely on the judiciary to decide whether bail should be granted for such serious offences, taking into account a range of considerations and risks. However, unlike other jurisdictions, including New South Wales, my understanding is that the current NT bail legislation, although significantly strengthened last year by this government, does not explicitly say that community safety must be paramount when considering bail for the serious and/or prescribed offences referred to in this proposed legislation.

From my perspective this is a no-brainer. We need to pass these amendments to add clarity and strengthen Declan's law. This Assembly passed Declan's law on urgency last year, despite the vote against it by the opposition and Independents. This is why I am pleased that opposition members have indicated that common sense will finally prevail and they will support these amendments.

Let me go back to our election commitment to reduce crime. Although it is fair to say that when we came to government we inherited an eight-year shitshow of crime and antisocial behaviour occurring in an environment with no consequences for such behaviour, it is our responsibility to fix it. From day one, we have been moving on this, ensuring we have a legislative framework that brings real consequences, as evidenced by 600 more offenders being behind bars, rather than out on the streets, jeopardising community safety.

This is only the beginning. I know many other initiatives, including the establishment of boot camps, are underway. We need to put an emphasis on people taking personal responsibility for their actions and parents taking responsibility for their children's behaviour. This has been missing.

We are committed to reducing crime. This will not be a straight linear decline but a trend over time, especially as the implementation of our stronger legislative framework proceeds. Unfortunately, we will never eliminate crime, but reducing it and putting community safety first drives us all in this united 17-member government team.

As the Member for Karama, I acknowledge that I have an electorate which has, sadly, over the last eight years become a hotspot for crime and antisocial behaviour. On the weekend I took the Chief Minister and the federal Leader of the Opposition to meet with local businesses and residents to hear firsthand about the impact of this crime and antisocial behaviour on their lives and livelihoods. Many of these residents and businesses urge for a stronger police presence at Karama shops.

As the Chief Minister and my colleagues know, I am a strong advocate for the establishment of a stronger police presence, including the six-month trial of a mobile police caravan to be based at Karama shops. More than two years ago a petition from almost 1,200 local residents for such a police presence was submitted to this parliament, but it was ignored by the Labor government. This police presence was also part of our CLP commitments for Karama at the last election. Although I know we are trying to deal with an inherited budget crisis, we need to stay focused on community safety.

Troubling for me is that on Monday at 7.40 pm a 17-year-old male was arrested for walking into the Karama bottle-o, threatening staff with an edged weapon and stealing money. I have spoken to the staff and checked on their welfare. Luckily, they retreated and no-one was physically injured. Coming so soon after the Nightcliff attack, you can understand the fear in our community. Those staff said that although they sometimes see police during the day, they do not see them at night when most of the troubles occur. They urged me to try to get a stronger police presence in Karama, and I made a commitment that I would raise their concerns in this parliament.

I stand before this Assembly and my parliamentary colleagues, advocating on behalf of my community to stop the talk—just do. Let us honour our commitment to trial a permanent police presence at Karama as soon as possible and strengthen community safety in our neighbourhood.

Mr BURGOYNE (Lands, Planning and Environment): Madam Speaker, I support the bail amendment Bill. I will start, like many have, by acknowledging Linford's family and the community grieving. I acknowledge other losses across the Northern Territory that have left the community reeling and feeling as though more needs to be done to ensure community safety in the NT is addressed.

Since coming to office our government has strengthened bail laws. Declan's law, as the Chief Minister spoke about, has gone a long way to ensuring laws are strengthened and police have better powers to ensure offenders are off our streets. I also acknowledge Samara Laverty—who has been in this Chamber today—and her strength in ensuring there are strengthened laws, after her son was tragically lost.

There is mandatory sentencing for assaults on workers to deter would-be offenders from taking part in this sort of behaviour. Breach of bail has been reinstated for youth offenders. Public drinking laws have been strengthened, with more than 227 fines issued. No longer is there a law with no infringement attached.

I will mention some issues that have been raised today, mainly the claim that this government has only just started speaking about root causes. We spoke about this throughout the election period, and I have witnessed it since coming to government. Our government is putting in place programs and working with the department to ensure that we are engaging with young people at the earliest opportunity possible.

I thank Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro who, when coming to Alice Springs, has been out on patrol with me, the Member for Namatjira and police to see the impact that our policies are having on the ground. I also thank Minister Cahill and the Children and Families department staff for the work they are doing in Alice Springs. There are real statistics that speak to what our government is doing to ensure there are early initiatives, looking into the root causes of crime and how we can have a better impact on those families.

In the five years prior to us coming into government 60 family responsibility agreements were entered into. This was held up by the former Labor government as something that would drive real change, yet it was walked away from towards the end of its term.

In the four months post the introduction of the Circuit Breaker Program there have been 85 family responsibility agreements entered into. Children and Families works to ensure that families with young people who are doing the wrong thing or are on the edge of going down the wrong path enter into an agreement. This agreement ensures young people are attending school and that any cognitive issues are dealt with. This is important work the department is doing to address the root causes of crime, family structure and support families to enter agreements. I thank the minister for her work and for the time she spent in my home town of Alice Springs, going out on patrol and seeing firsthand the issues we face.

Today we come together to debate the changes to the *Bail Act* that would see the Northern Territory have the strongest bail laws in the country. It will ensure that when a judge, courts or police are considering bail for any offender, youth or adult, the community's safety and whether the individual may pose a risk are also considered.

I was somewhat touched listening to Minister Charls speak about the impact the foreign student had on him. I was taken back to what has been happening across the Northern Territory and the different things that have impacted many people in the community. It is important to acknowledge these community members who have been impacted and the follow-on effect it has on everyone in the Northern Territory.

I will mention Mr Shane Powell, a community member in Alice Springs, who, when driving home from work late one night, was struck and killed by a motor vehicle that was alleged to have been stolen. That impacted our community of Alice Springs and me immensely, as I later had his mother, Raelene, and his family in my office speaking to me about the impact that the loss of their son and brother had on them.

It speaks to why we are here today, which is to amend laws to reduce the prevalence of these sorts of things happening and ensure the community can feel safer. Members have spoken about many instances which have impacted them in different ways. It goes to why we are here representing our communities that have been impacted by crime in many different ways.

Thank you, Minister Charls, for sharing the story of how you went overseas to speak with the family of the young person who lost his life in the Northern Territory and how it impacted you and the community you represent.

People have been getting in touch with many in government to voice their concerns over what has been occurring across the Northern Territory. I say loudly and clearly that our government is listening and acting to ensure that community expectations are met as they relate to ensuring that those in our community are safe and offenders are held to account.

I thank those in the department and Parliamentary Counsel who literally worked day and night to ensure that these changes were ready for us today. These changes make up, in part, reforms this government has been looking at. The people who ensured the changes were ready for this recalled parliament should be commended.

I urge the Assembly to support this Bill—I note that those opposite said that they will—to ensure a safer future for our community.

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

I acknowledge the family of Linford Feick. For many years my mother collected their unsold vegetables for our chickens. They were truly a friendly local grocer.

On Saturday I attended the candlelight vigil with the Member for Nightcliff and many other members of this House, and gave my condolences to Ben and to Lin's wife, Margaret. At the vigil Margaret called for no anger in the community, and I support that call.

The community is hurting. I have been inundated with feedback and pleas from community members for strong action. Some of them went probably too far, and I will not detail those in this House. It is important that we urge calm in the community and respond not out of anger, but instead carefully consider the ongoing problem and address the short and long-term issues, which our government is doing.

When this news first hit it reopened the wound that was caused by the slaying of Declan Laverty. I acknowledge that Samara Laverty is in Darwin with us today and was in the Chamber earlier. Thank you, Samara, for coming up. We offer support for you in this hard time of re-traumatisation.

The tragic death of Linford Feick has reopened all the wounds the community experienced when Declan was slain. I make a key distinction: after the slaying of Declan Laverty, people were calling for action—not violence, but action, particularly from the government as their elected representatives. The government did not see it. This proceeded until a quiet and respectful protest was held at the front of this building, which I attended with some of my colleagues. There was some dispute about the numbers, but the forecourt in front of Parliament House was chockers—full. This was in response to a perceived lack of action by the government of the day. Eventually that government came through with the bare minimum, some action on knife crime and limited wanding powers.

This government is not like the previous Labor government; this government will listen and respond to deal with the issue. This tragedy occurred last week, and here we are in parliament with legislation drafted and ready to be debated and passed.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Nightcliff for their pledges to support this Bill, which will make community safety the overarching principle that judges should consider when they have a bail application before them and are deciding whether to remand in custody or release into the community someone who is alleged to have committed an offence. That is action.

I say to my community: we are listening to you; we are responding; and we will continue to respond until you feel safe. This is not the end; it is just the next step.

I will speak about another matter, which has been traumatic for me, relating to Trevor Miller of Woodroffe. On Wednesday 2 April before 8 am I received messages about a potential break-in at Trevor's house. Trevor is a pillar of one of the seniors' associations in the Palmerston and rural area. He has given of himself as a volunteer to the community for many years—at least 10. I would almost say he gives too much. He is a great guy who has given to the community without asking for anything and without regard to himself. This poor man's house was broken into by two alleged offenders who carried an edged weapon, reported in the media as being a machete, and he was brutally assaulted.

I visited Trevor in hospital several times. The first time he was in ICU after spending a full day going through plastic surgery, reattaching nerves, tendons, muscles and one of his fingers that was partially detached. He was in a horrible way. On my most recent visit he was looking better, but he is still in a rough situation. He still cannot eat with his mouth; he has to be fed through a tube inserted into his nose. This is the consequence of violent offending in our community.

It has been reported in the media—I will be careful with my comments because this is a live matter—that one of the offenders and potentially the main offender was allegedly on bail at the time. I will not get into the media reporting, but it goes into the number of times this person was allegedly bailed. This matter is before the court—they are innocent until proven guilty—and that process will flow, and the facts will eventually come out in full. This has happened too many times. Too many times we hear of some horrific thing happening—an innocent person, a worker in their place of employment through no fault of their own or indeed someone in their own home has been brutally assaulted.

If it was a first offence or an offence by someone who was free to walk around the community, you could understand that. Crimes happen and people make decisions of all types, but when it is someone who has a pattern of offending who has been before the courts, and there has been an opportunity to keep the community safe from that offending, it drives me and my community crazy. This is why I am proud to support this Bill and any steps we can take which will help keep the community safe.

I know a few people who were accused of committing offences. They were arrested and spent time in a watch house. They received bail, and some for quite serious alleged offences. When they went to court they were eventually found innocent. I support people's entitlement to the consideration of bail, but a first offence by someone with a clean record is one matter. It is another matter if you have someone the prosecution alleges is a risk to the community if they are granted bail, so we need to support our judges to make that determination

and keep the community safe. We need to make sure that the legislation is fit for purpose so that judges can meet the community expectation.

I thank Chief Justice Michael Grant for helping us out by commending our government for backing our police and pointing out clearly the next steps that needed to be remedied in the *Bail Act*. We will continue to give our judges the support they need in legislation to keep the community safe.

This legislation will strengthen Declan's law. Declan's law was not the final piece in the puzzle; it was the first piece in the puzzle. It was the first step of a new government coming to power. It was in the first tranche of legislation. This Bill strengthens Declan's law.

In my maiden speech I spoke about my motivations for putting up my hand to represent the people of Blain. In the interests of time I could not go into all of them, but a key thing that motivated me was the procession of laws passed by the Gunner Labor government that watered down the *Bail Act* and removed consequences for young offenders.

I welcome this Bill that strengthens the *Bail Act* and the *Youth Justice Act*, works to keep the community safe and gives our judges the legal framework they need to keep the community safe.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.

Before I speak to my reasons for supporting this Bill I express, as my colleagues and those on the other side have done, my condolences to the family and friends of Mr Linford Feick who tragically lost his life in circumstances that have left our community reeling. Every person should be able to go to work with the expectation that they will return home safely each evening. No family should have to endure the heartbreak Mr Feick's family are dealing with. My deepest sympathies are extended to his wife, Margaret, his children and grandchildren and his community more broadly, which clearly he had such a significant impact on.

I thank Samara Laverty for her support for us today. She has selflessly championed the safety of our community, and I am grateful for her presence as we work together to strengthen Declan's law.

Our government is introducing the strongest bail laws in Australia because our community has been let down by a justice system that for far too long has placed the rights of offenders ahead of community safety. No more—today we are putting the rights of Territorians and the safety of our community first.

Our government started this journey in October last year with the introduction of a suite of legislation with Declan's law at its core. This introduced a presumption against bail for serious violence offences and mandatory electronic monitoring for repeat offenders; expanded the presumption against bail to apply to youths; and reinstated breach of bail as an offence for youth offenders. This sent a message to those who choose to break the law that their actions will have consequences.

Those changes had a significant impact, as demonstrated by the additional 600 offenders who have been incarcerated since those laws came into effect in January 2025 and the 5,000 individuals who have been scanned in wanding operations.

We know, however, that there is much more to do. This is why, for example, our government has been working on a rewrite of the *Youth Justice Act* to be ready for July, parental responsibility legislation, changes to the *Traffic Act* and considerably more.

The sad fact, however, is that while we work to facilitate change and improve outcomes for our community, we continue to deal with the legacy left us by those on the other side when they were in government. We have a situation where, as happened the day after the tragedy in Nightcliff, young people think it is their right to rampage through our CBD, creating havoc for shop owners, pulling stock off shelves, abusing and threatening workers and patrons and daring retailers to remove them from their stores. One young person who revealed that she was carrying a small edged weapon and threatened harm was clearly confident that she could act with impunity, totally lacking any concern that there would be a consequence for her behaviour. Sadly she was right, as the group absconded before assistance arrived.

This group of young people were not hungry, destitute or homeless—the Member for Gwoja implied that to participate in such behaviour they must surely be—they had simply intended to create havoc, harm and fear

in our community because they could. This type of behaviour does not occur in a vacuum. It develops over time in an environment where a clear message has been sent that you can do whatever you want and there will be no consequence.

I was pleased to hear the Member for Gwoja say that this behaviour, no matter the reason, can be addressed and there are solutions. I ask in return, 'Why did you not take appropriate action when you had the opportunity to do so?' The member spoke of innovation and looking to address the root causes and change behaviour. He was right; that is critical. However, those actions of innovation and addressing the root causes were not taken. If they were, why were programs that were not demonstrating outcomes allowed to continue unabated? One that comes to mind is the safe sleeping program that was establish in Alice Springs when those opposite were in government. When I reviewed that program, funded at half a million dollars per annum, I found that only one young person had been placed in the program in the first quarter of 2024–25.

Innovation is about doing things differently, not throwing good money after bad. That is why I worked with the Department of Children and Families to deliver the Circuit Breaker Program, which is having real results on the ground where it counts. In four short months this program has worked with young people at risk and their families to give those kids the best possible opportunity to succeed in life.

Its success is demonstrated by how rapidly families and young people are engaging with the program. For example, at the beginning of April there were 120 young people in the Circuit Breaker Program, with 75 of them having an active family responsibility agreement in place. Three weeks later that number has grown to 136 young people, with 85 family responsibility agreements in place. Thirty-five of those young people are now actively engaged with school attendance officers. For comparison, under the previous government in the five years from 2019 to the implementation of the Circuit Breaker Program, only 60 family responsibility agreements were entered into. We have seen 85 in four months.

Families see the Circuit Breaker team as trusted supporters for them as they work to get their kids on track. I have been on the road with the Circuit Breaker team in Alice Springs twice and saw firsthand how the team has connected with the community, working with families and kids. I have heard success stories of young people who have been discharged from the program because they are back at school or, more excitingly, have found a job or have been placed in a family situation that is safe, significantly reducing the risk they will progress down the path of antisocial behaviour and/or criminal activity. Most excitingly, the Circuit Breaker team members are full of hope and see how their actions are having a positive impact on the lives of kids who, until recently, were heading down a path that mostly would have seen them end up before the courts. These are early days, and the signs are good.

The next step—once changes to the *Youth Justice Act* come into play that make diversionary programs mandatory as opposed to voluntary—will provide another layer of intervention when a firmer consequence may be needed. This is innovation; it is facilitating change and improved safety outcomes for everyone in our community.

The Member for Nightcliff noted that people on remand do not receive rehabilitation programs. The serious backlog in the court system, which was mentioned earlier by my colleague the Attorney-General, is a legacy of the time those opposite were in government. That means, in some circumstances, by the time a person on remand's case comes before the courts and is decided, that person may be released for time served on remand. You are right, Member for Nightcliff; a person on remand, if found guilty when their case goes to court, may well exit the judicial system not having served any time in a correctional facility and, by association of having been on remand, not having been provided access to any rehabilitation programs.

As the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence that was immediately flagged to me as an issue. Why did we not have the capacity to deliver programs to those on remand, especially when we consider the importance of early intervention in changing the behaviour of the perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence? The obvious challenge is that rehabilitation programs are delivered to those who have been convicted of a crime. Under the previous government no steps had been taken to see whether there was capacity to create programs that people on remand, who under law are not guilty of a crime, can be mandated to attend. It is a challenging area, but it is a discussion I have been willing to have.

I am working with the Attorney-General to determine whether we can create a process to deliver programs to those on remand in a way that will not jeopardise their case before the courts. I do not know at this point where the exploration of this will land, but I am 100% committed to working to ensure that when there is an opportunity to deliver support and programs that will decrease the risk of domestic and family violence in our community, we will take it.

This brings me back to why we are here today. It is to say that we will not resile from the hard decisions. We will work to do everything we can to make our community safer—as so eloquently said by one of my constituents, safer today, not tomorrow, not next week, not next year, but today. Our government's preparedness as a matter of urgency to strengthen the tests that determine whether an offender is granted bail is evidence that we agree with my constituent's sentiment.

This Bill further strengthens the amendments to the *Bail Act* made in October 2024 through Declan's law and clearly puts on the table that the safety of our community must be considered before all else.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Guyula cannot be here today, so he asked me to read this speech on his behalf:

'The events of last week are a tragedy, and justice must be served. I send my condolences to the family and community for this loss. It is a great tragedy that someone who has been such a strong and giving community member has been taken from his family and the broader community with such senseless violence.

'I want to be clear that my position today not to support this Bill is not meant as any disrespect to the family and the community. However, this is not a condolence motion; these are laws being passed that will have a long-lasting effect, and we need to find the best response to it. I do not believe that the government has given enough time to find the best response for the Northern Territory, and the unintended consequences of this Bill may be catastrophic.

'The violence we are seeing across all our communities, not just in Darwin or Alice Springs, is something that many elders and leaders are very worried about. This is not part of our culture; it is not who we are. We want to draw on our strong culture so that these people are brought back to a place where they build values of respect and responsibility for community.

'We want to be able to take action and bring community-led solutions, but we are not the decision-makers anymore. Our right to make decisions for our people was stripped from us by the changes that both parties, Labor and the CLP, made when they were in government. Labor removed our community councils, federal governments brought the intervention and Stronger Futures, and all governments continue to neglect our homelands. These actions over the past two decades have brought us to here today. Many of us call this generation the "children of the intervention" because they have grown up during this time of Aboriginal disempowerment when the government took our authority to make decisions for our people and run our communities.

'I have spent eight years talking to deaf governments that do not understand that we need resources and decision-making power on country so that we can address these problems when they begin. Governments have ignored the problems in our communities and ignored our voices. When we have called for resources for *raypirri* camps to help our kids learn discipline and respect they have ignored us. When we have called for resources for peacekeepers they have ignored us. When we called for genuine local decision-making they ignored us. When we called for genuine two-way education, they do not understand what this means and do not consult the communities to understand what Yolngu education is and how our elders can be part of two-way education; they ignored us. When we called for treaty they ignored us. I am speaking in English when I raise these issues, but is this the best language to use because it often feels that there is no intention by government to try to understand the meaning of what we are saying.

'Governments need to stop trying to fix these issues in their departmental offices; they need to come out on country so that we can fix these problems together. Do not just colour in some ideas and make them look pretty; we need to make something that works.

'Community-led solutions are not easy fixes; they require partnership and government to hand over decision-making power to the people. This is where government has been failing us and why Closing the Gap is failing.

'I understand that this Chief Minister has inherited a significant problem that is the creation of many governments before her, but the actions of this government now to lock up more and more people in prisons that are already overcrowded where no rehabilitation programs are taking place will not make anyone safer. It makes us all less safe because it is creating hardened criminals; it is building a sense of anger and hurt in our people instead of helping them to find better pathways.

‘The cycle of crime we are experiencing is also shadowed by a cycle of racism. I have told the parliament that Darwin and all the towns up the highway no longer feel friendly if you are an Aboriginal person. It is sad to say—I do not want to say it—but racism is growing. I have felt it.

‘In many shops it no longer feels friendly. Sometimes my wife and I are ignored and we are not treated as customers, but as a problem. At the United petrol station I was not served fuel without being asked to pay first, even though others around me could pump fuel without paying first. Sometimes I am still wearing my tie from the Chamber and can still be ignored. At a caravan park a security guard approached my family who were waiting for me to find our cabin and show them the way to our accommodation, and they were told to leave.

‘This is my experience as an elder, a leader and a Yolngu person in Darwin for work, so I know many other Aboriginal people are having these experiences too. It does not make you feel good. I feel upset about being treated differently. This causes great harm and hurt to all those who feel it.

‘I watched a TikTok clip where the security guards at Karama shops wheeled an old lady out of the shopping centre to leave her outside. She is an elder—an old lady—and they removed her from the air conditioning of the shopping centre. For what reason?

‘Security guards all over Darwin are telling people to move on and go away. The message that we hear is, “We do not want you to exist”. The city, the parks, the suburbs, “We do not want you here”. That is what they are saying and what this government and the former government is saying when they hire their security guards to move people away from public spaces.

‘I heard about a family group being moved from under the shelter of the community garden building in Palmerston when they had nowhere else to go. I heard about a family being moved off an oval in Tiwi where they were sitting peacefully while the children enjoyed playing on the grass. I also spoke with that family.

‘The poverty and issues that our community face are significant, but we, the communities, need to solve these issues and we cannot do that when the government holds all the resources and decision-making power and does not work to include us.

‘The parliament has been recalled today to pass another round of laws that make bail harder to get. This is a lazy bandaid that at best will cover up a small part of the issue, but it is more likely to make the NT a more unsafe place.

‘The *NT News* reported that the bail laws from New South Wales saw a 32% increase in prisoner numbers; if the proposed bail changes have a similar impact to the New South Wales model, the NT’s prison population could swell by an additional 430 people. Where will all these people fit when our prisons are already full and failing to help rehabilitate people? What happens when a jail system in crisis collapses?

‘This increase in numbers would mean that the Northern Territory would have the highest incarceration rates of anywhere in the world. The majority of those people will be First Nations people who will be inside a jail, learning a criminal culture. This is not a picture of government success but a picture of failure. It is the failure of consecutive governments that have not listened and do not care.

‘I understand why people across the Northern Territory are upset and have called for us to be tough on crime because they are upset by governments that have not solved problems. Our communities are equally upset with governments because they refuse to work with us in partnership so that we can solve problems together.

‘I cannot be in the parliament this week. I am working from home in Milingimbi while recovering from heart surgery. It was a hard decision not to come to parliament today. I want to be there to stand up for the people who are struggling now, who feel the racism coming from Neo-Nazis booing the welcome to country at Anzac Day events through to this government that has already disrespected the Larrakia people through a failure to acknowledge country and disrespected all First Nations people by bringing in a Bill about our sacred sites without seeking to consult elders and leaders first.

‘I would like to be there today to try to explain to government that its one-solution treatment of Aboriginal people, the tough-on-crime approach that addresses none of the underlying issues, is only making the NT less safe.

‘I would like to be in parliament today so that others know there are people standing in this Chamber who are fighting for all people equally and that we stand together, but I must prioritise my health so that I can come back in May with a strong and healthy heart.

‘I am lucky that my doctor saw significant blockages to my heart before it was too late. A few years ago I looked at a map of Australia that showed where potentially avoidable deaths happened. These deaths were most concentrated in north-east Arnhem Land in the Mulka electorate, and the number one cause of avoidable death was heart attack.

‘When I was in Adelaide being looked after by a very good and caring health team at the Flinders hospital, the cardiac ward was full of Aboriginal people from the Northern Territory. Each year we lose significant numbers of community members in their thirties, forties, fifties and sixties from heart attacks, strokes or other avoidable illnesses. These are also significant and avoidable deaths that government can take urgent action on.

‘The domestic violence epidemic in the Northern Territory has also seen terrible deaths of many women, which this government has failed to take urgent action on.

‘Parliament has been recalled this week before a full investigation can be done into the tragedy that unfolded last week, before the situation can be assessed and we can determine the best course of action to make our community safer. The government is rushing to strengthen bail laws, but maybe it should be rushing to strengthen community-led solutions. Maybe if all governments had done this previously we would not be seeing full jails and this tragedy.

‘Many members of this parliament have not been given an opportunity to look at the Bill before parliament. This is not good governance.

‘I agree with government that this is a terrible tragedy, and much more must be done to ensure the safety of all our communities. I think the government is not taking full consideration of what needs to happen to truly build safe and healthy communities, and it is not taking the necessary steps to build safe and healthy communities. The government’s actions are divisive and discriminatory and do not empower and support self-determination and equality.

‘What happens in our Aboriginal communities now flows elsewhere. Governments have always thought that they could ignore the problems in the bush, ignore the oppression and disempowerment, strip remote schools of proper funding and two-way education, starve the homelands of resources and turn a blind eye to poverty and pain and no-one would know, but that hurt and pain is now everywhere.

‘We need a government that can work in partnership with our people to build safe and healthy Aboriginal communities so that we can all live in safe and healthy communities together. Let us stand and walk side by side.

‘I do not support this Bill. I urge the government and the Assembly not to pass the most severe bail laws in Australia until more work is done to create strong rehabilitative pathways through community-led solutions.

‘I thank the Member for Johnston for reading this on my behalf.’

Madam Speaker, I will now make my contribution.

As we have all acknowledged in this Chamber, the death of Linford Feick is a tragedy that has shaken our community to its core. As for many people here, Linford was pretty much a part of my daily life; I went to that shop almost every day. My heart goes out to him; his wife, Margaret; his children, Ben and Jo; his grandchildren; and all the amazing people who work in that shop. It is a terrible tragedy.

We know and have heard that Linford was more than just a shop owner; he was a builder of community and someone who brought people together, offered kindness, consistency and care, and believed in a kinder, more united Northern Territory.

As we honour his life we must face an urgent and painful truth that our community is hurting. People feel unsafe, angry and afraid and they are looking to us, their elected representatives, for direction, reassurance and real solutions.

We all want safer communities and to prevent harm. We share a responsibility to achieve this in ways that are effective, fair and lasting. The urgency of this moment is undeniable, but urgency must not override thoughtfulness. Urgent action and wise leadership are not opposites; they must go hand in hand. People deserve to feel safe and to be safe, and that is something we all agree on. However, we must also agree that we can only deliver real lasting safety if we work together, focus on solutions that work and make law with evidence, community input and care.

Violent crime in the Northern Territory is at crisis levels. It is touching all our lives, but it did not come from nowhere. It is rooted in deep and historic disadvantage, poverty, intergenerational trauma and decades of underinvestment. It will not be solved by a single Bill or media cycle. It will take long-term mature and calm leadership to fix.

What does it mean to work together? It means coming together in this parliament with a shared purpose to make the best possible decisions we can on the best available evidence for the good of every Territorian. There are many different lives lived in the Northern Territory—different stories, struggles and needs—and we are not here to represent one community at the expense of another; we are here to represent the whole Territory and make laws that make everyone safe.

That means listening to the people who live with the consequences of our policies and hearing the voices of the police, social workers, families, frontline staff, victims, offenders and the communities most impacted by violence. It means being brave enough to move beyond political pointscoring towards something more meaningful—shared responsibility. We must not just react to pressure; we must respond with clarity, evidence and care.

We are in a moment of crisis, and moments like this test us. They ask us whether we will be guided by fear or vision. People are now demanding answers, and rightly so. In this Chamber we heard there are solutions. We are not powerless, but we must do what has been shown to work, not rely on actions that do not build long-term safety.

We know what keeps people safe. We keep them safe when we invest in housing, education, mental health services and youth programs which offer meaningful support. We keep people safe when we listen to those who understand the complexities of harm and the power of preventing harm, not in theory but in practice.

Families, teachers, youth workers, health professionals, Aboriginal organisations and victim advocates have been sounding the alarm for years. It is clear that the system is not working. It did not work for Linford. It did not work for Declan, and I acknowledge his mum, Samara, in the Chamber today. It did not work for Roberta, Angela, Sylvia, Sadie, Lena, HD and Jodie. It has not worked for the countless others whose names we have not spoken in this Chamber. It has not worked for the thousands of people who have gone through our justice system only to reoffend again.

In the Northern Territory three in four prisoners have been in prison before. That is not a sign of success; that is the sign of a system failing.

If we know that homelessness makes someone more likely to commit a crime, we must reduce homelessness. If we know that incarceration increases the risk of reoffending, we must stop relying on it as our primary tool. If we know that kids who leave school early are more likely to offend, we must continue to support those kids to stay engaged, not just fine their families into further poverty. If we know that untreated addiction and mental illness contribute to crime, we must invest in the treatment that addresses those issues. None of these are radical ideas; they are practical solutions, and we could begin implementing them today.

Let us listen to Larrakia Nation whose country we are on and who said:

> *Larrakia Nation does not condone criminal behaviour in any form. Those responsible must be held accountable, there is no excuse for violence, and it must be met with clear consequences.*
>
> *However, this tragedy again highlights the urgent need for systemic change. For too long, governments are only responding to complex social issues with punitive measures, while failing to adequately invest in addressing the root causes—poverty, homelessness, intergenerational trauma, and social exclusion.*
>
> *…*

We will not allow the actions of a few to define the many. The overwhelming majority of Aboriginal people live with pride, purpose, and cultural responsibility. It is time for all levels of government to partner with us to build a future based on prevention.

Let us support those calls and, starting right now, let us:

- fund youth programs that divert people away from crime before it happens
- expand mental health and addiction services
- invest in safe housing and culturally safe trauma-informed care
- provide restorative justice and diversion options led by Aboriginal communities
- properly support victims and survivors
- roll out men's behaviour change programs that address the root cause of domestic and sexual violence
- fund therapeutic courts, including drug and mental health courts, because we know that jail does not fix addiction
- invest in Aboriginal liaison officers and Aboriginal community police officers, not private security
- partner properly with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and meet our Closing the Gap commitments
- introduce bail support programs that help people succeed, rather than setting them up to fail
- provide rehabilitation in remand because most of our prison population is on remand, as we have heard, with no access to support, no programs and no planning; I was happy to hear the minister say that this is being looked into
- address domestic, family and sexual violence by implementing the recommendations of the Coroner.

This is not a wish list; it can be a plan. It is a plan that we can act on now because the alternative is to keep doing what we know does not work. We do not have to choose between long-term solutions and immediate action; this is not an either/or situation. We can and must do both to make the Territory safer.

That brings me to this Bill. Parliament is being asked to vote on legislation which has significant consequences for our justice system and the *Youth Justice Act*. I received a copy of this Bill at only 10.14 am. We have had no time to analyse it. We cannot properly scrutinise or seek advice on a Bill we received only this morning. There is no opportunity to consult our communities about a Bill we have just received. This is not good government. It is not respectful to the communities we represent. It is not responsible and it is not democratic.

Our job is to make informed decisions and to represent our constituents with care and integrity. That requires time, consultation and transparency. Rushing through laws in the wake of tragedy may feel like action, but it is not the same as leadership. We are not making our community safer; we are simply delaying the danger. We cannot meet harm with harm and expect healing. We cannot address violence with systems that inflict more violence. We cannot ignore the root causes of this crisis—poverty, racism, homelessness and the erosion of services that hold our communities together—and expect crime to decrease. We cannot legislate out of fear. Leadership is not about headlines; it is about doing what works even when it is hard.

The NT has known for decades what works. From the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory to the NT youth detention review and every community consultation and expert report we have had, we know the answers. We just need the courage to act on them.

The truth is that for years the Territory has been underinvesting in the systems that keep people safe. Years of funding cuts to youth services, mental healthcare and frontline services have left communities exposed. When we strip away supports, we worsen disadvantage, widen inequality and drive up crime. If we want safety we have to rebuild these supports. As my colleague the Member for Karama said, it is a no-brainer.

We need leadership that chooses calm over panic, evidence over fear and community over division. In this parliament that leadership starts with us. We are not here as opposing teams; we are here as representatives of the same people, and my people have told me that they expect better. They expect us to lead with integrity, listen and work together. They expect us to make decisions that are wise, informed and careful and which will actually work.

I cannot in good conscience vote for or against a Bill I have only just received, so I will abstain from this vote. I understand there are deeply diverse views on this issue, and I have a responsibility to my community to ensure that all perspectives are carefully considered. For the last few days I have been out talking to many people in my community and there are many different views, but the strongest message I got was, 'We want you to go to parliament and do your job, which is to make careful and considered law, not rush through something that no-one has had a chance to work out what its real impact will be'. To vote on this without the time and opportunity to assess it properly would be a disservice to those I represent.

To my community, I have heard from you that I would not be doing my job if I voted on this today. I have heard from you that it is my responsibility, like all of us in this Chamber, to represent you carefully, thoughtfully and with integrity. My duty is to listen, reflect and then make informed decisions that will serve us all in not only the short term but also ways that will build a safer, more just future for all of us in the Northern Territory.

I want to be clear that I am here every day, ready to work with every member of the Chamber and every person in the Northern Territory to build safer and stronger communities, but I will not trade that responsibility for a headline. Yesterday my father's consecration was held, and I could not be there with my family because I was here, fulfilling my responsibility to serve. However, I know exactly what he would have said to me: in moments like this you must stand firm in your values, lead with compassion and act with wisdom and integrity no matter how hard it is. That is what I am standing for today.

We must honour Linford's life not with rushed laws but by committing together to build a safer fairer Northern Territory where justice is real, decisions are wise and every one of us has the chance to not only survive but also thrive because we choose care, courage and community over fear.

Mrs HERSEY (Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I offer my sincere condolences to the family of Linford Feick and the broader community that is mourning the loss of a loved one and dedicated community member. When at the Nightcliff markets on Sundays I would pop into the store. Since the tragic loss I have heard community members say that it was a friendly supermarket, known for its fresh produce and friendly service, and I wholeheartedly agree.

The horrific event that should never have occurred at Nightcliff last Wednesday, resulting in the loss of a father, husband, grandfather and brother, is a tragedy that no family should have to endure. The heartbreak the family is going through is beyond words.

Our government was elected on a platform to reduce crime, rebuild our economy and restore our beautiful lifestyle that has been eroded over the last eight years of Labor failures. I stand united with our CLP team in strong support of these bail amendments, which will further strengthen the amendments made to the *Bail Act* in October 2024 through Declan's law.

Within eight weeks of coming to office our CLP government introduced a suite of reforms, including Declan's law, which saw stronger bail laws and knife-wanding powers; mandatory sentencing for assaults on workers; breach of bail reinstated as an offence for youths; public drinking laws strengthened; post-and-boast legislation that has seen 10 individuals charged; and ramraid legislation that has seen 19 youths and five adult offenders charged with these new offences.

There is much work to do. Although these measures are having a positive impact, they are only the beginning of what is needed to restore our community safety.

I will pick up on the comments, which the Member for Johnston read out on behalf of the Member for Mulka, that the government was not doing enough with two-way education and bilingual education. I put on the record that the Territory has nine bilingual schools. Four of them have celebrated 50 years, which is a feat in itself.

I went to Shepherdson College last year when it celebrated 50 years of bilingual education. However, I could not help be a little disappointed when congratulating the school on the fact it had 50 years because 30% attendance is about average for Shepherdson College. This year with the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement the school gets a considerable amount of extra funding. I said to the principal at the time that

I hope that funding can go into increasing the attendance rates. The CE of Education recently went to Yuendumu for 50 years of bilingual education.

Although we have bilingual education, great educators and great Aboriginal people in great schools, those students are not coming through the doors. That is part of the problem. We need kids to attend school. They cannot get into meaningful employment and be educated if they do not attend school. I will speak more about that later.

Our government inherited a system that placed emphasis on the past trauma of offenders, rather than concentrating on continued harm to our community and the rights of victims. It is frustrating that this was not addressed under the previous government.

As I said, there is more work to do and our government will make sure that community safety is our number one priority ongoing, which is why parliament has been recalled. Territorians, no matter their age, gender or race, should not be subject to this terrorism from anyone, especially at the hands of those on bail for serious violence offences.

These changes to the *Bail Act* will prioritise community safety above all else. Bail will be granted only when courts decide that there is no risk our community. Before bail is granted we require the courts and police to be satisfied to a high degree of confidence that an accused will not offend again or endanger the safety of the community. We will remove the detention-as-a-last-resort principle for youth bail matters and the court's ability to consider the need to minimise the stigma to a youth resulting from being remanded in custody. We will create consistency between the adult and youth bail tests.

It is what our government will do and how our government will action this that matters.

There has been a slight decrease in the latest crime statistics for Katherine that have been released, which is great. The police have been doing great work. Everyone has been doing a lot of work since we came to government.

Although there were some small decreases in these statistics in February, we have seen a spike again in Katherine in the last month. I speak to people in my electorate each day, and it is clear that their fear of not feeling safe in our community is escalating again. With this increase, our police resources are stretched and they are wondering what has to happen before changes are made. Katherine has been under siege recently with this spike in crime and the impact on individuals and the flow-on effect in our community is real.

I have been a victim of intruders, both in my workplace and home. It certainly changes your perspective on how you live your life. Looking over your shoulder simply becomes normal, when in fact it is not normal. It is far from normal to be worried about whether you feel safe going to the shop and what time you should go to the shop. We have spoken about that time and again in parliament. It is not right.

Today my daughter called me after she was out running, training at 7 am in one of the parks in Katherine for a marathon. She was confronted by a group of youths, she said no more than 10, fronting up to her to punch her. She was angry. She was not scared because, fortunately, she has a bit of her mother in her, and she is feisty. She was angry and frankly—I cannot use the words she said to me—very annoyed about the fact they dared to confront her while she was out running, training for her marathon.

I do not want my community to get back to the stage that I am speaking to people in my community who are thinking about leaving or having to sleep with baseball bats under their beds as they fear offenders coming into their home. Last week a long-time single female fended off a would-be offender with a shovel in her home. I cannot imagine how terrified she would have been. I know this lady; it would have been quite confronting. I do not want people in my community to leave because nothing was done.

Changes need to be made, and the time to act is now. That is what we are all doing today.

More often than not we know that these offences are being committed by repeat offenders. Not once or twice but time and again they are getting out and repeating crimes on other people or in different places or homes. We saw this with the tragic loss of Mr Feick. We also saw this with the young Aboriginal boy who was granted permission to go to his grandfather's funeral; in the case of Declan Laverty—I note that Samara is here with us today—and, as the Member for Blain said in his contribution, Trevor the senior who was brutally attacked recently.

This does not meet community expectation, so here we are strengthening the laws again to make sure that the rights of the victim are above the rights of the offender. I am pleased to hear that the opposition will support the Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill. We need whole-of-government coordination and investment in primary prevention, early intervention and consequences.

Part of early intervention is about getting kids to school. The election commitment to reintroduce school attendance officers was enshrined in our legislation in the last sittings of parliament. I note that the Member for Nightcliff spoke of education for children and evidence-based measures. I want this too, and the Education department has been doing a huge amount of work in this area every day. The school attendance officers are out on the streets every day speaking with youths and families, letting them know the importance of school for their children and the consequence of not getting their child to school. I have been out with the attendance officers across the Territory; they are doing a fantastic job. In fact, it is the law for kids to attend school, so how can we have them graduate school in order to get a job with meaningful employment, as the Member for Gwoja spoke about, when their attendance is so poor?

I previously highlighted the intensive support roll that students are on, which sat separately to the other attendance rates under the previous government. Students on the intensive support roll have not attended school for 20 days or more. In April this year there were 1,272 Aboriginal students on the intensive support roll compared with 1,735 in the same period in 2024. That is a decrease of 463. The non-Aboriginal students on the roll were 69 compared with 77 in the same period last year, which is a decrease of eight. A lot of work has been done in this area with the school attendance officers. There is a total of 1,341 students on the intensive support roll, which is a decrease of 471 students compared with the same period in 2024 when 1,812 students were on that roll. That is the result of a lot of hard work by school attendance officers who work every day across the Territory.

There have been slight increases in attendance rates, but we still have a long way to go. In the Member for Daly's electorate in 2024 Peppimenarti had an attendance rate of 53.5%. For the same period in 2025 it is 58.6%. That is only a slight increase, but it is an increase nonetheless in a community like Peppimenarti; congratulations. Woolianna School had 53.7% attendance last year; at the same time this year it is 58.2%. Gapuwiyak School in the Arnhem electorate had 51.6% last year, in Term 1 of 2024, and this year it is 64.3%, which is a considerable improvement. Milyakburra School had a 28.1% attendance rate and now it is 45.5%. That is a considerable increase, but it is also new kids coming to school.

The work of attendance officers across the Territory in talking to families, letting them know the importance of getting their kids to school and the fact that potentially there will be a fine if they do not get their kids to school, is making a difference.

One thing I bring to everyone's attention, which is not spoken about much, is the importance of parents and their responsibility in raising their children. No child is born a criminal; therefore, we must have parents more responsible and accountable for their child's upbringing.

Each of us as an elected member has a responsibility to visit schools and talk to parents, and when we see parents with their children not at school, and we know them, to go up to them and have a conversation about why their child is not at school. It is not a shameful thing to do. We are the elected members in our community. When I see parents, even if I do not know them, I have a conversation with them. Obviously, I do not ask straightaway why their children are not at school, but I have a conversation with them. People come in from different areas for many reasons—it might be medical reasons or something else is going on which is why their child is not at school. It is great to have that conversation to better engage with people in your community and to speak to families to let them know the importance of getting their child to school. I am sure, Member for Gwoja, you were probably laughing about my abruptness in conversation.

We need elders to speak up and acknowledge when they see bad behaviour. It takes a community to raise a child, as I have said, and there is no better time than now when we all need to band together for the future of our youths.

Another early intervention that is happening in my community, and I know it has also happened in Alice Springs, is the night patrol meeting. This happens in Katherine from Thursday to Sunday, bringing together police, housing safety officers, the Kalano night patrol and the Circuit Breaker team to discuss strategies for the upcoming night patrol. This has been a great collaboration from all stakeholders to address the goings-on in the community, allowing all these departments to work together. This has a positive impact, as we heard from Minister Cahill.

I will talk a bit about enrolment data. In the middle years there is a decline in enrolments. We can acknowledge that the middle years are a trying time in an adolescent's life. If we all think back to when we were there, I am pretty sure we would all agree. Although the enrolments in that area were down—which is where a lot of work needs to happen—the preschool, primary years and senior years enrolments were up. It is great to know that at the start and the end there is greater enrolment in our schools, so we just need to work on the middle years to get those kids to school. Again, that takes a lot of effort with schools, attendance officers and people in the community.

Whilst school attendance officers have been working in the community they have completed 3,409 compliance activities, comprising 1,741 successful compliance visits; 246 compliance notices; 21 compliance notices for failing to send to school by an independent student, which is when the student is given the compliance notice as opposed to the family; 30 compliance notices for compulsory conference; five directions to enrol; and 134 revocations of compliance notices.

There have been 36 infringement notices for failing to attend school give to parents, which has a fine of $370; nine infringement notices for failing to attend school given to students, which is a fine of only $37; one infringement notice for failure to ensure enrolment by a parent; and seven revocations of infringement notices. After initial discussions with parents they understand that it is the law to send their children to school, so they are now getting their children to school.

In comparison with the same reporting period in 2024 there has been an increase of 3,349 compliance activities undertaken across the NT. It is important to note that whilst a lot of compliance activities are happening we are seeing slight increases in attendance. For the middle years there has been a decrease. There is an understanding in communities across the Territory that parents should have their children at school. A lot more work needs to be done in that area, but parents know that there will be a fine if they do not send their child to school.

I commend the department, school attendance officers and everyone working hard in education to ensure that we get kids to attend school. If children do not go to school they cannot get meaningful employment.

I thank members for their contribution. I am pleased that everyone supports the amendments, apart from the Member for Johnston who wishes to abstain.

I commend this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, today is not just a sitting of parliament; it is a moment of truth for the Northern Territory. Today we answer a simple but powerful question: who do we protect—the community or the criminals? We say the community—always. That is why this government under the leadership of Chief Minister Finocchiaro has brought forward the toughest bail laws in the nation.

This emergency sitting was not planned, but it was necessary. It was called after a senseless violent tragedy, the death of 71-year-old Linford Feick, a shopkeeper in Nightcliff. He was working, running a small business and doing what many Territorians do every day—earning an honest living. Now he is gone, taken from his family and community because someone who had no business walking the streets, who was already on bail for serious offences, was allowed back into our community. That is not justice.

Let me tell you another story. A young mum I met last month runs a takeaway shop in a Darwin suburb. She told me that she now locks the door at 6.30 pm, not because she wants to but because she is scared of the gangs roaming the streets and the young offenders who are out on bail laughing, smashing windows and threatening her and her staff. She asked, 'Khoda, how many people have to get hurt before something changes?' I can now tell her that change is here; we are delivering on that promise today.

The Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 is about one thing; that is, putting community safety first, not offenders, not trauma excuses and not loopholes—only safety. If someone is charged with a serious violence offence, the starting point is no bail unless the court is confident, beyond doubt, that they are no longer a threat to the public. That is the standard; that is the expectation; and that is the new law.

There is something else I must say clearly and firmly: this has nothing to do with race, colour, culture or religion. It does not matter who commits the crime. What matters is that wrong is wrong. When someone hurts another person it is not about where they come from; it is about what they have done. Every Territorian, no matter their background, deserves to feel safe. Every offender, no matter their background, must face the same consequences. This is about safety, not skin colour. It is about justice, not judgement. If we do not say

that clearly others will twist this debate into something it is not. Let us stand together as one Territory, united in protecting what is right.

We have heard too much in recent years about the trauma of offenders. We are told they have had a hard life and deserve another chance, but who is talking about the trauma of victims? Who is speaking for the shopkeepers who are assaulted, the pensioners robbed in their own homes and the children who now jump at every noise? What about their trauma? What about the mother who now walks her teenage daughter to the bus stop every morning, even though she used to walk alone? What about the father who now carries a metal bar under his car seat, just in case? What about the families who now take turns staying up at night keeping watch over their homes? That is trauma too. It is time we started treating the trauma of victims with the same seriousness and respect as the past trauma of offenders.

I acknowledge a mother whose pain has echoed across this Chamber and the Territory—Samara Laverty, the mother of Declan Laverty. Samara, your grief became the voice of reform and your strength has driven action. Because of you Declan's law was passed last year, and we continue to build on that foundation today.

To the Feick family, the Laverty family and every victim of violent crime, we stand with you. We will not let you be forgotten.

When we came to government just eight months ago we inherited a system in crisis. Bail laws were too soft, the justice system was overrun and police were left without the powers they needed.

In just weeks this government took action. We introduced Declan's law, tightening bail for serious youth offenders; reinstated breach of bail as a criminal offence; brought in mandatory jail time for assaulting workers; gave police the power to scan for knives; criminalised posting and boasting, the glorification of crime on social media; created new offences for ram raids; and cracked down on public drinking.

It is working. Since February 2024 property offences across the Territory are down by 15%; house break-ins are down by 42%; and commercial break-ins are down by 16%. These are real changes, but we are still not satisfied because violent crime by people on bail continues, and that is unacceptable. That is why we are here now.

We are removing the detention-as-a-last-resort rule for youths, making sure youths and adults face the same bail test and requiring courts to be satisfied to a high degree of confidence before releasing any serious offender on bail. These changes are Australia's toughest bail laws, and we make no apology for that. Some may ask whether we are going too far. Let me tell you what is too far: a pensioner stabbed while walking home; a shopkeeper killed in his own store; and a teenager beaten up for the fun of it while the offender films it on their phone. These laws are not about punishment; they are about prevention. They are not about anger; they are about safety. They are not political; they are personal.

As the Member for Casuarina I see firsthand what crime has done to my community. People do not feel safe going to the shops at night. Parents hesitate to let their children ride their bikes. Our Territory lifestyle has been under threat, and today we fight back with strong laws, strong leadership and a strong message to offenders that their actions have consequences.

To all Territorians, this is your government and we are listening to you. This emergency session, this Bill and this government are all because we heard your voice. You said enough is enough, and we agree. We will not stop until the Territory is once again a place where families feel safe in their homes, businesses feel protected, children feel free and victims feel heard. That is our goal and our duty, and with these laws we will deliver.

I support this Bill.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank everyone for their contribution to the debate. It was important that we came here today to deal with an issue that required the parliament's urgent attention. I very much appreciate the members who have spoken, and I appreciate Labor and the Member for Nightcliff supporting this legislation.

I thank, from my team, the Deputy Chief Minister, the Attorney-General and the Members for Sanderson, Karama, Braitling, Blain and Katherine for their contributions.

I will respond to some of the issues raised by opposition and Independent members. I echo the sentiments of the Opposition Leader. She said that Mr Feick made it such a welcoming and loved space; I thought that

was well put. We have had an outpouring of support from a community that is grieving, and it has been a consistent message. Margaret and her family must be the most incredible people to have an entire community feel their grief and make it their own.

Although the opposition will support the Bill, the Opposition Leader said that she held some reservations about it. From the outset I acknowledge her comments in respect of not knowing that this legislation included the removal of the principle of detention as a last resort. I note that the Opposition Leader was not at the briefing, so she can be forgiven for not having the information passed on, but I will not accept the accusation that it was not provided, because it was brought up. The Member for Nightcliff reinforced the fact that the first she heard of it was at the briefing yesterday. I wanted to correct the record on that.

For a long time we have foreshadowed publicly that we are undertaking a rewrite of the *Youth Justice Act*. That comes as no surprise to anyone; I talk about it every week on radio and have done for months now.

As part of that *Youth Justice Act* rewrite, we have been looking at the principle that Labor put into it regarding detention as a last resort. This came from the royal commission, and since that time things have never been worse. We make no apologies for removing this principle. It is an unnecessary complication to what is an already complicated space. It was on the cards as part of the rewrite, and it was something we could bring forward.

While we insert a principle that has this overarching impact of making sure that community safety is the number one consideration in granting bail, we also remove a principle which says that the number one priority has to be that the young person is not detained or embarrassed. These matters need not be the consideration of the decision-maker—the young person's embarrassment in being bailed or not and whether detention acts as a last resort. The young person will still have all the protections and processes under the legislation, but it will not be an overarching principle.

The Opposition Leader talked about it being a bandaid solution that does not address systemic issues. Those opposite seem to think that as a government you can do only one thing at a time. I believe that is how Labor operated—if it could even do one thing at a time. This concept of those opposite that you cannot deal with the pointy end and have stronger laws and better powers for police, more prison beds and a more efficient court system and not tackle the root causes of crime at the same time is, frankly, ridiculous.

If those opposite are so proud of their legacy during their eight years in government about what they were doing about root causes, I have a newsflash for them—they are all still in place. If they were working that well we might not be in this situation. We have rolled over that funding for another 12 months to give these service providers the benefit of the doubt as we go through that important work of checking the KPIs, the outcomes we need and what benefit we derive in the Territory. You cannot have your cake and eat it too. I think those opposite do not understand that. We have done more to deal with the root causes of crime and immediate community safety in eight months than Labor did in eight years. Not only is everything Labor was doing still happening, but we have gone far above and beyond anything it could have dreamt of.

Yes, we have stronger laws because we need them. I challenge anyone to go out to the community and tell people that we do not. We have brought online more than 500 prison beds, and we have filled every one of them plus some. You cannot tell me that this has not made the community safer, which is the allegation from those opposite, when there are 600 more people in prison in the last eight months than there were before. It is inherently safer when a person who was a threat to the community is no longer in the community.

The Member for Johnston made a similar comment to the Opposition Leader about not bailing someone not making the community any safer, but I cannot follow the logic. New South Wales had a 32% increase in the number of people on remand because a test was applied to say that people who are a risk to the community should not be allowed out. That means the people in that 32% increase would otherwise have been on the street presenting a risk to the community. This is what we are talking about. You cannot have it both ways; you cannot leave those people on the street and expect the community to be safe. It just does not happen. You cannot say that it does not work because by its very nature it vetted out a 32% increase in the number of people who were identified by the judiciary as being a high risk to community safety. That is exactly the desired intention we are here to deliver. We want to have the strongest, most robust system to make sure that only people who do not present a risk to community can be bailed to await their day in court.

It is easy to be critical and it is much harder to come in with realistic and tangible solutions. What we hear from those opposite sometimes—I do not know what their alternative is. You either have someone on the street who is a risk to the community or they are in prison. Where is this magical other place you want them to go? Labor did not have a magical other place.

We are working hard to deliver boot camps and work camps as part of our Corrections master plan that we created within six weeks of government; we got to work quickly. We brought online 500 beds and, ultimately, we have to do what works.

There was a lot of talk about evidence; the Opposition Leader and the Member for Johnston raised it. The evidence is that 32% more people were remanded because they were a risk to the community. I do not know what other evidence you would need to suggest that means it worked.

It does not mean that we cannot do all those other things. Today I spoke about some of the numbers in regard to rehabilitation in prison. Despite an extra 600 offenders in prison, having to bring online more than 500 beds across the Territory, having a shortage in prison staff and all the challenges that Corrections has risen to—Corrections has exceeded our expectations and done an incredible job—Corrections has increased the number of completed rehabilitation programs in the system. Despite all those challenges, we have improved on Labor's numbers. Labor did nothing about this. It was not arresting people or delivering beds like we are.

Corrections has delivered education programs. We had 671 prisoners in 2025 complete education programs compared with 553 the year before. In regard to the family violence program run inside prison, there were 103 completions versus 95. That is a small increase, but an increase nonetheless. It is going up despite the challenges Corrections is facing.

The RAGE program, which is an intensive six-month-long DV program in prison, is incredible. I think it was the Member for Nightcliff who might have criticised that as being a small number. Sure, 41 people completing a program out of nearly 3,000 prisoners is a small number, but when you compare 41 completions of a six-month program with 12 under Labor, it is fantastic. Do we want more? Absolutely. That is why we are working on how we can mandate programs in prison.

There was also criticism by those opposite—I think again it was the Member for Nightcliff—about why we were not ensuring people on remand are undertaking rehabilitation. We would love to. It is work that we are looking at. Someone on remand is not a sentenced prisoner, and there are limitations on what you can force someone on remand to do versus someone in prison. That is work we are exploring, nonetheless. If we had a more practical and realistic conversation about this we could get closer to being able to find and deliver the answers needed. Those program numbers are unbelievable.

Over the Easter break at the Holtze Youth Detention Centre five male and two female prisoners did four-day barista training. All of them got their accreditation. Seventeen young people also got their white card over that period. There would be a lot of Territory families out there wishing that their kids could have access to these programs. There is a number of programs for people in prison. They can get a Certificate I in Agriculture; a Certificate II in Retail Services; a Certificate II in Horticulture; a Certificate II in Community Services; a licence for a forklift; a white card; food handling skills training; a Certificate II in Visual Arts; and certificates in general education. There is English, numeracy, testing and tagging, construction, first aid—you name it.

Regarding the therapy that people require, there are intensive drug and alcohol programs; the Safe Sober Strong Program; the Family Violence Program; an addictive behaviours program; the Sex Offender Treatment Program; and throughcare coordinators—the list goes on.

As I said, that is the stuff that Labor left behind; it is the stuff that is just continuing. We have not even geared up yet on rehabilitation because we have been so focused on the pointy end. When those opposite want to paint the CLP's answer to everything as being the stuff at the pointy end, they are wrong because we are doing all of it simultaneously. In eight months we are proud of where we have taken the Territory from and to, despite it obviously not being anywhere near enough. We are on record time and again as saying that this is just the beginning—and it is. We are seeing some early results.

Again, the opposition has trickery regarding the crime statistics. Yes, we are seeing serious violent offending happen. The young people who are turning 18—we are seeing that high teenage bracket with knife offending and other serious violent offending—were 10 years old when Labor came to power. From the age of 10 those kids have not known a system that held them accountable. One thing that none of those opposite talked about, which the Member for Katherine raised, is parental or personal responsibility. That is how they ran the Territory. That is why kids who are 18 now, from the day they turned 10, have known nothing other than to effectively operate above the law. That is a shame because they missed the opportunity for intervention in their lives, which is what we are doing.

I take you back to some additional data. We have been working hard in Children and Families on Circuit Breaker and family responsibility. The Member for Braitling used to tirelessly ask the Labor government about how many family responsibility agreements there were. I am not even sure if Labor had any done by the time it left government, but we have signed 85. As the Attorney-General said, that is 85 families we are working intensively with on keeping parents accountable for their obligations for their children.

We have 113 Circuit Breaker open cases. There were 27 young people taken to safe places. The cohorts we are looking at are the younger ones of 10, 11, 12 and 13, which is exactly the age bracket we need to get to so that these kids do not turn into adult criminals. Again, if you want to talk about root causes and doing the hard work, that is what we have done in just eight months.

I commend the Education minister. School attendance is fundamentally important, yet Labor would never hold a parent accountable for sending their child to school, even though it was the law. We have not changed the law about that; that has been the law for forever.

It is exciting to see the data from Peppimenarti School, Woolianna School, Centralian Middle School, Gillen Primary School, Gapuwiyak School, Milyakburra, Minyerri, Gunbalanya, Jabiru, Warruwi, Borroloola, Robinson River, Batchelor, Ramingining—the list goes on. An incredible number of schools have seen increases in school attendance. Again, just eight months in, the work we are doing is showing those early signs. Things are moving in the right direction.

We are not planting a flag in the sand and saying, ‘Job done’. I will not listen to those opposite say that it is easy pickings, we are not trying to address the root causes of crime and all we care about is locking up people.

People who present a risk to the community will be locked up. As the Deputy Chief Minister said a thousand times, if you commit a crime in the Northern Territory we will find a bed for you. I am sorry, but cramped prison facilities will never be a reason that this government does not hold someone accountable under the law. If you do not want to live in a hot cramped cell, here is a newsflash for you—do not perpetrate crime on innocent people. You can live in your house and with your own job you can pay for your own air conditioning, but we will not be giving free rides.

We will find beds and support our Corrections officers. Not only have we brought online more beds, but we have graduated 31 Corrections officers and there are 33 in the college now. There are about 20 G4S staff providing support and relief to our Corrections officers through prisoner transfers.

Where was Labor in all that? Two Labor members opposite out of four—half that team—were the Corrections minister and the Attorney-General, who looks after our courts, yet we have had to give Legal Aid emergency funding and stand up the TIG-ER team to do assessments. The Opposition Leader is not happy about how long people are sitting on remand. Neither are we. That is the mess we are cleaning up, which she left behind as Attorney-General.

The TIG-ER taskforce, for example, had a person who was on remand from March last year. In one day it resolved the matter. This is the backlog and chaos we are working through.

We need a more efficient system because efficient justice is good justice. We do not want people sitting on remand—what is it?—for an average of 130 days in the Local Court and 400 days in the Supreme Court. There are huge delays, but we have done more in eight months than Labor did in eight years.

Labor members said that they support the Bill, and they have had their pot shots across the Chamber, but the reality is if what you were doing was working we would not be in here today.

I thank Samara Laverty for joining us today to strengthen Declan’s law. The fact we have wanded 5,000 people in eight months is huge. That is an untold number of crimes that never happened. People forget that. We can all take heart in that and use it to fuel us to keep going.

After the royal commission, coronial after coronial and every report by someone who wants to cuddle someone better, we have an entire system geared up and focused on the historical trauma of offenders instead of the trauma of victims and the community members, who live traumatised by the fear and threat of becoming the next victim. Shop owners are locking their doors. Mums are not letting their kids play in the park or ride their bike on the street. Seniors shop at Woolworths in Katherine at 7 am because they are scared to go any later in the day. People do not take their kids out with them because they are afraid. The

list goes on. There has been no consideration in our system for the trauma and impact on our community, our people, our way of life and our mental health and wellbeing. That is a critical factor moving forward.

Although there are many provisions in sections 24 and 24A that judges must consider, none have explicitly provided that overriding instruction by the parliament to consider community safety. We have not done it once; we have done it twice in this iteration of the Bill today.

Yes, more people will be remanded and it will put pressure on Corrections—so be it—if judges have been bailing people who presented a risk to the community. I will stand by these laws every day of the week because if a judge determines you are a risk to the community, you do not deserve to be in the community.

The Bill before us is straightforward. It provides two new tests regarding community safety and whether there will be a risk of continued offending. It removes the presumption of detention as a last resort to provide greater flexibility and intervention in a young person's life. You would rather be picked up by police at 13 years and be provided support and wraparound services through Territory Families at that point than be an 18-year-old violent offender. That is the reality. In a perfect world no-one will ever engage with the system, but people are at rates we have never seen before. It comes back to my point about parental and personal responsibility.

I thank everyone for their contributions. I am pleased with the support across the Chamber. I know the Member for Mulka could not join us today, but I thank him for providing his contribution through the Member for Johnston. I note her decision to fence-sit while lecturing me about leadership.

I thank Erin and Hannah and the entire team from the Attorney-General's Department. We have had people working overtime on this issue. We now have an important product that will be fit for purpose and ensure that community safety is no longer just a priority of the CLP government; it hopefully will be made today a priority that the judges must consider every time when they are determining whether someone should be at liberty. It is a reasonable expectation of the community that if a person is to be at liberty, they do not present a high risk to the people.

I commend the Bill to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; Bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.