

Legislative Assembly
of the Northern Territory

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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Braitling

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Braitling be granted leave of absence from the Chamber for today and tomorrow, as he is in Alice Springs assisting with the severe weather event.

Leave granted.

Member for Gwoja

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I move that the Member for Gwoja be granted leave of absence from the Chamber today and tomorrow to attend matters in Alice Springs.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Pink ribbons and pamphlets have been placed on all members' desks.

WEAPONS CONTROL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LEGALISING CONTROLLED OC SPRAY) BILL
Serial 80

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Police): Madam Speaker, I present a bill titled Weapons Control Legislation Amendment (Legalising Controlled OC Spray) Bill 2026, Serial 80, and table the explanatory statement.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the *Weapons Control Act 2001* and Weapons Control Regulations 2001 to establish a legal framework for the use of controlled OC spray in the Northern Territory. This Bill will give effect to the OC spray trial arrangements while introducing targeted changes to improve access and give more Territorians and their families the opportunity to use the tools they need for self-defence.

The trial commenced on 1 September last year, 2025, and has demonstrated strong performance with a 99% success rate—measurable benefits for community safety and the economy, supported by operational data and formal evaluation. The OC spray trial achieved significant uptake across the Northern Territory with 3,504 individual purchasers acquiring 5,562 canisters as at 31 August 2026.

This strong uptake demonstrates community demand for lawful, non-lethal self-defence options. The trial also helped improve safety for workers and businesses, particularly for high-risk sectors such as hospitality and licensed venues. The ability for trained staff and security personnel to rely on OC spray as part of their personal safety toolkit provides an additional layer of protection in managing challenging or aggressive behaviour.

The trial operated exactly as we intended, achieving strong community uptake, maintaining high levels of compliance and delivering practical safety benefits with minimal misuse. These outcomes have laid the groundwork for a permanent, regulated approach that gives Territorians greater access to tools for self-defence while maintaining appropriate safeguards to protect community safety.

The inclusion of a new part under the *Weapons Control Act 2001* introduces controlled OC spray as a separate category of weapon that is subject to its own regulatory process for lawful sales, purchases, possession, carriage and usage.

Controlled OC spray remains a personal safety tool that may assist a person in protecting themselves during a threatening situation by temporarily affecting a person's eyes, breathing and ability to continue aggressive behaviour.

For example, there have been two reported incidents where OC spray has been used for its intended purpose of self-defence. One involved a licensed security guard responding to an aggressive patron outside a licensed premises, while the other involved a father camping with his children who deployed OC spray. Just last week OC spray was used in Alice Springs to stop a domestic violence incident.

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The Bill expands access to controlled OC spray,

- within households for use in self-defence by people who are not otherwise prohibited persons or trespassers

- for use by employees or private security for self-defence at any licenced premises—not just at takeaway outlets

- to 16 and 17-year-old Territorians with appropriate safeguards. For example, a purchaser who is 16 or 17 years old will require parental consent to be provided and witnessed at the point of sale

- to allow a person to legally possess controlled OC spray where it has been relinquished or confiscated as part of entry conditions or workplace procedures. For example, controlled OC spray might be confiscated from a student by a teacher or by another person for the purpose of surrender or disposal, for example, a parent who has confiscated controlled OC spray from their child.

The management of misuse and safety risk remains a central component of the Bill. Clear legal conditions governing possession, carriage and use of controlled OC spray will continue to apply, supported by enforcement protocols for police and education initiatives for the public and industry.

This Bill maintains the category of prohibited person, which further restricts the availability of controlled OC spray to people who should not have access to it. A prohibited person will include people who have been found guilty of an offence under the *Weapons Control Act 2001* or the *Firearms Act 1997*, or subject to a domestic violence order or an interim domestic violence order.

The sale, purchasing, possession, carrying or use of controlled OC spray by a prohibited person will be criminalised with the same penalty as applicable for unlawful possession of a prohibited weapon which is 400 penalty units or two years imprisonment.

If a person becomes a prohibited person after lawfully purchasing controlled OC spray, the person will be required to surrender the controlled OC spray as soon as possible as they have under the trial. This time frame aligns with a similar surrender obligation for persons issued with a firearm prohibition order and reflects practical limitations that may arise if a person becomes prohibited while travelling away from their home, for example, if a person is served with a police domestic violence order while on holidays. Reasonableness is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Furthermore, the sale, purchasing, possession, carrying or use of controlled OC spray by a person who is not a prohibited person but is otherwise in breach of the *Weapons Control Act 2001* will be criminalised with the same penalty as applicable for unlawful conduct with a controlled weapon, which is 200 penalty units for 12 months imprisonment. Transitional provisions are also included to provide that any declared dealer status or those lawfully in control of OC spray will remain lawful on commencement of these amendments.

This Bill is an important step in government's efforts to reduce crime and restore community safety while maintaining regulatory safeguards, compliance controls and enforcement mechanisms. Furthermore, the formalisation of this Bill is a result of a significant amount of consultation with the public over the last 12 months.

The Community Reference Group reported that the trial was implemented in a measured and well-managed manner, supported by ongoing engagement between government, the Northern Territory Police Force and community stakeholders. The CRG noted the trial continues to progress successfully with positive community engagement, limited compliance issues and no significant adverse impacts have been identified to date.

The Have Your Stay survey indicated positive community sentiment. The majority of respondents supported the trial, believing access to OC spray could improve personal safety and support permanent access under a regulated framework. The numbers speak for themselves. These include 68.9% who supported the trial and 62.2% believed approved public access to OC spray would improve personal safety. This government is delivering a strong, practical plan to reduce crime, hold offenders to account and put victims first.

Legalising controlled OC spray empowers Territorians to protect themselves and delivers on this government's promise to reduce crime and restore community safety. I am pleased to commend this bill to honourable members and table a copy of the explanatory statement.

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Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

MINISTERIAL REPORT
Beetaloo Gas

Mr MALEY (Mining and Energy): Madam Speaker, I rise to deliver the ministerial report on Beetaloo gas as notified on 13 October. I report to the House on the development of Beetaloo gas.

For the first time, Beetaloo gas is flowing into our network, keeping the lights on. That is energy security. You would think that every member of this House would be proud of that, but apparently not. The Labor members opposite have no idea what their position is on gas. And what message does that send to industry? The industry is keeping our lights on, charging our electric vehicles and basically making everything in this Chamber today.

Today I give a brief recap on the story of Beetaloo, from nothing to powering Territory homes, and the story of the opposition, which has been the opposition from day one, even when in government.

The Beetaloo was never a given. The CLP Finocchiaro government delivered Beetaloo gas. Twelve years ago there was nothing. The land of opportunity is all it was—red dirt, cattle country and a promise, and that is what Labor wants it to return to. There were no production wells, no compression plants, no pipelines, no power from the Northern Territory and not one molecule of gas coming out of the ground. But investors had confidence in what was under the ground, and in May 2014, Origin Energy and South Africa's Sasol pay $20m to farm into the Beetaloo permits and signed up to drill nine wells. One of these permits, EP 98, is where gas is coming from today, keeping the lights on the Northern Territory.

Twelve years ago, that was an investor willing to take a chance in the Territory. These people would not invest it now, were the Labor muppets in government. Today is real tangible energy coming out of the Beetaloo and powering in Northern Territory.

While investment went ahead, the CLP government was working in the background. The CLP government asked Dr Allan Hawke to examine fracking the Territory, and in November 2014, he found that risk can be managed effectively with robust regulatory regime. In his words, 'there is no justification whatsoever for imposition of a moratorium'.

Hawke was not alone. By the time Labor called its own inquiry, a dozen reports here and overseas had already examined and approved the safety of fracking. In 2014 we had a resource, the investors and the science. Labor did not need another report. It did not need another safety assessment. It needed an excuse.

Labor was the opposition from day one. Labor did everything it could to stall and produce nothing but excuses. On 14 September 2016, weeks after coming to office, Labor slapped a moratorium on fracking for 18 months, and $6.3m on inquiry to ask the same question Dr Hawke had already answered.

In March 2018 Justice Pepper found the risk can be mitigated or reduced to an acceptable level with strong regulation—the same outcome as Dr Hawke—but three years had passed and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money wasted, not to mention the lost opportunity of investors in the Northern Territory. Our regulation is built on Pepper's framework, and our 2025 integrity code makes it stronger.

The science was never the problem. For Labor, Pepper was just another excuse to stall. Then five more years to kick off its own recommendations until May 23. Almost seven years of delay. Eight years in government, and the one molecule of gas sold to the Territory. Why? Because even in government, as I said, Labor was the opposition to this project.

In 2018 two-thirds of delegates at Labor's own conference voted to ban fracking. In 2022 Labor's conference passed motions to immediately ban fracking. In 2023, Labor members put up a motion to expel their own Chief Minister over her support for fracking. Labor even cancelled one of its annual conferences because it was too scared to face up to its members about fracking. Labor members cancelled their own conference because they could not face it head-on.

Most governments fight the opposition; however, Labor spent eight years fighting itself. The CLP, on the other hand, has always supported the Beetaloo and the gas industry.

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While Labor fought itself, our main gas supply was running dry. Blacktip, the offshore field fuelling our power stations, had declined by 85% in 2021. Gas supply outages at Channel Island cut power in 2020–21 and again in 2024. Power and Water was forced to buy expensive emergency gas, all on Labor's watch. Power and Water started paying to turn around the northern pipeline, built to send gas east, but it had to reverse it to bring gas to the Northern Territory. We know the Beetaloo has enough gas to power the nation for some 200 years. By Labor's last year in office, reliability had worsened during the last two years. Territorians averaged 2.6 interruptions, more than twice the national benchmark. If Labor had backed the Beetaloo instead of fighting it, Territory gas would have been on when Blacktip failed.

Labor signed the Tamboran first gas contract in April 2024. This was eight years late, when the cupboard was almost empty.

We came to government with the goal of rebuilding the economy and providing affordable, reliable and secure energy. In two years of government we have abolished Labor's 50% renewable target; modernised petroleum laws and streamlined retention licences; allowed appraisal gas, which used to be flared to the environment, to be sold into our network; delivered a new Well Integrity Code to international standards built with the CSIRO; and licensed the first ever pipeline built for Beetaloo gas.

On 1 September 2026 the Chief Minister, federal Labor's resources minister, the Member for Barkly and I turned up to turn on the tap at the Beetaloo. Two years and four days after this government was sworn in, and now that is ramping up to 40 terajoules a day contracted to the Northern Territory, powering the lights. None of this was by accident or guaranteed; it took serious private investment with strong continued support from the Finocchiaro CLP government to get that stuff happening. As I have said before: drill, baby, drill.

How much money has been invested in the Northern Territory? Tamboran spent $141m on a new compression facility and APA spent $70m on a 37-kilometre pipeline. In total more than $1bn has been invested across the basin, and Territory businesses are getting their share.

Triple P Contracting in Katherine fenced the compression facility; Butterworth Industries did civil works for the facility and the pipeline; Mick's Cranes Australia, for the heavy lifts; Ricey Contracting, for water trucks; Exact Contracting for Santos' well pad and access tracks; Simo at Arnhem Earthmoving is there doing the civil works; Noel Hassall, from a local Territory family, is doing the road as we speak; and Territory Sands, another success story in Larrimah, had $10m from Beetaloo Energy to help that business grow and expand. These are Territory businesses, workers and families making money out of the gas industry. That is work that the Labor government would deny Territory businesses if it gets into power.

What have we done in government? Our Treasurer increased the payroll tax threshold from $1.5m to $2.5m to allow those Territory businesses I mentioned to expand, put on apprentices and trainees within the exemption, employ more locals and make money out of this industry. Every TJ sold provides jobs and pays royalties to the Territory and traditional owners.

When the Beetaloo gas is flowing through Darwin, this money will support our local businesses, and those royalties will pay for hospitals, schools, the police. If Labor got its way and banned fracking, how would it play pay for the schools, the hospitals and police? I hope to hear today, when they have an opportunity to talk, how they will ban fracking and pay for the police, hospitals and schools, which we all rely upon.

Under Labor, there would be zero royalties and zero jobs. These are real consequences that are at stake, and we know that the current Labor members are personally opposed. International investors are knocking on our door, and all Labor can do is fight amongst themselves. INPEX, as Japan's largest oil and gas producer, has committed $200m to the Beetaloo, with an option for $400m more. What does that mean? That means jobs for Territorians.

Last weekend, Fortune magazine ran a feature on the industry leaders backing the Beetaloo. One of them, Mr Bryan Sheffield, called the gas total game changer. Some of the biggest names in the world are here in shoal development: H&P, Liberty and Halliburton. They are already here, and Fortune told the world that the Territory imposed a moratorium from 2016 to 2018 and relied upon emergency contract with gas exporters. That is Labor's legacy, broadcast to the world for all to see.

However, Santos is back, drilling since 4 September on a pad built by Territory businesses. All three major pipeline companies are circling. APA is proposing a $4.5bn pipeline to the east coast, and Jemena and AGIG a pipeline to Darwin. The real tangible outcomes are through Resources Week, just recently, with over 900 delegates, the largest ever. I was there with many people from this side, talking about the vibe and the buzz for the resource industry in the land of opportunity.

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What does Labor have to say about this? They have six members and six positions. Uncertainty, chaos, division, confusion and damage to the Territory's future—that is what Labor represent. Confusion, chaos, damage. Let's go through what those opposite think about fracking. The leader strictly regulated industry; there is one. She was the Energy minister when the government signed off the Pepper recommendations. She knows how safe it is because she signed it off. She just has to convince her own party room. We know that, because they had to cancel one of their annual conferences because they could not face the pressure from their own party.

The deputy leader has previously acknowledged we need gas, yet he signed a pledge to 100% renewables. I have that right here, and I wish to table it, which is from the Environmental Centre, 'Nightcliff by-election Pledge 2026'. Ed Smelt, Suki and Phil Scott:

> *… oppose the use of taxpayer money for fracking (including for fracking pipelines) and support the transition to 100% renewables in the NT to bring down energy bills and pollution.*

In the document here, there are two green ticks under 'opposing the use of taxpayer money for fracking' and 'supporting ambitious staged renewable energy … 100% renewables in the NT'. What does that mean for certainty? Nothing.

I table that document so people out there in the gas industry can really see what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks about the gas industry. He clearly does not support it.

Gas, no gas, we do not know. Only Labor could promise both in one breath. The Member for Gwoja was asked about fracking, and he goes, 'I do not have an answer, yes or no'. Last month he told ABC, 'You can't beat around the bush. I do not know.' He has been beaten around the bush for 10 years, and so has Labor.

The Member for Arafura, the shadow Environment minister, has stated that our ecosystem is too fragile to stuff it up. Under Labor, he would been the minister signing off on every fracking environmental plan, At least he would give some certainty. Some certainty but does not know how or what he would do.

The Member for Daly states that Beetaloo gas makes Labor's 75% target difficult. His new 75% target goes further than Chris Bowen, and that takes some doing when it comes to the environment.

The new Member for Mulka—I congratulate him—says that it is important to be cautious. He has had barely a day in this place and he is already flipflopping like a fish out of water.

Labor cannot agree what to do, so how can Labor be trusted? How could Territorians trust them to manage our economy? Labor members cannot even run their own party room or keep the lights on. How would they keep jobs for Territorians?

A native title owner near Beetaloo, Ben Ulamari, said:

> *… we just want to make sure our kids get good education, work opportunities and services like all Australians.*

Rosemary Raymond said:

> *Elliott is a forgotten town. We need a better future for our children.*

NLC Chair Matt Ryan said:

> *Native Title Holders are supporting growth in the Territory.*

The Member for Arafura said:

> *If they want fracking after all the information, pros and cons, then I think it is their decision to make.*

The Labor leader said:

> *… decisions of traditional owners must be paramount …*

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What have Labor members decided? Will they respect the decision of traditional owners or will they have their own view? Clearly, they are not respecting traditional owners.

The Opposition Leader said in her budget reply said that investment failing is a flashing warning sign that the Territory economy is stalling. Beetaloo is one of the Territory's biggest things and she wants it stopped.

I went looking for some Territory Labor press releases on the Beetaloo, and guess what? I could not find any. The last media was in April last year. Federal Labor turned on the tap while Territory Labor is still arguing about who should turn it on. Therefore, I have questions for the Opposition Leader: does Labor support Beetaloo gas powering Territory homes? Will Labor rule out another moratorium on gas? If Labor members had their way, where would our power come from and which Territory families would lose their jobs?

Labor cannot be trusted with the Territory's economy. It would deny Territory businesses work and send investors packing. Labor cannot be trusted with energy security. As I said, there were more blackouts than ever. The former Labor government left us buying emergency gas and suffering blackouts while its members fought amongst themselves. Clearly, they are still fighting amongst themselves. There is chaos on the other side. Labor cannot be trusted to manage the Territory.

Labor gave us the moratorium; the CLP gave us gas. I make no apologies for backing the gas industry, the development of the Northern Territory and Territory jobs, which is something those opposite cannot say they do. All they did was fight amongst themselves and gave signs of uncertainty for investment, and that hurts the Territory.

This is how we will build our economy and restore our Territory lifestyle. We talk a lot about reducing crime, and that is the number one priority. That, our economy and our lifestyle are the three pillars we were elected on, and they are clearly our priorities. We promised Territorians that we will manage those three things, and that is what we are doing.

The Assembly should condemn the opposition's division on onshore gas and the threat it poses to energy security and jobs.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, what a lot of hot air from the Deputy Chief Minister. If we wanted our own supply of gas for the parliament, we have it right there with the hot air coming from the Deputy Chief Minister.

That was just a lot of hogwash, a lot of backwards talking and a history that he is desperately trying to rewrite to try to get some type of kudos for himself and his team.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please!

Ms UIBO: I did not realise how desperate the Deputy Chief Minister was in trying to claim credit for all the former Labor government did in years past to ensure that the Beetaloo onshore gas industry was safe, protected the environment and met community standards.

Including today, there are eight days left of the parliamentary sitting calendar this year. I am a bit disappointed because I love parliament. Others may be disappointed too and some may be celebrating that number. Instead of having real debate on the things that matter to Territorians and on real reforms, having the initiative of a government program policy, here we are in a desperate attempt by the CLP to put on a ministerial statement to remind everyone about the work that the former Labor government did that just happened to land with the turning on by the CLP, which likes to talk about what it has done but has no courage to admit that all of the hard work was done well and truly before August 2024. The debate on the Beetaloo was settled eight years ago, and Territorians should not be shocked that the CLP government is desperately living in the past and trying to rewrite history.

There are some incorrect facts the Deputy Chief Minister rattled off. He claimed that I was the Energy minister when the signing off happened under the Pepper inquiry. Obviously, he did not get all his ministerial staff to do the proper history check. He thinks he can just tell stories. I was not the Environment or Energy minister when that process was happening. Maybe get your cronies upstairs to do the job properly.

Mr Maley interjecting.

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Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, cease your interjections.

Ms UIBO: I would like to start with the facts, because the CLP does not like facts, data or evidence. It was the former Territory Labor government that did all of that hard work and allowed Territorians to access the gas under our feet in a regulated industry.

The former Labor government did that following a three-year moratorium. Yes, there was a lot of flak, but guess what? We created a world-class industry in the Northern Territory—unseen in any other jurisdiction in not just Australia but also the world. That is something that Territorians should be proud of, and this was all because of the independent inquiry into hydraulic factoring led by Justice Rachel Pepper. It was one of the most comprehensive inquiries into onshore gas production on a global scale and one which established a high-quality benchmark for good regulatory practice in Australia.

The Northern Territory led the way, and it was the former Labor government that promised Territorians that independent scientific inquiry. It was the former Labor government that promised to make a decision on whether to ban fracking or permit it under highly regulated circumstances in tightly prescribed areas.

I heard the Member for Blain call out and interject during the Deputy Chief Minister's speech saying, 'Broken promises'. Member for Blain, the former Labor government kept that promise through decisions based on science, evidence and data. It kept that promise, recognising the potential economic and energy benefits of the Beetaloo Sub-basin but also understanding that development was contingent on the strong environmental protections and rigorous regulation, which Territorians expect with any industry in the NT.

The position was clear: Beetaloo gas could play an important role in providing energy security as the Territory and the nation transitions towards more renewable energy. That has not changed. Regardless of individual views—everyone is entitled to personal views—our Territory Labor position is clear: we support a highly regulated onshore gas industry that recognises traditional owner sovereignty.

The former Labor government accepted all 135 recommendations of the Pepper inquiry, which was tabled in 2018. Importantly, it accepted the central findings of that inquiry that were all 135 recommendations implemented, the risk associated with hydraulic fracturing in the Northern Territory could be reduced to an acceptable level.

It did not simply accept those recommendations and leave them on the shelf. The former Labor government set about implementing all those recommendations through legislation, regulation, environmental safeguards and ongoing monitoring. It was all open and transparent and available in the public domain.

Those processes established no-go zones to protect areas of significant environmental, cultural and community value, including national parks, conservation areas, Indigenous protected areas, towns, residential areas and strategic assets.

The last CLP government would have allowed fracking to proceed under its earlier weaker framework, long before the comprehensive Pepper inquiry and the 135 recommendations that Labor subsequently implemented.

Under the former CLP weak framework, these additional no-go zone protections had not been put in place. I was Labor that subsequently declared places such as Litchfield National Park, Howard Sands Plain and the town of Batchelor, off-limits to petroleum exploration and production.

Think about that. Litchfield National Park, the environmentally significant Howard Sands Plains and even Batchelor—the very community where the CLP government has just relocated vulnerable Territorians from YiSSA—only received this specific protection under the former Labor government.

The CLP was prepared to let the industry proceed under old rules that were not best practice or world class. Labor stopped. We listened to Territorians, followed the science and put a much stronger regulatory framework in place as the industry developed. Labor put in place strict laws and regulations to ensure that onshore gas development would be properly assessed, monitored and held to account.

That included requiring environmental management plans to be assessed by the Environment Protection Authority and approved by the Minister for Environment, including

- strict exploration approval requirements, including codes of practice of well integrity and well decommissioning

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- developing wastewater management frameworks and requiring gas companies to obtain water licences
- strengthening environmental monitoring and transparency requirements, including releasing environmental management plans for public comment
- addressing land access and compensation arrangements through engagement with pastoralists and industry
- providing broad avenues for judicial and merits review of statutory decisions
- strengthening enforcement powers, civil penalties and criminal penalties for environmental offences
- completing a strategic, regional and environmental baseline assessment for the Beetaloo sub-basin
- progressing a regional environmental monitoring program through Charles Darwin University involving traditional owners and ranger groups\introducing a long-term social impact monitoring program.

These were not token measures. They were part of a comprehensive framework designed to protect the Territory's environment, culture, communities and industries. Unfortunately, the CLP walked back and watered down some of the important protections which gave Territorians some ease around the new industry here in the Territory.

The CLP put the interests of gas exporters over those of Territorians and the evidence-based data that was provided through the Pepper Inquiry. This is not in line with community expectations, no matter how much the CLP tried to celebrate their lack of integrity when it comes to social and environmental safeguards.

In government, Territory Labor understood that Territorians want economic opportunity balanced with responsible environment protections and community protections. Our Labor team also wants this. When Territory Labor was in government, it wanted to create jobs for Territorians and attract investment, particularly in regional and remote communities, whilst ensuring that the unique environment and cultural heritage of the Territory remain protected. That is why government backed its regulatory framework and investment in environmental research, baseline assessments and ongoing important monitoring.

Labor put measures in place to ensure industry contributed to its fair share towards the cost of regulation through appropriate cost-recovery models. The approach was always clear. If industry was to operate in the Territory it had to operate under strict rules, be subject to proper oversight and contribute to the costs of managing its activities.

That is what responsible government looks like: evidence-based decisions, strong safeguards and public accountability. Under the former Territory Labor government, that process was undertaken. With our Territory Labor opposition, nothing has changed.

The Chief Minister’s claim that she has brought gas to the Territory is an insult to the proponents; businesses; the hardworking public servants, who they have sacked; scientists; traditional owners; and Territorians who contributed to the development of the onshore gas industry for many years. The groundwork was done well before the CLP took office and before the inquiry was conducted. The 135 recommendations were implemented, the regulatory framework was established, environmental approvals were progressed and commercial arrangements were negotiated.

The CLP inherited a significant body of work. This was all work that was completed under the former Labor government and it worked with industry to get to where we are in the Territory today. The CLP can try and slap its brand on the Beetaloo gas as much as it wants; it cannot rewrite history, and Territorians know that history. The CLP cannot erase Labor’s role simply by repeating over and over its desperate attempts of its own version on events.

The Deputy Chief Minister spoke about INPEX and may I remind him, if he wants history lessons, who started INPEX? Who was the enabling government to create that economic benefit for the Northern Territory? The Member for Blain loves calling out facts and figures and silly comments. Who was it? It was a former, former Labor government, that is right, the Labor government under Chief Minister Clare Martin and Chief Minister Paul Henderson. They like to rewrite history, but they cannot change the history. The real question is what can CLP point to as its own achievements? Silence.

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There is not a single new economic project or new economic investment that the CLP government can lay a claim to. There are two years left until the next Territory election so if they have been thinking about it all this time, now is the time to announce that nice big new project that will create economic stimulus and benefit for Territorians because at the moment, there is not one new project creating economic benefit that the CLP has cultivated, worked for and delivered. That is its shameful, pathetic legacy. It is no wonder they have to desperately claim credit for the Beetaloo because there are so many other legacies that the former Labor government had which they loved showing up at photos, taking pictures, announcing in media releases, but they have not done any of the heavy lifting. Absolutely no economic legacy of the CLP's own doing. To be fair though—obviously this is hitting a nerve as they are getting very chatty on that side—they do have a legacy in three parts.

First, more than $20m wasted on the Territory Coordinator with the CLP unable to identify a single additional job created or a new project greenlit as a result of the Territory Coordinator's extensive extraordinary powers. The second legacy of the CLP: a broken promise on cheaper power. They told Territorians that fracked gas would bring power prices down. Well Beetaloo gas is finally flowing, yet under the CLP Territorians are paying 5.3% more for power, water and sewerage this year, which means more of Territorians hard earned wages are disappearing into their utility bills rather than supporting their families on other elements.

The third economic failing legacy of the CLP is the future of Territory Generation. The CLP's handling of Territory Generation and its lack of work, understanding and care—Territory Generation, a greater role in securing our gas supply, taking over key gas contracts, dressing it up as the machinery of government change but I say it looks alarmingly like an attempt to fatten up public assets for privatisation, which is what happened between 2012 and 2016 under the former CLP government. There is only one person in the CLP government who was part of that team—maybe she is borrowing from old ideas of her former Chief Minister friend—that is the Chief Minister, the Member for Spillett. Keep an eye on that and let us see what they will try to sell off Territory Generation.

If that is not the plan, will the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister today rule out selling off Territory Generation, the government-owned corporation? Let us hear it and see if they are brave enough to let us know that is not the plan.

That is the CLP's sad, sorry economic legacy. They say it is one of their three key pillars. We hear the Deputy Chief Minister rattle it off. Even when he is asked a question on radio, he rattles off the pillars; he does not answer the question. He has been trained well. He has been taught well by his leader not to go off track, not to think for himself and not to answer a bloody question about it either. The CLP's sorry legacy is wasted taxpayer money, higher household bills, the threat of selling off a public asset and a reinvented history of gas in the Northern Territory.

There are businesses across the Territory that need work. Contractors need to know where their next contract is coming from. Regional and remote communities need jobs, investment and economic certainty. They need a government which can demonstrate real progress and deliver new opportunities. Instead, the CLP seems more interested in claiming credit for the legacy of the former Labor government rather than building its own economic legacy. It would be laughable if it was not so concerning for those Territory businesses and industries that are deeply worried about their future.

There is a bigger question too the CLP government has failed to answer. It is not simply how much gas we can get out of the ground, it is what do we do with that gas to build a stronger Territory economy. On that test, the CLP has botched Middle Arm. Middle Arm should be an engine for domestic manufacturing, value-adding industries and industrial hubs that create secure long-term Territory jobs and certainty. Yet, the CLP government has failed to demonstrate a credible plan to turn that promise of that precinct into operating factories, new industries or lasting opportunities to benefit Territorians.

Where is the plan to attract manufacturers that will use Territory gas in the Territory? Where is the plan to build local supply chains, support Territory contractors and give young people skilled jobs? Where is the plan to ensure that benefits reach our regions, businesses and communities? Again, silence from those opposite.

The CLP may want to claim the credit, but it does not get to rewrite history. Territorians deserve the truth about who has done the work, and they deserve a government that is focused on delivering the next generation of opportunities rather than a pathetic, out-of-ideas CLP government more focused on taking credit for other people's achievement and hard work in the last Labor government.

This is a desperate attempt to rewrite history and to claim the work of former governments.

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Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, that was, if anything, entertaining. We certainly will not take advice from Territory Labor on economic matters. Look at where we are today.

At least Beetaloo gas is now flowing into the Territory network. This is an important moment, but its significance goes beyond first gas or an opening ceremony. We are beginning to see what a producing onshore gas industry could mean for the Northern Territory. It mean reliable local energy, more work for local businesses and continuing investment that can support regional communities for years.

This could have happened years earlier, yet Labor put a moratorium, costing the Territory millions of dollars and putting Territory development back years and years. That continued investment deserves attention, something the previous Labor government did not give it.

Individual wells produced less gas as they aged, so new wells must be drilled, stimulated and connected to maintain supply. Development continues alongside production, even when overall output remains steady. Tamboran has identified additional wells to support its initial production plateau. Continuing development is part of that operational model.

For Territory contractors that means opportunity can extend beyond the first pipeline or processing plant. Another drilling campaign, more connections, further civil works, equipment servicing, road maintenance, accommodation and supplies. Consider a local contractor preparing a well pad; that contract pays wages and meets costs. If further work flows the owner has a stronger reason to buy another machine, employ another operator or take on an apprentice. The same applies to transport businesses, workshops and suppliers. A clear program of work helps them build capacity here in the Territory.

We did not see that certainty from the previous Labor government because they backflipped left and right on what fracking meant, what the Beetaloo meant and it provided difficulty and uncertainty not just for the proponents of the Beetaloo but the industry across the Territory that will support it. That is how an industry becomes part of a regional economy; businesses grow; skills remain and workers see a future here.

Tamboran reports spending $36.1m with Territory businesses in 2024–2025, compared with $19.1m in the previous year. These are company reported figures, yet they nevertheless provide a concrete example of work reaching territory suppliers and our task is to increase that participation.

The leader of the opposition mentioned INPEX and how they did the deal. Yes, they did the deal but what ongoing larger investment has there been for the Territory? That is something we are making sure is going to happen with the Beetaloo.

Special services will sometimes come from elsewhere but we should use their involvement to develop local skills and stronger businesses. Businesses need to understand upcoming work; training providers need to understand demand and workers need realistic pathways into employment. A clearer programme of future works helps businesses make decisions today and it gives them the reason to invest here, develop their workforce and prepare for contracts that support their operations over a much longer period.

The more capability we establish here, the more expenditure we will retain in the Territory and that comparison I mentioned with INPEX is important. That project bought enormous investment to Darwin and continues supporting jobs and businesses but Territorians understand the difference between peak construction and ongoing operations. Workforce numbers change, the demand on suppliers change. The Beetaloo offers a different path. Sustaining shale gas production requires successive drilling campaigns and associated activity. We can build a continuing development for industry alongside a producing gas industry that does not remove commercial risk.

A commercial scale investment could reach billions of dollars over the life of the development but each stage depends on successful wells, competitive cost, finance and customers. Those investments would come through successive decisions as production grows and ageing wells are supplemented. That gives us a sound reason to look beyond the first construction phase when considering the Territory's economic future.

Announced ambitions must become funded projects. Local opportunities must become local contracts. The immediate benefit begins with energy security. Families need reliable electricity; businesses need confidence that energy will be available.

The Territory has experienced the consequences of less dependable gas supplies. Emergency arrangements have been needed because of the delays in developing the Beetaloo. That experience should focus every member on broadening our supply base. Beetaloo adds another Territory source. Long-term contracts can

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improve planning and strengthen our resilience. Electricity bills will not necessarily fall overnight; retail prices reflect more than gas costs but reliable supply matters to every household and business.

Larger markets offer the next opportunity. The development scenario begins with Territory sales and considers east coast supply from 2029–30 and for existing liquified natural gas facilities from 2035–36. At its proposed plateau, the scenario could reach 6,000 terajoules a day. These are modelling assumptions, though, and they depend on commercial decisions and the infrastructure needed to reach customers. Pipelines, processing capacity and supply agreements must come together to support that investment.

The Territory can meet its own needs while playing a larger role in Australia's energy supply. Economic modelling points to activity continuing for decades and development production proceed together, but we should judge progress against results—wells completed, gas delivered, contracts awarded, territory workers employed and investment committed to the Territory. That is how growth, certainty and security become practical outcomes—growth through investment and productive work, certainly through clear rules and credible plans, and security through stronger energy supply.

Governments' responsibilities extend beyond welcoming announcements. Approvals must be clear and rigorous. Infrastructure planning must be anticipated and training must match employment opportunities. Territory businesses need a fair opportunity to compete on a level playing field. Regional communities and traditional owners need meaningful opportunities to be able to participate. Land, water and cultural heritage must be protected through effective regulation.

The members opposite have responsibilities too. Their government signed the initial Tamboran supply agreement back in April 2024. They understood the Territory needed another gas source. Do they support the continuing development required to sustain that supply? Gas contracts depend on producing wells. Wells require investment and sustained production requires further development. If members propose another approach, they should explain its costs, timing and reliability. Territorians deserve that detail, as do businesses considering investment and workers considering their future.

In the Leader of the Opposition's contribution, she said that she was not a part of the signing of some of those agreements but on 3 May 2023, when that agreement was signed, she was the Minister for Renewables and Energy on the day that agreement was signed. Does she know or not know when she was a minister or is she deliberately trying to mislead people in this House? Or does she just not know?

Scrutiny, of course, is legitimate. Questions about performance, public support, environmental safeguards and local benefit deserve answers but this debate must also recognise the consequences of decisions. Delays affect investment and unclear policy affects confidence. We have seen that.

With industry out there saying that they have the confidence now to invest in the Territory because the CLP has the reins and we are working alongside them to develop this resource and develop our energy needs. Our responsibility is to make those decisions and stand up economically and deliver practical benefits.

Success means local businesses winning that work repeatedly, apprentices becoming tradies, regional suppliers expanding and a stronger energy system supporting employers and new investment. We must earn further development through performance and our government will guarantee that.

This is the Beetaloo opportunity, a resource requiring continuing development, an industry capable of creating continuing work, a Territory able to build lasting strength from both. This government intends to turn that opportunity into results.

Mr HOWE (Drysdale): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak about the opportunities that Beetaloo gas presents to the Northern Territory. I will state to the Chamber the frame at which I approach the gas industry and the economic opportunity that it presents.

Drysdale is in the bottom section of medium household income earners in the Northern Territory. The electorates that are the poorest and therefore struggling hardest when it comes to cost-of-living pressures are Drysdale—which is tied with Namatjira—Arnhem, Barkly, Arafura, Daly and Gwoja. I do not like that fact.

I would love those electorates to be at the top because there are some harsh realities that come with having household incomes in that section. The median household income is only $1,670 according to the latest ABS data in the electorate of Drysdale. Once you tie inflation into that, which has massively eroded the value of that $1,670, and the purchasing power that each family has and add on the growing interest rate debt that

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households are carrying and the follow-on increasing to rent—those interest rates are highest in 15 years at the moment—the fact is the cost-of-living pressures in my electorate are extremely real.

I have no shame about saying I want my constituents to be wealthier. I want them to have more dollars in their bank accounts and to have greater purchasing power with those dollars so they can do, quite frankly whatever they want to do with those dollars. It is not for me to say; I just want them to have it because that gives them opportunity and a lifestyle they can create. They can invest it, be it in education, holidays, a boat—whatever they want, they can have it. However, that is just not a reality at the moment.

When there is opposition to this industry that can create such huge benefit for the Northern Territory, I know it is personally going to impact my goal of making constituents of Drysdale wealthier. I want and support this industry because anything that will bring economic benefit to the people of Drysdale, I will support.

On that ground alone, I will support any development in the Northern Territory that will improve the lives of my constituents. I ideally want that, so they are in control of it. That is the primary objective. He second objective it brings is the support government can bring. I make that the second objective because the first is paramount; that is when my citizens get to choose what they do with their wealth. The second is what government can do.

We already heard this week of the constraints that everyone in this Chamber knows about the budget position of the NT Government and the limits that puts on services. It can be hard to swallow for some, but it is a reality we are stuck with. These economic developments across the Northern Territory will mean we in this Chamber, regardless of who is in government at any time, can do more for the citizens of the Northern Territory.

That means greater health services and public education, two things I think are cornerstones of good government. It means we can have safer streets, we can invest across the board. It allows us to do more, quite simply. Why should we be inhibiting that? That is the real question, so that is how I approach this.

Geopolitics this year has exposed how limited energy security is in this country. It has blown it wide open. Probably two years ago I gave a speech about the risk we have to energy security in this country following decades of poor policy out of Canberra and, quite frankly, state governments as well. That has come home to roost. It was foreseeable. It was something I was being briefed about as a military officer many years ago; about how risky our energy security was. That has come home to roost, and it is now playing out.

Diesel is $3 a litre in Palmerston at the moment. Once people have paid their $700 rent, their $250 fuel bill to fill their ute, there is little left to do with their $1,670. Now that inflation has eroded the hell out of it, the fact is my constituents have little to spend their money on. They are basically choosing what kind of Coles brand canned food will be in the shop for the week. There is not that much else. They will not go on holidays—you can blow that out of the water. If their family is interstate they will probably have to save up for a year or two to go to see them.

They are the harsh realities of not having a proper economic development strategy and policy that signals to industries all over that they can come here and develop. The longer we debate that in this Chamber about whether or not we should even do it, signals that the politics of trying to get the economy moving is not shared across the Chamber. It has shown that it has become a partisan issue. I am proud to stand with the government that says, ‘No, we will develop’, because I can then look my constituents in the eye and say, ‘We are doing everything we can so you can have more dollars in your bank account, your kids can have more investment in their schools and we can have newer hospitals’. We would all agree we would love some new hospitals. Well, this is how we can do it.

We can also strengthen our position when it comes to geopolitics. I do not want Australia to be reliant on the events that unfold on an international stage that comes home and smashes us here in the pocket. We can be self reliant. We have this incredible continent with incredible resources. We just need the policy settings to get it out of the ground and make sure that our people are looked after.

I thank the government for its work in ensuring that this continued investment signals to industry that we will do business. Beetaloo gas will provide tangible benefits to the people of Drysdale. I will keep pushing and support every measure to make them wealthier and to provide them more services. I will combat all measures to block that.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Mining Energy, for bringing this critical report to the Assembly.

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The Beetaloo Sub-basin is a generational opportunity for the Northern Territory. It is far more than a gas reserve; it is a critical pillar of this government's plan to rebuild the economy. It is the catalyst for new downstream industries for global private capital, regional energy security and for the Territory's future as the industrial and digital hub of northern Australia.

We are competing hard for that capital. Across the Indo Pacific governments are committing billions to win investment and, if we sit back, that investment will go elsewhere. Investors do not just look at what is in the ground, they look at whether the government of the day backs optimising those resources and the economic opportunities they bring.

When those on the other side were in government, the Territory became known for debt and mixed signals. Under the previous Labor government, the Territory earned a reputation for indecision and failure to progress economic opportunities. That is no longer the case. Under the Finocchiaro CLP government, the Territory has become known as a place for its unequivocal support of the Beetaloo Sub-basin and the opportunity it presents.

Since coming to government, we have rebuilt confidence in the Territory and unashamedly made the case that the Territory is the place to do business—a place that welcomes investment and understands the Beetaloo Sub-basin is an enabler of investment.

We have taken that message to the nation, the region and the world. In September I led the largest Territory delegation oversees in recent memory to Texas and Washington, meeting energy proponents, oil field service companies, the US Chamber of Commerce and international financiers. The interest in the Beetaloo was extraordinary. American investors see it as far more than an extraction play; they see the foundation of an entire industrial and technology ecosystem.

In July the Territory Investment Summit brought more than 190 investors and government leaders from 11 partner nations to Darwin, with the Beetaloo front and centre. In all those forums, our government made it clear that the Territory will not settle for being a passive exporter of raw resources. For me, the most important question is not simply about how much gas sits beneath the Northern Territory, but what we build above the ground because of it. Do we build stronger Territory businesses? Do we create skilled, secure careers for Territorians? Do we build capability that stays here for decades? Do we use this period of investment to strengthen and diversify the Territory's economy? Without question, we want those resources utilised here in the Territory, creating jobs and economic prosperity.

My Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations commissioned Wood Australia to scope the energy-intensive industries the Beetaloo can enable so that we can go after the right proponents and make sure the value is captured here and interest is growing. To a proponent, contrary to the claim made by the Leader of the Opposition—whose team destroyed the reputation of the Territory as a place to invest—that industry interest is directly off the back of the work done by the Finocchiaro CLP government.

Every investor I have spoken to stated that this government is the most forward-thinking proactive government they have dealt with in this country. The generational energy supply Beetaloo gas provides, combined with Darwin's position as Australia's lowest latency gateway to Southeast Asia, is also drawing serious interest from data centre investors. We are working with 14 active proposals. Beetaloo Digital, a $40bn data centre proposal, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Halliburton. Project Ares at Murranji Station proposes up to a gigawatt of hyperscale capacity. Since July 2025 we have facilitated more than $2bn in secured investment, and the active pipeline stands at 75 projects.

The Beetaloo will be an industry that runs for decades, and the opportunity goes well beyond drilling. The emerging supply chain takes in civil construction, transport, logistics, aviation, equipment hire, manufacturing, environmental services, maintenance, accommodation, catering, communication and professional services—all industries where Territory businesses already operate and do so well.

When we talk about developing a gas industry, I want members to think about the mechanic in Katherine, the transport operator moving equipment and the civil contractor building and maintaining roads and work sites. Think about the environmental scientists, electricians, engineers and technicians, the local accommodation and catering businesses, the aviation operators, manufacturers and equipment suppliers, and the Aboriginal businesses and workers in regional and remote communities.

We have all seen major projects pass through and leave too little behind. Equipment comes from interstate, workers fly in and out, and procurement decisions are made thousands of kilometres away. This government

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is determined that the Beetaloo will be different. That is why local participation matters so much. Our ambition is bigger than the gas projects themselves. We want an economy capable of servicing them. That means giving Territory businesses earlier sight of opportunities, connecting suppliers with operators and major contractors, improving tender readiness, building accreditation and capability and encouraging companies to set up a genuine operational presence here.

It also means building a workforce here rather than an economy that depends on fly-in fly-out labour, as happened under the previous iterations of the Labor government. We want these projects to grow our permanent skills base. That means apprenticeships and training pathways tied to real jobs, pathways for workers in regional and remote communities and more Aboriginal participation. It means attracting skilled people where we cannot meet demand locally, and giving them reasons to put down roots. It means knowledge transfer so that capability brought into the Territory becomes capability held by Territory workers and businesses.

That capability does not have to stay in gas either. An engineering business that lifts its systems, technology or accreditation can compete for work in mining, Defence and infrastructure. A worker who gains sophisticated technical skills carries them for a career. A logistics company that grows to service one major project is ready for the next. That is how the Beetaloo builds lasting economic capability, not dependency.

Government has a role in making that happen not by replacing the market or guaranteeing contracts, but by making the market work better for Territory businesses. That means better information, fewer unnecessary barriers, a stronger workforce, buyers and suppliers being connected and clear expectations about local participation. Industry has a part to play too. Operators and major contractors need to engage with the local market earlier. If procurement packages are designed before anyone has considered Territory capability, we will always be playing catch-up. Local participation has to be part of commercial planning from the outset.

This is why the Beetaloo matters. It is an energy resource that represents enormous investment, but its greatest potential lies in what happens around it—businesses that grow, workers who build careers, apprentices getting their first start, Aboriginal businesses entering new supply chains, regional communities coming alive with new activity and the Territory companies that build expertise here, win repeat work and take the expertise to markets beyond our borders.

Resources and major projects alone do not build economies. People, capability and local participation do. The gas beneath the Territory is the catalyst. Our task is to make sure that the opportunity above the ground belongs as much as possible to Territorians for generations to come.

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, I thank the deputy leader for bringing on the topic of Beetaloo this morning.

It is disappointing that the Deputy Opposition Leader has been gagged from speaking today. I can see why. We only have to go back to his election commitment. The Member for Nightcliff said that he would oppose the use of taxpayer money for fracking, including for fracking pipelines. He is not only opposed to the gas industry. He is opposed to developing the gas industry by building more pipelines. The opportunity we have to supply gas to the rest of Australia is being blocked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, so I can understand why he has been blocked from speaking here this morning. He would, no doubt, not want to get up and speak anyway because we know that he does not support the gas industry, more housing, development of the Northern Territory, small business or creating jobs for Territorians. He needs to rethink what he is actually doing in this House.

The opportunity to speak about Beetaloo this morning is fantastic. It was not long ago that I attended the Tamboran Shenandoah South development with the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister to see the first flow of gas. To be onsite to see the Chief Minister spinning the wheel to open that first flow of gas happening in the land of opportunity that is the Barkly electorate was absolutely incredible. There is no better place to see development than the Barkly electorate because that is where it is all happening, despite the opposition from people like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Territory is now powering Territory homes, businesses and industry. Our government has made unlocking the Beetaloo and getting it into production a key economic priority. Our plan to rebuild the economy is working.

The CLP has always backed the bush. We are getting on with the job of driving growth across our regions. Unlocking regional growth is one of the five priorities of achieving our vision to rebuild the Territory economy so that works for all Territorians.

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The Beetaloo is a major step in transforming the Territory into an energy powerhouse, enhancing the security of both the Territory and the nation. The Beetaloo achieves three of our five economic priorities. It is building a bigger and better workforce, unlocking regional growth and delivering for Australia.

The Beetaloo will mean more jobs for Territorians, stronger regional communities and longer-term royalty revenue that will help fund essential services and infrastructure. Development of the basin is forecast to generate more than $17bn in economic value over the next two decades and support more than 13,000 jobs by 2040 through royalties, business growth, construction activity and long-term employment opportunities.

Tamboran has an appraisal gas agreement with native title holders with outcomes that will see jobs and benefits for native title holders. At the end of 2024, the native title holders consented to the sale of appraisal gas of up to 60 terajoules per day from the Shenandoah South Pilot project over a three-year period. Like the traditional owners in the Barkly, I am looking forward to growth and investment in local communities and the township of Elliott.

I will read some of the comments from the native title holders about the benefits from the Beetaloo and their agreement. Native title holder Jeremy Jackson said:

> *We are working with Tamboran to see investment in our communities, skills training and job opportunities for our Traditional Owners and local mob.*

Native title holder Rosemary Raymond said:

> *We need a better future for our children.*

For more than two years the Jingli-Mudbarra native title holders negotiated substantial improvements to living standards and economic development opportunities for Elliott, the neighbouring Marlinja community and other surrounding communities and outstations. Those involved in green lawfare have been opposed to native title holders making informed decisions to allow fracking and the benefits of the Beetaloo to flow to traditional owners, all residents of the Barkly and, indeed, all Territorians.

The Beetaloo benefits also fit under the strategic priorities of our Northern Territory Aboriginal Affairs Framework. These priorities include empowering bush communities, aimed at supporting place-based decision-making and reflecting the cultural authority of the native title holders, which I just spoke about, in making an agreement for the benefit of their people. Another priority under the framework is all about creating jobs and businesses on country to support Aboriginal economic opportunities, something Labor is clearly opposed to. It also supports the priority of developing skills for the future.

We understand that local businesses and workers need to be central as the Beetaloo and the gas industry develops. Territory Sands has secured a $10.4m investment from Beetaloo Energy to build a local frac sand supply chain. Locally mined and processed Beetaloo red sand has already been pumped into the wells at Shenandoah South.

Previously, there were no frac sand supplies in the Northern Territory and a limited number of suppliers in Queensland and South Australia. To see this opportunity come up in Larrimah is great news for the Barkly electorate. Not only will this see Territory sand used to support the production of Territory gas, which lowers the cost of activities for gas companies, it also creates a new industry and builds local expertise and supply chains. This is another example of how the Beetaloo Sub-basin is creating real opportunities for Territory businesses with the flow-on benefits for jobs and economic activity to be felt for years to come.

Labor left the Beetaloo in limbo for nearly a decade, stalling jobs and royalties and putting our energy security at risk. Labor has shown that even after the moratorium delayed this industry and the benefits for years, it remains hopelessly divided on fracking, with four of Labor's six MLAs personally opposed to their own party's stated position. It is no wonder that under Labor, the NT had the worst-performing economy for five-and-a-half years. How can you attract investment with that sort of messaging being sent to the business community, that Labor will pull the rug out from under you if you give them a chance? Gas is flowing, the lights are on and Territory Labor members still cannot tell you whether they are for it.

The CLP brought the Beetaloo from potential to production—potential that Labor was keen to ignore and shut down. Those Labor members who are opposed to the Beetaloo are opposed to creating jobs and businesses on country. You cannot rebuild the Territory economy without strong regions. The CLP understands that and we are backing our regions to grow. Whether people live in Katherine, the Barkly, Central Australia or a

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remote community, they deserve a government that backs them. That is what the CLP is doing with Beetaloo, the Arafura Rare Earth Nolans project and, of course, the major projects in Tennant Creek.

The Beetaloo is turning potential into production, creating jobs, strengthening energy security and building a long-term industry with benefits for the Territory and the nation. That means more investment, more jobs and stronger energy security. Local businesses, regional communities and Territorians benefit. That is growth, certainty and security in action.

Labor remains opposed to the gas industry; therefore, it remains opposed to traditional owners making decisions in the best interests of their people, working in the regions and creating business opportunities for local people. Labor needs to rethink its policy. It needs to get on board and give local traditional owners the opportunity to create jobs, wealth and business for their people. Only then will we see better housing, better education and real opportunities for Aboriginal people in the regions. Labor's current opposition to development in the Territory is bad news for Aboriginal Territorians. It needs to look at exactly what it is doing because the further it goes down this path, the fewer opportunities we will see for people in the regions.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, we are talking about Beetaloo gas. It is fitting and interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to take full credit for it; however, she has clearly instructed her backbench not to say a word. She clearly does not trust the Labor Caucus to have a say. If the Member for Gwoja was here, he would have risen to his feet and tried to get a second speech, because at least he cannot be gagged by Labor's leader.

We know that the Labor Party and the Labor Caucus is divided on gas. I cannot fault the new Member for Nightcliff on not quite understanding the history of fracking in the Northern Territory because, when the 2018 Pepper report was tabled, he was not here. He does not know the history. He was in Victoria turning his oven on using power from coal. He is a Victorian at heart. Perhaps if we had come out with coal-fired plants, he would support it because that is what he grew up with.

He does not support the Territory economy. He does not understand. When asked by the media, he finally said that gas is needed as part of the energy transition. That is after signing a pledge to support the transition to 100% renewables in the NT. We have a tremendous opportunity to be the powerhouse of Australia and to have incredible manufacturing and development in the Northern Territory, but the Member for Nightcliff would rather have a community battery powering homes for half-an-hour a day than see gas in the Northern Territory. He does not want to see the Barkly develop. If I am wrong, please tell me what you really think. I know the leader said that she will not. You are probably not allowed to speak. She said, 'I will be the only one to speak on this today'. You said, 'All right; she is the leader. I will do what she says.' She will not be the leader for long; we all know it. Member for Nightcliff, tell your community exactly what you think. If you would rather be a member of the Greens, you can say that today. At least you would start being honest with Territorians.

I acknowledge that the Member for Gwoja is in Alice Springs, which has been affected by a massive storm. His history with this goes all the way back to 2016 when he was on the Alice Springs Town Council. He seconded a motion for a fracking no-go zone. In 2016 when he was asked whether he had a position on fracking, he said, 'I don't to have a yes or no answer to that question'. That might be the first time I heard the Member for Gwoja not give an answer, because I know he loves to elaborate and keep going.

In April 2024 the Member for Gwoja was the Deputy Chief Minister when Labor signed the Tamboran contract. In May 2023 he was Attorney-General in the Cabinet that approved fracking in the Northern Territory. Now he plays both sides of the cards. He says, 'I do not know. We have to find out. I do not personally know.' It is pathetic. That man is more interested in shoring up his vote with the imported lefties from down south in Alice Springs than he is about getting on with the job of looking after the Territory.

The brand-new Member for Mulka—congratulations on your maiden speech yesterday—came out early and said that he does not support fracking. I quote:

> *At this stage, given where the climate is, I think it's very important to be cautious …*

The Leader of the Opposition now has a Caucus that has a two-thirds majority against gas. I know that across the Territory, hardworking Territorians in the Barkly, the Beetaloo and working at the gas plants in the Member for Daly's electorate are asking: what will happen if Labor gets back in power? Will I be able to afford my mortgage and the car repayments? Will I be able to turn the lights on? Nobody knows what will happen because the leader is saying something and her backbenchers are saying that they do not agree.

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When we go to the community barbecues, pizzas in the park or whatever we are doing in town, those electric barbecues are turned on. Member for Nightcliff, guess where that electricity is coming from? It is Beetaloo gas power in your barbecues.

Territorians deserve to know where Labor sits on gas and that certainty and security exists for long-term investment in and development of the Northern Territory. They deserve to know that if Labor ever ends up in power again, their jobs and industry are safe. It is not just the people working on the gas fields or on the plant; it is also the downstream manufacturing, mechanics, tradies, service trucks and everything involved. It is watching Tennant Creek absolutely flourish over the next decade. The risk if Labor ever gets in power again is that its members would rip it out in a heartbeat to appease their lefty mates.

We have seen over the last 12 months that there is a divided backbench on the other side. We have seen a Caucus divided on a number of issues, including housing, gas and gambling. The members of the Labor Caucus need to sort themselves out, go into their party room, have a wing meeting, get a new leader and come up with a policy and plan so that Territorians can judge them for what they are—flip-floppers. They flip, flop and flap about. I am not talking about a fish on a boat, but real decisions that impact Territorians' lives.

Territorians should be proud that it is Territory gas powering the nation and that we have massive potential to be at the forefront of Australia's energy security.

We have a Labor opposition which keeps throwing doubt, promoting uncertainty and fearmongering instead of moving with the times, getting on with the job and putting the Territory first.

I do not really like the federal Labor government and that is no secret—right? Even it realises the importance of Territory gas, and the federal minister turned on that first little bit of gas to flow out of the pipeline because federal Labor understands the need for gas.

It is Territory Labor that would love us to go back to having big power outages. Madam Speaker, you would remember when the big cloud came over Alice Springs, causing a massive blackout. That is what happens when we do not have enough shoring or Territory gas ready to go.

Mr Brown: It happened last week.

Mr MACKAY: Finally we have some noise from the opposition; we have a word. The Member for Arafura is clearly ready to jump up next, because he knows that the deputy leader can either get up and speak for himself or he will not be deputy leader for long. He does not have the numbers. I would love to hear what the Member for Arafura has to say, and I am sure I will disagree with him, but at least he knows that he is a strong man and can have a say.

I appreciate that Territorians deserve to know where each member of this parliament sits on gas. Territorians deserve certainty so that they know when they next go to the ballot box that if they risk Labor, they risk their job.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: The Member for Blain will be heard in silence. Please cease your interjections.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I could talk about the economics of the Beetaloo, and I probably will, but the Member for Drysdale did a great job.

I will give a bit of history first. The Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out that Paul Henderson, the former Labor Chief Minister, negotiated INPEX. She said a few points and asked: what have we done? We did the energy corridor, which Labor did not do. We have done the Northern marine zone—the development complex—fixing up Labor's mess. We got Arafura rare earths over the line. We got Beetaloo over the line. It was stuck in limbo for years and years under the former Labor government.

Who knows how long the Member for Arnhem will still be the leader? I see the Member for Nightcliff biding his time and doing what the faceless men say. How long until the Member for Arnhem gets the tap on the shoulder, just as the Member for Daly got the tap on the shoulder and was told to sit on the back bench to make way for the Member for Nightcliff to be the deputy?

The Labor that I grew up with, when Bob Hawke and Paul Keating were Prime Ministers, was can-do. New Labor is 'will not do'. Old Labor was a party of the workers. New Labor is a party of the activists. I have news

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for the Member for Nightcliff: when you become leader one day, you will be told to support the gas industry as well. I wonder how well that will play with the constituents of Nightcliff whom you promised to oppose fracking, signing your 100% renewables pledge that you will never be able to fulfil. I am sure you knew when you signed it, but you were happy to say anything as a candidate. The Greens candidate Suki Dorras-Walker won on primaries, so do not forget that you were elected on CLP preferences and those CLP voters want safety and opportunity. Part of that is development of gas in the Beetaloo.

Beetaloo gas is now flowing and powering Territory homes and businesses, and I could not be happier, because I remember all the blackouts we suffered under Labor. Did the lights go out in this parliament under Labor? Even the Chamber went out. We had so many blackouts in the Darwin–Palmerston–Katherine network, not to even mention the Alice Springs blackout in the early days when the cloud went overhead, which I talked about previously. The previous Labor government could not be trusted to keep the lights on.

The Member for Nightcliff wants renewable energy; so do we. We love renewable energy—the bore at my family's property is solar powered—but not at any cost; it has to be part of a well-regulated well-planned grid that is reliable, affordable and clean. The Beetaloo field has enough energy for all of Australia.

At the previous election the Prime Minister promised that power bills would come down by $275 for the east coast. Guess what? Power bills on the east coast have rocketed skywards. That is yet another broken promise by the Prime Minister.

There is no way that those on the east coast can constrain prices with their renewable pledges without Beetaloo gas. They desperately need Beetaloo gas. We are waiting for the east coast to come to the table and make an arrangement to build a pipeline from the Beetaloo to the east coast where our gas is desperately needed. We will be more than happy to supply it. The Territory has enough energy to fuel Australia, take care of our energy needs and turn Darwin into a thriving production hub.

The recent unrest in the Middle East exposed the flaws in the idea the elites have that we can just offshore all our dirty industries and import clean finished products. They export iron ore and coal, and they import steel. Where are the jobs in Australia? The smelters in Australia are shutting one by one. We already lost the smelter in Gove. The Tomago Aluminium smelter had to be bailed out at a cost of billions of dollars because power prices on the east coast are rocketing. The east coast needs cheap reliable Beetaloo gas.

Our farming sector is struggling because the majority of the fertiliser it relies on is produced in the Middle East. Here is a little science lesson: natural gas is a source stock for all our plastics. They produces polyethylene. The Haber process produces ammonia, which is a feedstock for our nitrogen fertilisers which power the green revolution that enables us to feed the world. We have enough room on Middle Arm and enough gas in the Beetaloo to set up fertiliser and polyethylene factories—enough so that Darwin could be a manufacturing hub, exporting to the world. All we need is the investment to get the job done.

For the record, I support a responsible, well-regulated onshore gas industry using the hydraulic fracturing technology. It is a hard life in the Territory. There are only a few things we have going for us. That Beetaloo gas field is a gift and we need to take it with both hands and not put any instability and lack of confidence in the investment community.

Territorians cannot rely on a Labor team that is divided amongst itself, that do not even know their own policies on gas. They cannot agree. One person is saying they oppose it, one person saying they support it. There is no business confidence over there. On this side of the House we support gas.

Mr O'GALLAGHER (Karama): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to support the ministerial report on the Beetaloo development.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition say the CLP is rewriting history. She is partially right; we have actually created a new future where the development of the Beetaloo has commenced and will grow.

We always planned to do that. We went to the last election on that. The Member for Mulka is not here, but if he was, I would be showing him this plan. This is the plan we went to the last election with. Let me quote exactly from it regarding the Beetaloo and Territory gas. One of our key promises was to develop a safe and well-regulated gas industry. Territory gas to grow the Territory economy.

I quote from what we said two years ago before we were elected, when we went to the whole populace about this. We were open and transparent, something the opposition does not understand. The media release says:

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Labor has mismanaged our gas supply. They cannot even give certainty to keep the lights on in our towns and regions. The CLP has always stood up for and supported the Territory's gas industry. This industry will proceed with certainty under a CLP government. We have this incredible resource right here and thousands of Territory jobs could be created over the next 20 years. The gas from the Beetaloo is cleaner than fossil fuels and can be used to transition to renewables and create a new clean energy source.

We will ensure the gas industry is well-regulated, that our domestic power is secure and the benefits of a strong economy flow to Territorians.

We also went on to say:

Not only will gas grow our local economy, but it will help Australia meet its emissions targets. Gas is the cleaner and cheaper pathway to renewables. The Territory's gas can provide the solution to the east coast power shortage and provide economic benefit to Territorians.

That is what we said, and have we not already started moving big on that?

Unfortunately, Labor has always been confused on its support for onshore gas. I take this opportunity to pay credit to the Member for Johnston and the former Member for Nightcliff. Whilst I disagree with their policies they had on gas and banning fracking, I have to give them full credit that at least they were consistent in that view. The Member for Johnston stays consistent in the view. Credit to them that at least we know where they stand.

Labor, on the other hand, for strictly political reasons, had sought to delay and kick the tin down the road regarding the development of the Beetaloo. We had the Hawke report, which was a fantastic report, well-detailed. It answered all the questions. That should have been enough to move on. But no, Labor had to go up and set up the Pepper inquiry. It was a big inquiry and they were very happy because it went for years. It chewed up time. It was there because they did not know what they wanted. They were delaying but they came out and said they had more scientific basis. They could have just used the Hawke report to get the gas going.

In July this year the Leader of the Opposition said, 'Labor believes the onshore gas industry should be strictly regulated.' Then in July, 'Territory Labor supports the onshore gas industry provided it operates under a robust regulatory framework.' She would not actually say her own position, but that is the policy of the Labor opposition.

The Member for Nightcliff, as we have heard before, pledged in his by-election speech to oppose the use of taxpayer money for fracking, including fracking pipelines, and support the transition to 100% renewables. I do not know how you are going to get gas across the Territory or to the east coast if we do not have pipelines, but he is against that. He has come up with some new way of getting gas there. I do not know where he is at.

The Member for Arafura—one of the members who got demoted by the recent reshuffle—personally opposes fracking over water regulation and the lack of a traditional owner veto. The Member for Gwoja said he has been out there. He does not quite know what he wants, but he is against it personally.

We just heard the Member for Daly, of course, and he is right up there. Fracking gas from the Beetaloo Basin will generate emissions at a scale that will make it very difficult to meet the target, so he is very uncertain. Do not forget the Member for Daly was the deputy leader until he got dumped in June 2026 and now has no shadow portfolio. This is not quite a united team, and we have heard about the new Member for Mulka; he basically does not support fracking.

Two-thirds of the caucus are against it. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is half-hearted about it. The Leader of the Opposition is stating the policy that the party came up with, and they want us to trust that that is their policy. Sorry, but two-thirds of your caucus are against it. Believe me, you have history of backflipping. The Member for Nightcliff should know about this because, as we know, Labor is anti-development.

They did the moratorium on gas; they certainly campaigned against the Territory Coordinator because they did not want that to happen. They had a certain policy on Lee Point, but they did a backflip with the Nightcliff by-election. I wonder who drove that backflip. I think it was the Member for Nightcliff. Now they are asking for a data centre review. They are absolutely against development.

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I know I have talked about the policy positions of Labor and I have given the analogy of being the Teletubbies and so on. I also referred to the Member for Nightcliff's policy position being like the amazing Mr Ed, but I think there is a better characterisation of that policy position.

Anyone remember the show *Flipper*? That was a great porpoise that could go up and down and change positions like that, and he has nothing on the Member for Nightcliff. He can switch like that. Are we to trust investors and try to have certainty going forward if this Labor opposition—if it got into government—may or may not support gas? Come on. They have flipped on the Lee Point—that did not take long—and two-thirds of the caucus at the moment are against it. What certainty does that provide to investors?

If you go back to 2024 election, imagine Labor and a combination of the Greens and Independents—I know where they stand, I give them credit because at least we know where they stood, and it was certainly not for gas development. If they had got in—and this goes back to the rewriting of history by the Leader of the Opposition—I guarantee you, the Beetaloo gas development still would not have happened. It would have been postponed and probably would never have happened in the future. That is what we have to think about.

Our CLP government is about growth, certainty and security. We provide certainty for investors. We are seeing the development of the Beetaloo. It is in its early stages. We are now looking at pipeline investments and—for the Member of Nightcliff's benefit—those pipelines are used to move gas. He is on the record as saying he is against fracking pipelines. Well, we are for pipelines because they can solve our energy needs in the Territory. They can also help solve the energy needs of Australia and that is best for nation building. Even the federal Labor government—I heard the Member for Goyder talk about this—recognises the importance of our gas for national energy needs.

I congratulate the minister on bringing forward this ministerial report. I congratulate the CLP Finocchiaro government for delivering on its plan. We said we would deliver it and we have started to. We have more to do. Let's not hold back. But what a great start.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL 2026
Serial 71

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move the bill now be read a second time.

Mr Maley: Truth comes out now.

Mr Mackay: Now he can talk.

Madam SPEAKER: Let us give the Member for Nightcliff some silence and respect, please.

Mr Maley: He is allowed to.

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, remain silent.

Mr SMELT (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, this Bill contains a broad range of changes to liquor licensing enforcement, banning notices and alcohol restrictions across the Northern Territory.

There are elements of this Bill that are sensible. There is broad support for ensuring that alcohol restrictions currently applied through interim alcohol protected areas do not disappear. There is merit in modernising administrative processes where that can be done without weakening appropriate safeguards. Nobody in this Chamber would dispute that police need appropriate powers to respond to serious alcohol-related violence or that workers in our bottle shops, licensed venues and other businesses deserve a safe workplace.

Consideration of this Bill raises a much broader question regarding this government's approach to alcohol harm. We have to ask what happens after a person is banned from an area. What happens after somebody is picked up by police? What happens after somebody comes into contact with the justice system again and again because of harmful alcohol use? Most importantly, what will we do to stop that person coming back?

That is where this government's approach remains incomplete. The government has increasingly focused its response to alcohol-related harm on police powers, banning orders, criminal penalties and restrictions on individuals. These measures have a role but enforcement is not treatment. A banning order is not

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rehabilitation. An arrest is not a therapeutic intervention. Prison should never become a default alcohol treatment system.

The Banned Drinker Register provides perhaps the clearest example. The government's own reporting has shown a significant increase in the number of people subject to the BDR. By the end of 2025, NT Health was reporting that more people were on the prohibited list than ever before. If that means the system is identifying more people whose alcohol use is causing harm, then the next question should be obvious—what is being done about it? How many of those people are receiving a clinical assessment? How many are being connected with an alcohol and other drug service?

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 35; relevance to subject. Nothing that he is talking about is in this Bill. If we can just talk about topics …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Goyder, we always give members some latitude when they have potentially 45-minute speech ahead of them. Given that he is a few minutes in, he can continue. If there is a relevance issue further down the track, then I will note that.

Mr Maley: He is not allowed to talk very much. He has an opportunity to talk …

Mr SMELT: How many are actually being connected with …

Madam SPEAKER: Could you pause, please?

Deputy Chief Minister, you are on a warning. Stop interjecting.

Mr SMELT: How many are being connected with an alcohol and other drug service? How many are commencing therapeutic treatment? How many are serving their banning period before returning to precisely the same circumstances that contributed to their harmful drinking in the first place?

The BDR framework recognised the importance of treatment. A person can seek a reduction in their banning order after completing an approved therapeutic support program. The government lists residential rehabilitation, cognitive behaviour therapy, relapse prevention, counselling, anger management and social and emotional wellbeing programs among the available supports.

However, having a list of services on a website is not the same thing as ensuring that people can access those services. The government's budget papers show why we should be asking questions about capacity.

For 2025–26, the government set a target of 5,600 alcohol and other drug assessments. The estimated outcome was just 3,934. It also set a target of 3,500 alcohol and other drug treatments commenced. The estimated outcome is 2,568. It set a target for 70% of treatment episodes to be closed. The estimated result is just 61%.

The government said increased incarceration has been one of the factors constraining access to alcohol and other drug assessment and treatment services. That should concern every member of this House, because it describes the problem we are talking about. We are expanding the number of people captured by enforcement systems at the same time as our treatment system is falling short of its own targets. Increased incarceration is now making it harder for people to access treatment. That is a cycle we need to break.

The government's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Strategy acknowledges that more needs to be done. It commits to developing a road map to tackling problem drinking. It talks about increasing investment in AOD rehabilitation, expanding outpatient and community-based care, behavioural change services and compulsory treatment options. Those initiatives are identified as being delivered within existing resources.

Where is the additional capacity? If thousands more people are entering the BDR system, where are the additional clinicians? Where are the additional rehabilitation places? Where are the additional outreach workers? Where is the sustained investment in Aboriginal-controlled organisations and other local organisations that understand the people and the communities they serve? We cannot keep expanding the front door into enforcement without expanding the door into treatment.

The CLP went to the election promising action on compulsory alcohol rehabilitation. In February 2025, the minister said the government was developing a policy framework for mandatory alcohol rehabilitation and expected to progress that work later that year. By Estimates in June 2025, the Chief Minister was still talking

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about what mandatory alcohol rehabilitation might look like going forward. We are now well beyond that point, so what has happened to that commitment? When will Territorians see the comprehensive treatment response that was promised?

It is reasonable for a government to take time to ensure policy is evidence-based. However, it is equally reasonable for this parliament to ask what has been delivered …

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nightcliff, it is just on midday. Would you like to finish a section there or leave it to a different point in proceedings?

Mr SMELT: I can stop there.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

NOTICES

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

This Assembly calls on the Northern Territory Government to prevent harm caused by poker machines by:

1. maintaining the cap of 1,659 machines and legislating a schedule for its reduction

2. requiring cashless play with binding loss limits

3. removing autoplay inducements and ATM access from gaming areas

4. establishing a Territory-wide self-exclusion scheme requiring public reporting of machine numbers, losses and the effectiveness of harm minimisation members

5. replacing the current Community Benefit Fund arrangements with a 10% levy on all venues with gaming machines so that community and sport funding does not depend on gambling losses.

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

That the Assembly calls on the CLP government to:

1. accelerate the 2700 home remote housing program.

2. improve repairs and maintenance

3. invest in homelands and government employee housing in remote communities.

Mr SMELT (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion:

That the Assembly calls on the CLP government to establish a dedicated housing construction authority to coordinate land release, streamline approvals, facilitate investment and accelerate affordable housing construction across the Territory.

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

That the Assembly calls on the CLP government to develop a housing construction industry strategy addressing workforce shortages, rising construction costs, supply chain pressures and long-term housing development pipeline certainty.

Mr SMELT (Nightcliff): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next General Business day I shall present a motion:

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That the Assembly calls on the CLP government to develop a comprehensive housing strategy addressing the entire housing continuum, from crisis accommodation and social housing to affordable rentals and home ownership.

PETITION

Mr YOUNG (Daly)(by leave): Madam Speaker, I present a petition not conforming with standing orders. from 137 petitioners regarding the proposed relocation of YiSSA services to Batchelor.

I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read.

A petition regarding the suitability of the proposed relocation of YiSSA to Batchelor.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I move that the petition be referred to the Public Accounts Committee to consider whether the petition should be debated.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, a reminder to the opposition and crossbench that any questions during Question Time for minister Burgoyne should be directed to minister Yan for today and tomorrow.

IT Outage – Effect on Health System

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Last week a major government IT outage disrupted systems across the Northern Territory with serious implications for our health system. AMA NT told ABC rad io yesterday that hardworking health staff were left flying blind without access to the essential patient information they needed to make the informed medical decisions required. Territorians deserve to know that patient safety will not be put at risk by another system failure.

While the minister responsible for government IT shied away from the review of the outage, will you, as the responsible Health minister, commit today to an inquiry into the impact on our health system due to the outage, to ensure that this does not happen again.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I note the system outage last week and the disruption to a number of services as a result of that. I thank the Health staff who were well-prepared for the outage and immediately enacted their business continuity arrangements. Incident management teams were stood up to deal with any issues through the health system.

During the outage, all hospitals remained open and continued providing patient care throughout the outage. There were no significant consequences for hospital operations reported at the time, and I have had no reports of any issues since then.

In regard to the business continuity arrangements, the health department is well prepared for these types of outages, and the business continuity plans that were enacted straightaway go to show that not only did they enact the plan but they have been well prepared through planning, and they responded effectively when the system went down.

In regard to the way that staff went about it, the reports I had from a couple of the hospitals, including the Royal Darwin Hospital, is that they immediately moved to a paper-based system, which again just goes to show that the health system is very well prepared for these type of outages. The staff, by all reports, coped very well by moving straight to that system and delivered a sterling job under significant challenges with those systems down.

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I put on the record my thanks and give credit to all the health staff throughout the system because this outage was felt not only in each hospital but right across the health system in general. The staff and the way they responded professionally, conducted themselves extremely well without the systems access—I even had a report from the chemist that they had …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; specifically the question asked if the minister will commit to an inquiry about the outage to ensure that it is preventable in the future?

Mr EDGINGTON: There will not be a separate inquiry, I have no doubt that DCDD is looking at the overall outage from the government perspective and once that inquiry is conducted by DCDD, as the Chief Minister has said, we will be open and transparent about that and we will make that information known once that inquiry is done.

From a health perspective, the health department has responded extremely well. I put on the record my thanks to every staff member in the health system, whether they are remote, regional or admin, but also the pharmaceutical system—extremely well handled. Thank you to everybody involved.

Alice Springs – Extreme Weather Event

Mrs ZIO to CHIEF MINISTER

The severe storm that struck Alice Springs earlier this week has caused significant damage, disrupted essential services and left thousands of Territorians without power. We acknowledge and thank the hardworking crews, emergency services personnel and volunteers working tirelessly to restore power and support affected communities. During times of hardship, Territorians need certainty but practical assistance is available to help them recover.

Can you please update the Assembly on the progress of power restoration efforts and how the Finocchiaro CLP government is providing certainty and practical support to affected Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know that emergency management is close to the member's heart. In her professional career she spent a lot of time managing varying crises and that Alice Springs is a special place to her. She grew up in Alice Springs and have friends and family there, so I appreciate her keen interest in this.

It is timely that I give an update to the House following the update given by the Member for Braitling, Josh Burgoyne, this morning at a press conference in Alice Springs.

I start by thanking the Member for Braitling, it was important that he relieve himself of his parliamentary duties to be in Alice Springs, providing the leadership required. I thank him very much for doing that. It has meant a lot to that community while the rest of us continue with parliamentary business.

As at 5 pm last night, we had progressed significantly with the power restoration, which is our most significant priority other than making sure that everyone is safe, obviously. The numbers had dropped down to 2,500 overnight.

I am pleased to say right now that there are about 2,000 properties that remain without power. We are taking huge chunks out of the number of people who are without power as the hours go by but 2,000 properties remains a significant volume of people who are undoubtedly growing extremely tired of being without power as it is a very difficult thing.

It remains a priority for us. At 4 pm yesterday the Emergency Operations Centre was stood down and we reverted to an incident management control model because the threat—that is, the weather—had gone. Now we move into the recovery phase of making sure everyone is supported, the town is clean, people's houses are restored and everyone can get back to normal business, which will be different for everyone.

To that extent, I have an update on damage which is fresh this afternoon. About 51 houses were damaged by that weather event. More than six houses lost more than half their roof and one home lost its roof and rafters, if you could imagine the horror of that. Plenty of fallen trees have damaged homes. We have cleared all debris from key roadways, which is important, so traffic is moving. There were 13 fences and six vehicles damaged. That resulted in 55 requests for assistance from emergency services on the first day; 64 requests

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yesterday; and another six this morning. That is a total of 125 requests for support from emergency services staff.

We have announced the $250 relief payment which will start from 9am Friday from 2 Railway Terrace. The Department of Children and Families is taking the lead on that and will be opening it this afternoon for support services.

Local Government De-amalgamation

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

Last week you publicly walked away from your commitment to local government de-amalgamation in the Barkly region. Can you give the people of the Barkly a straight answer today? Will their communities be de-amalgamated from Barkly Regional Council?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we are trying to fix a system that was virtually destroyed by the Labor government. On 1 July 2008—unfortunately, the Member for Nightcliff was not around in those days, but Territorians and remote Territorians remember that day clearly—the Labor Party amalgamated more than 70 community government councils into shire councils.

Ms Uibo: That you promised to de-amalgamate, so where is it at?

Mr EDGINGTON: It took away not only local decision-making in those communities but also the leadership structures in every remote community in the Northern Territory. I can see all the members over there are just as shocked as I was, because those opportunities were destroyed. They were taken away by the Labor government in 2008.

Not only that, in 2005, three years earlier, Labor took away law and justice committees. In 2005 and 2008 the Labor government was on a path of destruction.

Ms Uibo: Guess what? It is 2026. Did you realise that?

Mr EDGINGTON: Labor destroyed every local decision-making structure in the Northern Territory over a three-year period.

Ms Uibo: What are you doing in 2026?

Mr EDGINGTON: In 2024 we made an election commitment to empower communities in the bush, something that was taken away by Labor on 1 July 2008. They are still upset about that.

Ms Uibo: What is the 2026 update?

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, cease your interjections.

Mr EDGINGTON: Those opposite are fuming because we want to give local Aboriginal communities local decision-making and rebuild those leadership structures that they took away. I know you do not want to see that, Member for Nightcliff. You are opposed to everything, including development, empowering the bush, gas, major projects …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The question was clearly about the Member for Barkly's electorate. Will the communities of Elliott and Arlparra in the Barkly region be de-amalgamated or not?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, please continue.

Mr EDGINGTON: When I hear those interjections, I know that those opposite are not happy with the answers. That is what they did.

We are working with all communities right across the Northern Territory. I must say that we have had …

Ms Uibo: What about your electorate? What is happening?

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Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader!

Mr EDGINGTON: We have had a number of expressions of interest from communities across the Northern Territory expressing their desire to move back to a local decision-making model so that they can have …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; I have not heard the answer regarding specifically Elliott and Arlparra.

Madam SPEAKER: He has heard the question. The minister chooses how he answers it.

Mr EDGINGTON: We have had a number of expressions of interest across the Northern Territory. We have had interest from across the Barkly including Elliott, Ali Curung, Ampilatwatja. Arlparra, Epenarra and Alpurrurulam. We are working with those communities to bring back real local decision-making that was taken away by the Labor government.

Beetaloo Gas

Mr MACKAY to MINISTER for MINING and ENERGY

Beetaloo gas is flowing into the Territory network and powering territory homes, schools businesses and even the electric barbecues in Nightcliff. On this side of the House, the Territory gas is important in securing the Territory's energy and economic future, with Territory businesses winning work and investment flowing into the land of opportunity. We also know those opposite are divided, and when given the opportunity to speak this morning, those opposite lost their voice, or perhaps it was taken away by their leader.

Now that Beetaloo gas is flowing, can the minister outline what it means for Territorians, and what is the biggest threat to secure affordable and reliable power for the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Goyder for his question because he knows that rural families and small businesses in Humpty Doo and Berry Springs will benefit from gas in Beetaloo. For example, Arnhem Earthmoving; Simmo does a great job.

Now that gas is flowing, he wants to know what it will mean to the Territory and what is the biggest risk. There are two questions and I will answer them quickly. We certainly got the answer this morning from the other side, loud and clear. It was certainly clear, but it was not loud. Labor members had their chance, and also the crossbench who said nothing, to stand up here and put their position to this House.

What did we hear? Crickets, nothing at all. No-one opposite wants to stand up and actually make a policy decision in this place where it matters. They are happy to go on the ABC and talk about it, but in this House, where it really matters and people are listening and their words are recorded, they say nothing. How embarrassing.

What does it mean in the Territory, what does gas flowing mean? It means direct and indirect jobs. Mechanics, hairdressers and civil contractors are benefiting right now from the gas in the Beetaloo. It means royalties to the Northern Territory Government and traditional owners. Royalties that come to the government pay for the education system, police, health and even pay for some of the electric barbecues in Nightcliff.

The traditional owners are thankful they have this real opportunity to grow their community, have purpose and good jobs in those areas. We know that those opposite forgot the reason, so we are giving the opportunity for those regional towns to have growth through the Northern Territory.

The second part of the question is what is the greatest risk? I can answer that in one word: Labor. The opposition. The biggest risk to Territory gas is Labor. The members are clearly being gagged. The Leader of the Opposition told the House this morning that she was not the Energy minister when the Pepper report was released in May 2023. But she was wrong; she is so disorganised.

One must admit it must be easy to lose track because over there they did not have a Cabinet, they had musical chairs. They were swapping around left, right and centre—who goes where? Three Chief Ministers. No wonder she lost track where she was. I will remind everyone that on 3 May 2023, the Labor government's 135 Pepper recommendations and that the minister was the now Leader of the Opposition. She knows what happens. But she does not want to correct the records.

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She made a mistake and she does not want to rewrite history.

Borroloola Health Clinic

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for HEALTH referred to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and LOGISTICS

In February you were posing on Facebook, spruiking that the tender has closed for the new $20m Borroloola health clinic. Fast forward 18 months and you have failed to award the tender and get this work out the door. Given your decision to scrap the $20m new health clinic at Gunbalanya, will you confirm to Borroloola residents, that their health centre project remains funded and will proceed. Could you also confirm when construction is expected to commence?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, given that the project is being managed through DLI, I will ask Minister Yan to respond.

Mr YAN: Madam Speaker, yes, there was an election commitment for us to build a new clinic at Borroloola. We had the budget for that and we put the works out to tender. Unfortunately, all the works came back 30% over the allocated budget. I have a very strict regime with my department. I want them to deliver everything on time and on budget—something the previous government could not do because the previous government would have gone okay, if it is 30% over budget, we will just go and borrow the money and do the clinic.

We do not do that this side of the House. We are responsible with Territory money. Whilst I have closed and cancelled the tender for the Borroloola Clinic because the budget is 30% over, we are now looking at ways to look at the scope of that project, look at how we deliver that project and look alternative methods of construction for that project so we can deliver on the clinic at Borroloola because it is a commitment of ours and it is a commitment from me that we will deliver that clinic for that community.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, cease your interjections please.

Mr YAN: I have a budget, and I will make sure that the delivery of that clinic is within that budget and that we get it delivered on time once we let the tender. We will look at whatever methods of construction we can to make sure we deliver a quality clinic for Borroloola so the people there get the care that they need.

Nhulunbuy Cyclone Shelter

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for LOGISTICS and INFRASTRUCTURE

To families across the Gove Peninsula cyclone preparedness is a part of life but the existing public shelter at the Gove District Hospital has only the capacity for 300 people. Can the minister update the House on how the Finocchiaro CLP government is progressing the new $30m Nhulunbuy cyclone shelter, the work undertaken to reach this milestone and what the investment will be for that community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there is lots of work going on out at Nhulunbuy because we know what has taken place with the closure of the mine. The Member for Wanguri is representing the Chief Minister out there and working very closely with that community on what that transition looks like and how we can help that community. When cyclones threaten families need that reassurance that there is somewhere safe to go. The current cyclone shelter at Nhulunbuy is not fit for purpose.

It is interesting that the latest Member for Mulka made the election commitment that he is going to deliver a cyclone shelter. We made that announcement many weeks ago, I believe, and we are progressing now on delivering that piece of infrastructure for Nhulunbuy. It is a bit rich to make the election commitment that you are going to deliver it.

We released a tender for design and to construct a new $30m cyclone shelter and multipurpose community facility at Hindle Oval. I have been there on site and seen where it is going to go and been shown by the community how it is going to fit on that site. It will accommodate up to 1,800 people compared with those 300

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at the existing shelter—that is six times the capacity—with more families able to shelter closer to home with less need for evacuation to centres. It also services not just Nhulunbuy but some of those wider communities and outstations in that area so people have somewhere safe to go and they do not get displaced.

Getting here has required quite a lot of planning and close cooperation with Nhulunbuy Corporation and the key stakeholders. The site feasibility study, the flood and storm surge assessments and the infrastructure concept plans are of course complete. The design and construction tender is now open and will be closing on 4 November. Our government has progressed that practical work needed to bring this project to market for the people in that community.

We are contributing $15.17m alongside $14.95m from the Australian Government through the Disaster Relief Fund. The Nhulunbuy Corporation is contributing $50,000 and the land, and will own and operate the completed facility which is great to see. It is not just a place for safety and beyond the emergencies, the doors will be opened because it will create that recreational space for those people in the community.

This project complements the $100m in flood recovery funding and the additional $30.5m for urgent road repairs that we released earlier this year after the flood and cyclone events across the Territory.

For families on the Gove Peninsula, that means a future with greater protection, stronger facilities and more confidence when severe weather threatens. That is what our government is working to deliver for the people of Nhulunbuy.

Defibrillators – Remote Schools

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

During the last election campaign, the Member for Barkly promised that defibrillators would be provided to every remote school across the Northern Territory. Has your government commenced that work, and what have you done to deliver that commitment? How many remote schools have received defibrillators so far, and when will every remote school in the Northern Territory have one?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will take that on notice because I am not aware of it.

I will get back to you, Opposition Leader.

Wagering Industry Regulation

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for RACING

The Northern Territory has Australia’s strongest and most highly regulated wagering industry. The people of Blain love to have a little flutter while they are enjoying a beer at the Bell Bar in Bellamack. The industry supports more than 1,000 local jobs and delivers significant benefits to families, businesses and community organisations. After years of inquiries, reviews and debate, the Albanese Labor government in Canberra chose not to adopt the bulk of the blanket measures that some activists were demanding. Those same activists have now turned their attention to the Northern Territory.

Can you update Territorians on how the Finocchiaro CLP government is ensuring that we can continue to have strong regulation without creating uncertainty?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Blain understands how these sorts of things work, especially when it comes to personal responsibility

We believe that we can have strong consumer protection and a strong economy at the same time, and that is what we are delivering. The wagering industry supports more than 1,000 jobs, like the Member for Blain said. I know he has lots of people in his electorate working in this industry. It contributes more than $150m in taxation, plus it delivered $120m to community organisations through grants, all of which goes directly to the Northern Territory.

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This particular debate has already been had. Canberra spent three years on gambling reforms. There were parliamentary inquiries, Senate inquiries, independent reviews, consultations and thousands of submissions. Activists called for blanket advertising and inducement bans and a range of sweeping restrictions. After years of debate the feds chose a more targeted approach rather than adopting many of the blanket measures that activists had demanded. Some activists in Canberra did not get the outcome they wanted, so they now want the Northern Territory to relitigate that same debate.

Our government is here to provide certainty for Territory jobs. The Northern Territory has already modernised wagering legislation. We already have Australia's strongest regulatory framework.

Unlike our government, Labor members are providing uncertainty wherever they go. They are back to their old tricks. We have seen it with gas, and we saw it again this morning. We have seen it with the Lee Point housing development and now we are seeing it with gambling. Labor members cannot make up their minds.

If you want a sure bet, Madam Speaker, you can bet that Labor will have a new Leader of the Opposition by Christmas because Labor members are throwing each other under the bus and cannot become a team. They have more members over there, but they are more divided than they have ever been.

A member: It keeps getting worse.

Ms BOOTHBY: It is getting worse. More is not necessarily more.

Labor members cannot even provide certainty within their own team, let alone for industry.

Strong consumer protections and a strong economy at the same time is what growth, certainty and security looks like, and we are delivering it.

VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge in the gallery the Chair of Tourism Central Australia, Patrick Bedford; the CEO of Tourism Central Australia, Danial Rochford, who is also our Deputy Mayor of Alice Springs; and Samara Laverty. It is lovely to see you, Samara, and everyone else in the gallery. It is nice to see people watching what we do.

Members: Hear, hear!

Prisoners – Childbirth

J DAVIS to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

How many pregnant prisoners have been restrained during labour or childbirth in the Northern Territory in the last six years? In how many cases were restraints used during the birth itself? What are the exceptional circumstances in which the department considers it necessary to restrain a woman during labour or childbirth?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there is a lot of technical detail which I do not have now, but what I can say is what we have done to protect women in the prison system.

When we came to office the prison system was in chaos. There were prisoners in watch houses for weeks on end, banked up. Their rehabilitation and training programs were not happening. The work parties were restricted, which meant prisoners were locked in a small cell and did not get out for exercise and did not get the rehabilitation which is super important. We want to break the cycle of reoffending, and putting someone into a watch house does not help that whatsoever.

The previous Labor government failed to invest in the Corrections system. It failed to invest in …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. That has nothing to do with the question. I asked: how many pregnant prisoners have been restrained? I am happy to take the question on notice if you do not have the information here.

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Madam SPEAKER: Member for Johnston, he is just a few seconds into his answer. We normally give a bit more time.

Mr MALEY: I go back to what we are doing to protect women in Corrections. I was laying out the context. The system was in chaos. That was caused by the previous Labor government because it failed to invest in Corrections and the court system. People were banking up in remand, overflowing, and there was no real money spent, other than on programs like Back on Track, which was for 35 young offenders at a cost of $35m. That is why the previous Labor government blew out $1bn a year in overspending.

I will get back to what we do to protect the women. The previous Labor government had the women behind the wire with all the men. I visited Holtze and walked to where the women were kept. There was catcalling and abuse coming over the fence, which you could see. To protect women we have moved them out from behind the wire. Out the front of Holtze there was a sort of workers' camp. We have upgraded the security a bit. It is called sector 11, and those women are in their own area outside …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The minister has 60 seconds left to address my question.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have some time.

Mr MALEY: This allows the women to have their own area outside the wire at Holtze. In Alice Springs the previous Labor government left the women behind the wire. We have moved them out the front where they have their own area away from the men. They are away from that catcalling. We offer those better services, better health services—this is what I am getting to—so they can be treated with more dignity and respect …

J DAVIS: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mr MALEY: Here we go again.

Mr Young: Because you are not answering her.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Johnston, this is your third point of order.

Ms Cahill: Is it 110?

Mr Maley: Relevance?

J DAVIS: Standing Order 110; relevance—thank you, everyone. You can all see that it is not relevant. Thank you for helping me.

Minister, if you do not know the answer from your own department, I am happy to take the question on notice.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, you have the call.

Mr MALEY: I will get back to where I was. The women are now outside the wire, where they get those better services. If a woman goes into labour, there is a better opportunity to get to hospital.

That gets me talking about G4S. We now have those prison sits, who are the people sitting with the women—and with the men as well—to make sure they get better services and better health outcomes for men and women in our Corrections system.

We know the previous Labor government left us with chaos.

VISITOR
Reverend Viliami Mila

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, we also have in the gallery this afternoon Reverend Viliami Mila. Welcome to the Chamber, and thank you for attending our beautiful parliamentary prayer breakfast on Monday. It was nice having you there.

Members: Hear, hear!

DRAFT

Barkly Tourism Association

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

During the last election campaign, the Member for Barkly promised to re-establish a Barkly Tourism Association and employ a dedicated tourism officer in Tennant Creek. What work has your government done to deliver that commitment? How many meetings has the re-established Barkly Tourism Association held? How many members does it have? Has the tourism officer position been filled?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is fitting that Danial Rochford, the CEO of TCA, and Patrick, the Chair, are listening to this. I do not know whether the Member for Daly knows this, but they do a fantastic job in representing not only Alice Springs but also the Barkly. I saw them in the Barkly when we were travelling from Tennant Creek to Alice Springs and they were doing the same thing. We stopped and had lunch. It was fantastic. These guys do a fantastic job for tourism in Alice Springs and the Barkly region.

Our government put tourism as one of our five key pillars at the election; we told everyone what we would do. We have continued to deliver on that commitment. The fact that I am the Tourism and Hospitality minister, the Parks and Wildlife minister, the Racing minister and the Major Events minister—all under the one ministry, portfolio and department—means that we can do much more. We are now starting to see the results of that reform.

The numbers from Tourism Research Australia for June are out. Even though there were significant headwinds in tourism across the Territory, including Alice Springs and the Barkly, with fuel uncertainty, global crises and weather events—we had the most serious weather events we have ever seen in the Territory over such a long period—we still managed to increase our numbers by 24%, which was crazy, and our international visitation by 9%, which is huge. I think it was $2.36bn of spend …

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. The question was pretty direct. How many meetings has the re-established Barkly Tourism Association held? How many members does it have? Has the tourism officer position been filled?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes, it was specific, minister.

Ms BOOTHBY: The Member for Daly might not know—I do not know why he does not know this—the associations, the peak bodies, decide how they represent their areas. As the government we support them in that. We give them funding, but they are responsible for their membership, whether it is in the Barkly, Alice Springs or the Top End. Katherine is represented by the Top End.

It is a good question. If they want to do that, I am 100% supportive because, unlike Labor, I will not tell people how to run their businesses. They are the experts in their businesses. They are the ones who understand how tourism and their customers work, so I will let them do that work.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the specific end of the question, which we hope the minister can at least respond to, is: has the tourism officer position been filled?

Madam SPEAKER: The minister has finished her answer. Opposition Leader, I thought you were jumping up to ask another question.

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please!

School Attendance

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

When the CLP came to government we had a clear plan for Territorians to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore lifestyle. A big part of delivering on that plan is making sure young Territorians are in school, getting an education and building a real future. Territorians were rightly shocked to learn that under the former

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Labor government, hundreds of children were effectively absent from school and could be moved on to a separate list and were not reflected in the enrolled student statistics.

Can you update the Assembly on what our government is doing to drive school attendance, hold parents accountable and get children back into classrooms?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Fong Lim is interested in all things education. It is great to have him on board as the assistant minister for Education.

We will not take any tips from the previous Labor government which had four Education ministers, one of whom was the Opposition Leader. We saw the poorest literacy, numeracy and attendance across the Territory over the last eight years.

On coming into government we made a commitment to increase attendance in schools and boost literacy and numeracy. We have made a firm commitment, over the last two years, to boost literacy and numeracy by bringing in explicit instruction, having attendance officers and engagement officers in schools and getting counsellors back in the schools. We have Aboriginal liaison officers and school-based police.

All that is making tiny increments. We saw a 1% increase in attendance in the last term. Although it is tiny, it is going in the right direction. We have to start somewhere. We had a very low bar but we are making incremental changes to attendance.

The attendance officers gave out 579 compliance notices across Term 3 this year. That resulted in 176 fines.

I thank the federal government for working with us. There were 385 referrals to the federal government for income management, of which 208 were accepted.

There is all of this, as well as the things we have brought in, like the Aboriginal liaison officers. We are also making sure that we hold parents to account. No parent should be depriving their child of an education.

We will make sure that we continue doing that work for those incremental changes to make sure that every child in the Northern Territory has access to a good education.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Mulka, this is your first question.

Community Plans for Robinson River, Mungkarta, Ali Curung and Alpurrurulam

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

During the last election campaign you promised the communities of Robinson River, Mungkarta, Ali Curung and Alpurrurulam 10-year community plans. How many of these plans have you delivered? How far into the plans are we? Will they be publicly released?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, regarding the work that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development is doing, I will go back to a couple of the points I previously said.

In 2008 one of your colleagues, Member for Mulka, was involved in scrapping every community government council in the Northern Territory. The communities in your electorate, Member for Mulka, all used to be part of smaller community government councils that were elected to make their own community plans and decisions for their community. However, that was all taken over by the East Arnhem Shire Council, I think it was back then, under the Labor government.

What we have done moving forward is work with the Groote Archipelago. That community is now working on its own to manage the Groote Archipelago. The separation from the East Arnhem Council is the work that we have been doing to empower communities across the bush.

The Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation manages the Robinson River community. It is not the council, but the Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation in Robinson River is doing a fantastic job. I must say that the locally elected board has made a number of plans for that community.

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When it comes to delivering these plans, we have ensured that there is local decision-making and local people involved in the decision-making, which is clearly what the Labor government took away on 1 July 2008. If the Member for Mulka is concerned about plans for communities and local decision-making, that is what was taken away by his government. Law and justice committees were scrapped in 2005. Local community government councils were scrapped in 2008 …

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; relevance. I acknowledge that the Member for Barkly answered a small part of the question regarding Robinson River but there were three other communities—Mungkarta, Ali Curung and Alpurrurulam. Regarding the 10-year community plans, how many have been delivered and how far into the plans are we? When will they be publicly released?

Mr EDGINGTON: Member for Mulka, these are things that have been taken away from Aboriginal communities—the law and justice committees in 2005, local government in 2008. When it comes to local decision-making, Member for Mulka, your former government also promised a treaty.

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, you asked for a point of order 15 seconds ago. You need to give the minister a bit more time, even though there is not much time left.

Mr Young: It would be good if he could answer it.

Madam SPEAKER: Repeating a point of order over and over again does not elicit the response you necessarily want.

Mr EDGINGTON: The Member for Mulka has obviously had a question put before him and that he knows no history about the failures of the Labor government in the Northern Territory. The Barkly Regional Deal was established on 13 April 2019. That is a social, economic and cultural placemaking plan. As a result of the Barclay Regional deal, Member for Mulka …

Data Centres

Mr HOWE to MINISTER for TRADE BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

The Albanese Labor government has made clear its opposition to a moratorium on data centres, recognising the importance of investment in Australia's digital economy and artificial intelligence capabilities. However, there appears to be a growing disconnect, with some advocating for a moratorium despite previously assuring Territorians that their approach did not relate to slowing down investment.

Can you please outline how the Finocchiaro CLP government is providing certainty and encouraging investment in the Territory's emerging data centre industry and what impact conflicting policy positions and calls for moratoriums could have on investor confidence and future economic opportunities?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I never thought I would say this but this is the one thing I think I might agree with the Albanese government on, and that is investment in Australia's digital economy and artificial intelligence capabilities is vital.

It is astonishing that those on the other side have taken the opposite view of their federal counterparts. I do not know if we are seeing a bit of a tear-away group of Labor in the Territory, which would not necessarily be a bad thing.

Let me be very clear. This sends such a bad message to potential investors because it is so important that we have a very strong message to investors that we are open for business and, Member for Drysdale, that business will flow into places like your electorate, creating jobs, creating opportunities for Territorians right across the board.

Our Chief Minister went to national Cabinet and fought hard for the Territory’s stance. She fought hard and she won to make sure that our position on data centres was 100% crystal clear. They are critical for our economy nationally and critically important to the Northern Territory.

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Our point of difference around the Beetaloo gas supply of energy was also recognised. I thank the Chief Minister for her work in that because it sent a message to our investors that we will not be held to ransom by the federal government and the Territory's interests will always be pushed forward.

In August, the Deputy Opposition Leader said they did not want to slow the investment in our economy down, but here they are. The biggest opportunity facing the Northern Territory in today's economy is the development of data centre investment. Those on the other side are saying, 'Oh no, sorry. We have changed our minds', even though data centres were started in Darwin under a previous Labor government when they were gung-ho for that. NextDC's D1 $80m investment started construction in 2023 under Labor. What has happened? What mind snap has happened to those on the other side that they have forgotten that they need to back investment?

These mixed messages will cost jobs and investors need certainty and we will delivery that certainty. We will back investment, we will back the Beetaloo, we will back Territory jobs and Member for Drysdale will make sure your constituents get every opportunity that this data centre proposition presents.

Tennant Creek – New Primary School

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

During the last election campaign the Member for Barkly promised a new primary school for Tennant Creek. What budget is allocated to this commitment, when will this school be delivered and how much will it cost to build?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Opposition Leader for trolling the Member for Barkly's Facebook page on this laundry list of things that he would have liked to have seen…

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader.

Mrs HERSEY: … and were fighting for commitments. There is a difference—you are fighting for it or it is a commitment. We all know that the Member for Barkly is a strong advocate for the Barkly region.

Ms Uibo Interjecting.

Mrs HERSEY: If the Opposition Leader wants to just pipe down and listen to the answer, that would be handy. As a government we are boosting education across the Territory, not just in the Barkly electorate. We have gone to the federal government—where there is a need in the Barkly is for early childcare. We have secured funding to build and strengthen the early childcare sector there, so that mums and dads who come to the Barkly region can have places for their childcare.

We will be very happy to see the build of that and see the end result for the families who are going to the Barkly region, specifically, Tennant Creek. I look forward to more announcements on that in the near future so those families who are coming—mums and dads. We are trying to get people into the regions to stay there, so housing and childcare is one of the biggest things families need to secure jobs in the regions. I am sure you would know that, Madam Speaker, even being in Alice Springs. We know there is a need for early childhood care in the Barkly region, and we are delivering on that.

We are also making sure we are finally delivering on the boarding school facility that was under the Barkly Regional Deal that the Member for Barkly speaks about so often. That could not be advanced under the previous Labor government. While they might sit there and go through the Member for Barkly's laundry list and troll through his Facebook pages, clearly they have nothing better to do because they do not stand for too much of what we need in the Territory. On this side of the House, we will continue to advocate for education making sure families in the regions are looked after.

Tennant Creek – New Primary School – Supplementary Question

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

DRAFT

In the answer the minister mentioned building an early childcare centre in the Barkly, particularly Tennant Creek as the priority, rather than the primary school question that I asked. Can you clarify is the building on the current early childhood centre in Tennant Creek or is it a new site?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I did say building onto so maybe the Opposition Leader needs to listen. We are building onto and expanding that service, as well as delivering the boarding facility in the Barkly which the Opposition Leader could not do when she was in government, and one of four Education ministers.

Home Ownership Grants

Mr O'GALLAGHER to TREASURER

The Finocchiaro CLP government's home ownership grants continue to go from strength to strength, helping Territorians secure a new home, while supporting local builders, tradies and businesses. Recently I have been privileged to join the Chief Minister and other parliamentary colleagues at the launch of the Marrara Gardens and Lux Apartments developments adjacent to my electorate and to hear about how the housing grants are helping first home buyers. These grants are about more than bricks and mortar. They are giving people the confidence to put down roots, raise a family and buy into the Territory dream. After years under Labor, when too many Territorians were looking for a way out, our government is giving them reasons to stay and invest in their future.

Can you update the Assembly on this Territory success story, the economic activity these grants are supporting and what they mean for families achieving their dream of home ownership?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is great to hear those stories from the Member for Karama about the construction that is happening in his electorate.

Labor had eight years to build the Territory; instead, it left our home builders facing some of the weakest activity in living memory. In the March quarter of 2024 construction began on only 80 detached houses—that was the weakest quarter in 50 years—and only five multi-unit dwellings. That was Labor's record. It was an industry starved of work, families starved of opportunity and, of course, families looking for an exit. We all heard those stories about families leaving the Territory for various reasons, but it was primarily the crime crisis that Labor drove.

I am glad to say that people are now staying here. Our population is increasing, which means we need more homes. We are delivering on that through our home owner grants.

Private residential construction fell 14.7% after inflation in Labor's last full financial year. That is a staggering figure. However, under the CLP, it grew by 30.8% in 2025–26 alone. Labor delivered a decline and we are delivering opportunity; I can guarantee that. There are 413 applications for the $50,000 home owner grants in the pipeline, alongside 247 applications for the $30,000 FreshStart grants. That is 660 grants supporting new homes and millions of dollars in economic activity across the Territory. That was a pipedream, not a pipeline, under the previous government.

The CLP knows how to grow the economy and attract investment. We back businesses to expand and we are helping families get ahead. People are not just buying a home; they are buying into our Territory dream. That is what we want to see. We want the Territory to be the place to be, the place to live, the best place in the country to come to live, work and raise your family. They want a career, a family and a home of their own and an unbeatable lifestyle. We are delivering on that.

Under Labor, too many people were planning their exit; under the CLP, people are planning their future. Just ask FIFO worker Thomas James Marshall, who became his family's first-ever homeowner at the Parks Estate in Holtze off the back of our grants. He saved hard and our $50,000 grant helped him get over the line.

It is the CLP getting homes built. We are backing jobs and giving Territorians a reason to stay in the Territory. The CLP has brought back the Territory dream.

Tennant Creek – Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Officer Position

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Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The domestic, family and sexual violence officer position in Tennant Creek has been vacant for two years. Does this critical position still exist and, if not, why not? If this position still exists, why has it not been filled?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as I am sure the Member for Daly would understand, those matters are operational matters. I have not seen any indication that the position does not exist anymore. I am more than happy to seek advice from the acting chief executive as to why they have had challenges filling that position and let you know.

Frontline Health Workers – Safety

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for HEALTH

The CLP government has been delivering on its promise by implementing stronger laws and stronger enforcement, with a clear focus on reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our beautiful Territory lifestyle. We all know that Labor was soft on crime, but this government is delivering a safer Territory for all. Can you update Territorians on how the CLP government is protecting our frontline health workers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know how focused the Member for Casuarina is on ensuring that we not only reduce crime but also protect and ensure the safety of our frontline workers.

As he indicated, we are delivering on our promises. We are reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our Territory lifestyle. Community safety remains our top priority. That is why we were elected.

The CLP government will continue to focus on ensuring our frontline health workers are protected because no-one should be subject to any violence or threatening behaviour in the workplace. There is no place for this kind of behaviour in the Northern Territory. When we came to government we strengthened laws to protect our frontline workers, making sure that any offender convicted of assaulting a frontline worker would face mandatory minimum sentencing. That work has been done, but there is still more to do.

I continue to meet with the nursing and midwifery union, working to strengthen and improve staff safety across the Northern Territory. We are investing in practical safety improvements across hospitals, including enhanced duress alarms, improved CCTV and infrastructure upgrades in the higher-risk areas of our hospitals and clinics. Dedicated security officers are supporting staff, patients and visitors across our facilities, while our local work health and safety teams continue to identify risks and implement targeted mitigation strategies. We are also rolling out updated occupational violence and aggression training to equip staff with the skills and confidence to prevent, de-escalate and respond to challenging situations.

I know you will be pleased to hear this, Mr Deputy Speaker. Recently I was in Alice Springs to meet with St John and attend a function. An MOU, an agreement, has been signed between St John and Tangentyere. It is about protecting our ambos. They are always on the front line responding to emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was pleasing to hear from St John and to engage with Tangentyere which has big plans to support our frontline paramedics. This will enhance community safety. By working in partnership across the board in Alice Springs, what we will see over the short, medium and longer term is not only the partnership built but also, hopefully, a reduction in violence towards our ambos who are constantly working on the front line.

I thank all the St John staff for the work they are doing.

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

RACING AND WAGERING AMENDMENT (HARM PREVENTION) BILL
Serial 79

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a bill titled Racing and Wagering Amendment (Harm Prevention) Bill 2026, Serial 79, and table the explanatory statement.

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

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All of us in this Chamber know that the Northern Territory is in a unique position as a de facto national regulator of the online gambling industry. About 50 of Australia's biggest wagering operators are licensed in the Territory, including Sportsbet, bet365, Ladbrokes and Neds. Australians everywhere are relying on the Northern Territory to regulate this $50bn industry, so this Bill represents a unique opportunity for this parliament to make meaningful change that will impact not only Territorians but also Australians across the country.

It starts with a very simple proposition. If we know something causes harm, we have a responsibility to do everything in our power to prevent that harm. Regardless of our personal views on gambling as entertainment, the evidence is clear that for many in our community gambling is addictive, just like alcohol or drugs. As with those addictions, gambling is often hidden behind a wall of stigma, shame, secrecy and deception.

The gambling harm prevention Bill I am tabling here today has a clear purpose to prevent and minimise the risk of online gambling harm to individuals, families and communities. Anyone who is genuinely looked into the impact of gambling and seen the devastation that poorly regulated systems inflict on our community should be shocked by what is happening in the Northern Territory and across Australia.

Let me be clear about what this is and what it is not. This Bill is not an attempt to stop the gambling industry. It is not an attempt to attack the Territory lifestyle. It is not about stopping people from having a flutter, no matter how many times the CLP has tried to frame it that way; that is a deliberate mischaracterisation designed to avoid the real issue.

This is about ensuring that our legislative systems are strong, fit for purpose and protecting Territorians from harm, not enabling it. This is about making sure that we are not actively contributing to the destruction of families, to the bankruptcy of vulnerable people and the criminal behaviour that gambling addiction fuels, because right now, that is exactly what we are doing.

This Bill is for the people whose lives are being devastated by online gambling companies that profit from vulnerability and that fuel addiction. This Bill is for the person who loses a pay check, then their savings, and then their home. It is for the relationship that breaks down, the family that is left picking up the pieces, and in the most devastating cases, the life that is lost. Behind every statistic about gambling harm is a person, a family and a community. This Bill is for the countless constituents who came to me and bravely told me their story about how gambling harm has affected their life and it is about making sure our laws put those people first.

I will highlight the story of one person in particular, Shiva, who has bravely written the following letter which I will read out on his behalf.

'Dear members of parliament, I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to my story and I hope that after hearing it, you might have a better understanding of the pain that gambling addiction can cause. I also hope that you understand that you have the opportunity to protect people from this misery by supporting this Bill.

'My name is Shiva Panchalingam. I am a gambler in recovery, which means I have not gambled in a significant amount of time. This significant amount of time is time where people that care and love me have not had to see me in pain. It is a time that they have not had to see me starve because I have lost all my money just hours after I've been paid.

'It's time where I haven't had to lie to people that love me about why I'm borrowing money for them from them with little prospect of paying them back. It's time that they haven't had to worry about me because I have been missing for hours or days, worried about whether I would return.

'While I can tell you the low points of my addiction, there are many who would say that I made those choices and I should live with the consequences. But gambling harm does not just affect the person placing the bets; it affects all those around them. Over the past eight years, I've supported people experiencing gambling addiction, and one of the most painful parts of their stories is the harm it causes to the people around them.

'It's the wife and child of a veteran who's worked for 30 years only to discover the extent of his gambling when they're facing eviction because he's been hiding letters from the bank. And it's the children whose dad spends every weekend shut away in his room, placing bets on his phone instead of playing with them. And it's a small business owner whose trusted employee has stolen from them to fund their addiction.

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‘If you're not addicted to gambling, the thing you don't understand is that we know deep down that we aren't going to win because if we do win, we aren't going to take those winnings home. We're just going to put it back into the app. There isn't any rationality to it. We are too scared to ask for help because gambling companies have told the public that it's a personal responsibility issue.’

‘Research by Roy Morgan found that 48% of the gambling company's profits come from just 12% of their customers. They also found that young people were disproportionately affected by gambling harm. Gambling companies rely on those that are most vulnerable by feeding them inducements and bonus bets that keep them addicted.

‘This Bill does not ask for the gambling industry to be shut down; all it asks is that gambling companies make a profit without ruining people's lives. Those within the Chamber have been chosen by our community because we feel that you are best placed to have our interest at heart. With that in mind, I would like to ask you two simple questions.

‘First, knowing that gambling companies use inducements to target people who are already losing more money than they can afford, are you comfortable with those companies continuing to target people at their most vulnerable? Is $12,000 too little for a 24-year-old to lose in a year? If the answer to both those questions is no, then please vote in favour of this Bill.

‘I am fortunate to be in the position I am today, but getting here has taken a great deal of care, support and hard work. For many young people, gambling addiction does not just cost them money; it can cost them their relationships, opportunities, future and sometimes their lives.

‘The monthly deposit caps for young people proposed in the gambling harm prevention Bill are not asking much. I started gambling when I was 18. By the time I was 20, I was gambling most days and losing thousands of dollars a week. If this legislation had existed when I was in addiction, it would have stopped me from losing everything and given me space to get the help I needed.

‘I hope you remember that behind every dollar lost is a person and behind every person is a family, a network of people who love them. When you vote on this legislation, I hope you speak to at least one problem gambler and vote knowing the misery that you can save people from feeling in the future. Thank you.’

Shiva is one of many Territorians impacted by gambling harms. He is also one of the people that this Bill is designed to protect. As Shiva says in his letter, I hope that every member of this Chamber takes the time to hear the human suffering caused by predatory practices because that is what this Bill relates to. It relates to protecting vulnerable people and their families from companies who make a living from exploiting their addiction, manipulating gamblers to chase losses and bet more than they can and when they struggle, convince them that it is a personal failing of theirs alone.

I take issue with the phrase ‘problem gambling’ because it is only ever used to describe an individual gambler. What about the systems that are specifically designed to create problem gambling? Why is the shame not with the companies that create the toxic environment in which people develop problem gambling? This question is particularly important now when we see a steady increase in gambling harm Australia-wide and it is being driven by highly accessible online gambling.

The way that Territorians gamble has changed dramatically over the past decade. Gone are the days when you walked into a pub or betting shop to place a bet. You can now be in the most remote part of the Territory and access to betting is right there in your pocket 24 hours a day.

In 2023–24 Australians lost $3.4bn more in wagering losses, including online gambling, compared with 2018. In the Territory the Gambling Prevalence and Wellbeing Survey report found approximately 73% of adults participate in some form of gambling every year. The same research found that online gambling almost doubled between 2018 and 2023 and the rates of harm have grown alongside the proliferation of online wagering services.

The same report found that gambling-related harms increased dramatically, with a 70% increase in problem gambling and a 25% increase in harm from someone else's gambling. The study found that access to gambling products online through mobile phones and the internet was a clear contributing factor to that increase. These figures tell us that gambling harm is a real and growing problem for our community.

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Research from the Australian National University has estimated that approximately one in six Australian adults experience gambling harm, either directly or through someone else. The consequences extend far beyond the money lost. They can include financial distress, psychological harm, relationship breakdown, violence and, in the most tragic circumstances, suicide. The people experiencing this harm are not always the people we might expect. They are parents trying to provide for their children. They are young adults just starting out their working lives. They are people already struggling with the cost of living who find themselves caught in a cycle of chasing losses and hoping that the next bet will make things right.

The industry's business model is designed to keep people hooked through inducements, offers and incentives that deliberately encourage people to keep spending, return after a loss and continue gambling when they might otherwise stop. The money lost belongs to Territorians and Australians who are trying to make ends meet. It belongs to families who are already under enormous cost-of-living pressure.

When young people are drawn into online gambling, they may be exposed to harmful patterns of behaviour at a formative stage of their lives. As elected representatives, we have a responsibility to respond to this harm. We have a responsibility to put the safety and wellbeing of the people who elected us before the interests of an industry whose commercial success depends on people continuing to gamble and often when they are clearly experiencing harm.

This Bill is not about legislating individual responsibility; it is the opposite. This Bill is about legislating corporate responsibility, protecting Australians from predatory online gambling companies who deliberately and doggedly pursue people demonstrating clear indicators of problem gambling to exploit them for maximum profit, offering them VIP managers, free bets and other inducements and, as we heard in the federal Senate inquiry recently, in some cases drugs and alcohol.

All of us in this Chamber know that the Northern Territory is in a unique position as the de facto national regulator of the online gambling industry. Australians everywhere are relying on the NT Wagering Commission, a six-member commission that meets once a month, to regulate this multibillion-dollar industry that Australians lose $35bn to a year—$95m every day.

Australians per capita lose more money than any other country on earth to gambling. People experiencing gambling harm are far more likely than the average person to attempt or to die by suicide. Gambling harm is a national crisis in Australia and as the home of the Australian online gambling industry, we have a responsibility to act.

The gambling harm prevention laws we put in place here have implications that extend well beyond our borders. We are a jurisdiction of about 1% of Australia's population, but we have a significant regulatory responsibility to 100% of Australians to regulate gambling effectively and protect people from highly preventable harm. That is an extraordinary responsibility that we hold in the Northern Territory, but it is also an extraordinary opportunity. We can work together to demonstrate that when faced with a serious national crisis, parliaments can act to protect people from harm.

Effective regulation does not mean shutting down an entire industry. A well-functioning industry can and should go hand in hand with harm prevention. Together we can make clear that online gambling companies operating in the Territory have obligations to the people whose money and behaviour they profit from. We can show that being open for business does not mean being unwilling to set basic standards. The Territory has an opportunity to lead meaningful change where the federal government failed to, and this Bill is about taking that opportunity seriously.

The gambling harm prevention Bill makes five main sets of changes to our current regulations.

First, the Bill makes preventing and minimising risks of harm caused by online wagering to individuals, families and communities a clear purpose of the law. It requires anyone exercising a power or function relating to wagering to consider that purpose when they are making decisions. It places a positive duty on betting companies to take reasonable steps to prevent harm to customers by implementing an action plan for meeting that positive duty by reporting to the commission, by requiring licensees to suspend service immediately where a customer shows recognised indicators of harm or has self-excluded or is suspected of money laundering or is a minor. Under this positive duty, customers have a right to civil legal action if they are harmed, and the burden of proof is placed on the betting company to demonstrate that it met this duty to prevent harm.

Second, it introduces stronger conflict-of-interest requirements for members of the commission. It defines what a conflict of interest is; requires disclosure and recusal; it establishes a public register of declared

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conflicts; bans members from accepting gifts or benefits from licensees; and creates offences for noncompliance. It also tightens the composition eligibility rules for commission appointments, extends the cooling-off period before a former industry participant can be appointed and broadens the ban on members holding a wagering account to cover any licensed wagering operator in Australia.

Third, the Bill prohibits inducements and other commercial practices that drive wagering harm. It bans licensees from offering, providing or advertising inducements such as sign-up bonuses, free bets, deposit matches and loyalty schemes that encourage a person to open an account, wager, keep wagering or return after a break. It also bans arrangements under which a licensee pays an employee ongoing commissions or a share of revenue based on customer losses.

Fourth, it strengthens protections for young people, who we know are at a disproportionate risk of harm by gambling. It caps monthly deposits for young wagering customers at $500 for those aged 18 to 21 and $1,000 for those aged 22 to 24. It also prohibits advertising directed at children, advertising that portrays children wagering or advertising likely to reach children.

Fifth, it strengthens enforcement. It removes the commission and the director's ability to delegate licensing decisions, extends the time limit for lodging complaints, substantially increases the maximum monetary penalty that can be imposed on a licensee and adds a new ground of review where a commission member has failed to disclose a conflict of interest.

These are practical, commonsense reforms directed at the way the industry operates. They are about prevention, accountability and putting the interests of people experiencing harm at the centre of our regulatory framework.

I will address the issue of personal responsibility, which we have talked about in this Chamber. Several ministers have said you cannot legislate personal responsibility. I agree; governments cannot legislate whether or not an individual chooses to gamble. However, that is missing the point. This Bill does not legislate personal responsibility; it legislates corporate responsibility. That is an important distinction.

This Bill legislates a set of basic responsibilities for companies that profit from allowing and encouraging people to lose more money.

Everyone can agree that just because people have a personal responsibility not to consume something harmful, that does not mean that companies should be free to deliberately market it to vulnerable people, manipulate their behaviour or encourage them to consume more, even when it is destroying their lives.

The evidence heard by the Senate inquiry into the federal government's gambling legislation was overwhelmingly clear that online gambling companies use sophisticated inducements, direct marketing and manipulative product features to encourage people to gamble. People who have experienced gambling harm described how these practices could trigger their gambling and make it extremely difficult to stop.

The evidence given to the Senate inquiry by former NRL player Luke Bateman was particularly moving. He spoke of his experience of gambling addiction and the difficulty of overcoming it while continuing to receive so-called VIP inducements and bonus bet offers from gambling companies. He told the inquiry:

> *The inducements really destroyed my life because that is what kept you coming back. When you wanted to get out, this was the encouragement to stay within it and continue the harmful behaviours. I would steal money from my own mother, my partner or my siblings to get those bonus bets, to get those inducements. Without that encouragement, I do not think that would have happened. The harm would not have anywhere as much.*

He went on to explain that the issue was not about trying to stop anyone from having a bet, but about stopping the relentless targeting of vulnerable individuals. That is exactly what this Bill is about. We are not trying to stop people from making lawful choices; we are trying to stop companies from using practises that can exploit vulnerability and fuel harmful gambling.

When a company can see warning signs in someone's spending, when it can identify that a person is chasing losses and when it responds to those red flags by sending that person incentives to gamble and have no responsibility for the harm caused to that person, we have to ask whether the current balance of responsibility is right.

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The responsibility for the harm created by problem gambling does not sit squarely with the person experiencing the harm. The company that can identify the warning signs, that controls the inducements and that profits from the continued gambling losses must have a responsibility to act. We cannot continue to tell people to gamble responsibly when we are simultaneously allowing companies to use increasingly sophisticated tools to manipulate them into losing more.

Australians lose more to gambling per capita than any other country in the world. We are experiencing a gambling harm crisis in Australia and we have the opportunity to enact real reform in this space. Support for this Bill crosses all political divides. Hundreds of Territorians and Australians, including people with lived experience, health organisations, researchers, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, religious groups, federal MPs and harm minimisation advocates have backed this Bill and called on the Northern Territory government to put people ahead of profits/

It is well known and well researched that gambling harm is linked to financial ruin, relationship breakdowns, domestic violence, is a risk factor for suicide, it causes or exacerbates depression and anxiety, substance use, homelessness and self-harm.

Gambling is not a political issue, it is a public health issue. That is why I am calling on the government to allow a conscience vote on this Bill. The devastating harm caused by gambling to Australians is a serious public health issue. It is time that government started treating it as such. That is why I believe every member of parliament should be free to consider the evidence, listen to their constituents and make their own judgment. If the government truly believes in protecting Territorians, it should let its members vote according to their conscience.

As everyone in this Chamber knows, I believe the Northern Territory parliament's Legislative Scrutiny Committee process is critical to public confidence in the laws we pass and in our democracy. That is why I believe, just as in other jurisdictions, all major Bills should be referred there. That is why I will be referring this Bill to it.

This Bill is an opportunity for the parliament to work together to take meaningful action on a problem that affects over 70% of Territorians and one in six adults across Australia. We have an incredible opportunity to address gambling harm because the laws we make here influence the way this industry operates nationally and the decisions we make here could have far reaching positive impacts on countless Australian lives.

This is a nation-leading opportunity. We have a responsibility because of the role we play in regulating online wagering, and we have an obligation because we know the harm gambling is causing. I will say again, this Bill is not about banning gambling; it is not about blaming or shaming people who gamble; it is about recognising that when an industry profits from a product that can cause serious harm, it has a duty of care to minimise that harm.

It is about ensuring our laws put the safety and wellbeing of people ahead of the interests of multibillion dollar gambling companies, and it is about making sure that the Northern Territory uses our unique position to deliver meaningful change. If we know something causes harm, we have a responsibility to do everything in our power to prevent that harm. That is the principle behind this Bill, and it is the responsibility that I believe this parliament should accept.

I look forward to the support of my fellow members to protect Australians everywhere from gambling harm.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 1 February 2027.

Motion not agreed to

Ayes 6	Noes 16
Mr Brown	Ms Boothby
J Davis	Ms Cahill
Mr McGrath	Mrs Carlson
Mr Smelt	Mr Charls
Ms Uibo	Mr Edgington
Mr Young	Mrs Finocchiaro
	Mrs Hersey

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Mr Howe
Mr Kerle
Mr Mackay
Mr Maley
Mr O'Gallagher
Mr Patel
Dr Rahman
Mr Yan
Mrs Zio

Motion not agreed to.

MOTION
Moratorium on AI Data Centres Pending Public Inquiry

J DAVIS (Johnston): Mr Deputy Speaker, we need an urgent moratorium on hyperscale data centre planning and development in the Northern Territory. The community has called for one. Yesterday in this parliament I tabled petitions signed by thousands of Territorians calling for a moratorium. I have supported those calls publicly, and I will continue to do so. I want to be clear that we need to press pause now and not wait until decisions have been made and the damage has been done.

These AI data centres are enormous developments with potentially far-reaching consequences. there is no Territorian who will be unaffected by decisions made about our land, water, power and our future. In our last sittings, the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations delivered a speech intended to reassure Territorians. She talked about all the ways these projects could operate. She said the government must plan properly and they must hold proponents to high standards on water, energy and community benefit, but she gave us no concrete commitments, no protections, no transparent agreements and no details about any consultation before the deals are struck.

Territorians are not asking for hypothetical examples of how these projects might work. They are asking the government to show its work and explain how Territorians' interests will be protected. Since then the minister has travelled to Texas to promote Beetaloo gas. Texas, the home of the oil and the gas industry and while she was there, in extraordinary timing the governor of Texas called for a moratorium on AI data centres saying simply put, Texans must come first. If the minister wants to learn from Texas, that is a good place to start. Will this government put Territorians first?

The Northern Territory Environmental Protection Authority's recent determination on Project Ares in the Barkly has made the need for scrutiny even clearer. The EPA expressed a low level of confidence in the proponents initial environmental planning and raised serious concerns that must be addressed, and that is just one project. The government says there are 12 proponents considering data centre developments across the Territory. Project Ares as we know is a proposed 1 gigawatt campus in the Barkly with an estimated operational water demand of around 4 gigalitres a year drawing on groundwater from the Montejinni limestone aquifer.

The proposed Berry Springs Weddell development has been reported as a $40bn facility seeking two gigawatts of power with up to two gigawatts of onsite gas-fired generation on 185 hectares of Territory land that has been granted to them without any details about how that grant was actually made.

These are not ordinary developments. Collectively projects of this scale could reshape our water systems, our electricity supply, our land use and our emissions for decades, in fact, for ever, yet Territorians still do not have a clear picture of where these proposals stand, of what has been offered by the companies, of what agreements have been entered into or what obligations the government may have already undertaken on our behalf.

Before any further approvals, we need answers to fundamental questions.

First, water. Where will the water come from? Which aquifers will be drawn on? What happens if several projects rely on the same groundwater systems? What is the cumulative demand if all 12 proceed? What happens in a dry year? These questions matter because water is not an abstract commodity here in the Territory. It sustains our communities, our remote water supplies, pastoralists, wetlands, springs and the natural places that make the Territory so special. Our water use is already high. We cannot assume that water is an is abundant simply because a company wants it.

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Consider Berry Springs, one of the Territory's most loved natural places, near which the Weddell hyperscale data centre has been proposed. We need to understand exactly what this proposal might mean for that precious place before any decisions are locked in. We must also consider the cumulative pressure that new industrial demand could place on proposals for major water infrastructure, including the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage project. We need to know whether these developments will drive costly new infrastructure, who will pay for it and whether the public benefits justify the environmental and financial costs.

Second, power and climate. We need much more information about where the power for these data centres will come from and what it will mean for our long term in the Northern Territory. We already have extremely high per capita emissions. We heard in Estimates that these emissions have risen sharply and that they are expected to continue to rise. Against that background, how can the government promote an energy-intensive industry without first showing how it fits into a credible plan to reduce emissions and protect the Territory from worsening climate impacts?

Our communities are already exposed to extreme heat, severe wet weather events, flooding and pressure on water security. These risks threaten Territorians, homes, infrastructure, livelihoods and access to essential services. They threaten Territorians. This is about more than the environment; it is about whether our children and grandchildren will be able to live safely and well here in the Northern Territory.

We hear about billions of dollars in investment and promises of jobs, but a headline investment figure is not the same as a public benefit. We need to know how many permanent jobs will these facilities create, how many will go to Territorians, what wages, taxes and other revenue will flow to the Territory, what companies will contribute towards the infrastructure they require and what will remain for the public once the costs are counted. Who are the companies and their customers? What land is being committed and on what terms? What agreements have already been made?

These are basic questions of public accountability. They are not anti-business questions or anti-technology questions. They are what responsible governments should establish before making decisions of this scale.

The benefit of data centres may extend across Australia and across the world, but the demands on Territory land, water, power, infrastructure and our future will be felt in the Territory. We should not be expected to carry the costs and risks of a global industry without clear evidence of what it will cost us. We can also learn from other jurisdictions where governments are now grappling with the energy, water and infrastructure demands of data centres. We have the opportunity to learn from those experiences before making decisions that may be impossible to reverse.

I am not saying that data centre proposals have to be rejected; I am saying that the government has not yet demonstrated these developments considered both individually and cumulatively will deliver a net benefit to Territorians without unacceptable risks, and that evidence must come first. If an independent review establishes that a proposal can proceed without unacceptable harm to water systems and the environment, that the public benefit outweighs the public cost, that the developers will meet the full cost of the infrastructure they require, and that traditional owners and effective communities have affected communities have been properly consulted, then we can consider the evidence. But that process must happen before approvals and commitments make the outcome a foregone conclusion.

A moratorium is not a rejection of technology. It is not a rejection of investment; it is the ordinary discipline of a good government. Establish the facts, set the rules, consult the people affected and then decide.

The Territory does not belong to the CLP to give away. We in this Chamber are its caretakers. Our land, water and environment must be protected for the people who live here now and for the generations who follow us. If the evidence shows that a project poses unacceptable risks to our water, environment, climate, livelihoods and futures, then it should not proceed.

We do not need to approve data centres first and work out the consequences later. Data centre companies want access to our resources. We do not need them; they need us.

This is a David and Goliath contest over whose interests our resources serve. The government must not ask Territorians to trust a massive experiment with their future while leaving fundamental questions unanswered. We have heard that there are potentially 12 projects on the table. We need time to assess their impacts, establish strong standards for water, energy, noise, disclosure, who pays for infrastructure and who will be involved. Traditional owners and communities need to have a genuine say.

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That is exactly what this motion calls for: press pause, do the work, publish the evidence, set the rules and then decide what is best for Territorians.

I urge every member of this Chamber to support this motion because Territorians should come first. Just like Texans should come first, Territorians should come first, before the deals are done, the resources are committed and it is too late to change course.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the motion be amended by omitting all words after 'That the Assembly' and inserting:

1. acknowledges that the Northern Territory is a signatory to the national framework on mandatory ai and data centre standards

2. recognises that these standards include national consistency on water planning and national data security and sovereignty

3. notes that these standards will ensure that AI data centre growth will be in line with community expectations

4. commends the Finocchiaro CLP government on its constructive, nationally consistent approach to this growth industry, in contrast with other approaches that will simply spread fear and misinformation.

As indicated by my move to amend the motion, this government will not support the Member for Johnston's motion. The Member for Johnston is asking that parliament imposes a moratorium on data centre developments in the Northern Territory until a public inquiry under the *Inquiries Act 1945* has reported.

That sounds simple, it may even sound cautious, but let us be clear about what it means. It means telling every prospective investor that regardless of the merits of the project, regardless of their willingness to meet our laws and regardless of the jobs and opportunities they could bring, the Territory is closed to them for an unknown period. It means stopping proposals before the regulators have even had the opportunity to assess them. It means putting investment decisions on ice, with no firm date for when those decisions can resume. It means giving our competitors an invitation to take the investment that should be coming here. That is not careful planning, it is a blanket ban dressed up as due diligence.

The Member for Johnston has not proposed a targeted safeguard for water, power emissions or land use. She has not identified a specific failure in the existing approval processes that requires urgent correction. She has proposed stopping an entire emerging industry first and asking questions afterwards.

A moratorium is not a neutral act; it has consequences from the day it is announced. Businesses do not suspend their commercial decisions indefinitely while a jurisdiction works out whether it wants them. They compare locations, allocate capital and sign agreements elsewhere.

A company considering Darwin can also consider Queensland, Singapore, Indonesia or Malaysia. Those places will not wait for the Northern Territory to finish debating whether we should participate in the digital economy. Once the investment goes elsewhere, there is no guarantee it comes back. The damage would reach further than data centres. Investors in energy, telecommunications, critical minerals and advanced manufacturing would all hear the same message: 'Even if you are prepared to comply with the rules, parliament may still stop your industry before your proposal is considered.'

Confidence is difficult to build and easy to destroy. This motion would destroy it for no demonstrated public benefit.

The Member for Johnston is asking for an inquiry under the *Inquiries Act 1945*, but her motion provides no deadline for completion, no clear test for lifting the moratorium. An inquiry would take time; it can receive submissions, hear evidence, consider complex technical matters and make recommendations. None of that happens overnight. What happens to proponents during that time? What happens to workers waiting for construction opportunities? What happens to the local contractors preparing to bid? What happens to the infrastructure investments that depend on an anchor customer?

Under this motion the answer is the same. Wait—without knowing how long, without knowing whether the rules will change, while other jurisdictions move ahead. We have seen the effects of that approach before. The Northern Territory's hydraulic fracturing moratorium began in 2016 and was not lifted until April 2018.

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Whatever members think about the outcome of that inquiry, the period of uncertainty was real. We should learn from that experience, not casually repeat it for another industry.

The question is not whether data centres should face scrutiny. Of course they should. The question is whether scrutiny requires us to ban all development while a separate inquiry takes place. It does not. There is an important difference between assessing a project and prohibiting a sector. Assessment asks, where is a site, how much power will it need, where will the water come from, what are the emissions, what infrastructure is required and can the impacts be managed? A moratorium refuses to consider the answers because it stops the proposal before the process can run.

The Territory already has laws and regulators whose job it is to ask those hard questions on water, relevant extraction and allocation decisions must be made under the *Water Act 1992*. A proponent cannot simply announce that it wants a large volume of water and take it without the applicable approvals. The source, quantity and sustainability of the proposed use must be considered.

Not every data centre has the same water demand. Cooling technology matters. Closed loop systems can recirculate cooling fluid. Other designs can reduce reliance on evaporative cooling. Those are exactly the kinds of engineering choices that should be examined in the actual proposal, rather than replaced with a sweeping claim about what every data centre might use.

On electricity, the Member for Johnson raised the legitimate question of demand. A large data centre requires substantial power, but that is a reason to test the project's energy plan, not a reason to outlaw it. We need to know what generation will support it, what network upgrades are necessary, who will pay for them and how existing customers will be protected.

The Territory operates outside the national electricity market. We have our own circumstances, our own generation and network requirements and potential access to new gas supply from the Beetaloo alongside renewable energy. Major new customers can help underpin investment in additional generation and infrastructure. That opportunity must be assessed responsibly with costs and obligations made clear.

The government is not arguing that every proposed data centre automatically makes electricity cheaper. We are arguing that a proposal should be judged on its actual energy arrangements. If it cannot demonstrate a workable and responsible plan, it should not receive the necessary approvals. If it can, why would this parliament prevent it from proceeding merely because it belongs to a particular industry?

On emissions, projects must comply with applicable Northern Territory environmental laws, including the *Environment Protection Act 2019* and Commonwealth requirements where triggered. On land use, proposals must address planning requirements, appropriate zoning, development consent and relevant protections for native title, cultural heritage and sacred sites.

These processes exist to distinguish acceptable proposals from unacceptable ones. They are not a promise that every application will be approved. They are a means of testing evidence, imposing conditions and refusing projects that do not meet the requirements.

The Member for Johnston's motions treat that distinction as irrelevant. It would stop a responsible proposal and an irresponsible proposal alike. That is the central absurdity of this moratorium.

If the Member for Johnston believes a particular law is inadequate, she should identify the gap. If she believes a regulator needs more information, she should explain what is missing. If she wants stronger disclosure of water use, electricity demand or emissions, let us debate the specific requirements. A blanket prohibition is not a substitute for making a case.

The Territory does not impose an industry-wide moratorium every time and mine; agricultural development, industrial facility or major energy user is proposed. We assess projects according to their impacts. Data centres should be no exception; neither a free pass nor a special ban.

The Member for Johnston also pointed to public concern and I respect the right of Territorians to ask questions about developments in their communities. They deserve straightforward answers about water, energy, land, environmental impacts and the terms on which public infrastructure might be used. But public concern is not resolved by indefinitely suspending every project. It is resolved by transparent assessment, meaningful consultation and decisions that can be explained and defended. A moratorium may make a good headline. It does not tell a family what a proposed facility would use, where its power would come from or what safeguards would apply.

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There is also confusion about commercial confidentiality. Early discussions with investors can involve commercially sensitive information. That is normal in major investment negotiations. It does not mean a proponent is exempt from the information consultation required by the relevant statutory approval processes. We should not confuse confidential preliminary discussions with permission to build without scrutiny.

Now consider what we would be giving up. A data centre is not simply a windowless building full of computers. During construction, it can support electricians, engineers, civil contractors, plumbers, telecommunication specialists, security providers and local suppliers. Once operating, it requires skilled technicians, maintenance, network support, and cybersecurity expertise. The scale of the project employment varies by project, and we should be candid about that, but dismissing the jobs entirely ignores the wider supply chain and the opportunity to build specialist skills in the Territory.

Darwin's existing next DC facility involved an investment of around $80m. That is a reminder that digital infrastructure is physical infrastructure, real capital, real construction and real services. Larger proposals would need to stand on their own merits, but they should at least have the chance to make their case.

There is a broader strategic opportunity as well. The Territory is geographically positioned to connect Australia with Asian markets. The Darwin–Jakarta–Singapore Cable is already part of that story. Further subsea and long-haul fibre investment, including proposed connections involving Darwin can strengthen our role as a digital gateway. Cables and connectivity alone are not the whole industry. The value grows when businesses can also locate computing, storage and related services here. If we advertise that data centres are unwelcome, we undermine the commercial case for the very digital infrastructure we have worked to attract.

Some members say the jobs are too few, or that industry uses too much energy, or that benefits will flow elsewhere. Those are arguments for rigorous evaluation of each investment proposition. How much local employment will be created? What training will be provided? What power and water will be needed? What costs fall on the proponent? What benefits remain in the Territory? These are practical questions. An indefinite ban answers none of them.

There is a striking hypocrisy in the Member for Johnston's position. On 11 August she promoted her community meeting about the dangers of data centres on Facebook, a platform that depends on data centres to operate. Every post, share, comment relied on the very infrastructure she now wants the Territory to put on hold.

Meta, the company behind Facebook, is itself a major investor in data centre infrastructure. The campaign against data centres was conducted using data centres.

That is not limited to Facebook—email, banking, online government services, cloud storage, AI tools increasingly used to support officers that depend on data centres. The Member for Johnston is entitled to question any project, but she cannot credibly present the technology as essential to her own communications while insisting that the Territory must shut the door on the investment, construction work and skilled jobs involved in providing it.

In effect, her position is, 'We will use the services but let Queensland, Singapore or Indonesia host the infrastructure and collect the economic benefits.' That is not a coherent economic policy; it is outsourcing the opportunity while continuing to enjoy the product.

The same applies to data sovereignty. Building a facility here does not automatically guarantee that Territory data will be stored here or that every privacy and security concern is solved. Those questions depend on contracts, governance, security standards and applicable law. A blanket moratorium certainly does not create local hosting capacity; it makes it harder to develop that option in the future.

This is precisely why the government's approach is to engage with the industry, understand its requirements and insist on proper assessment. We can pursue national consistency on matters such as water, locations, security and data sovereignty, while recognising the Territory's distinct energy and economic circumstances.

The Member for Johnston would have us do the reverse: withdraw from consideration now, undertake an open-ended inquiry and hope that serious investors will be waiting when we finally reopen the door. That is not a plan for managing growth; it is a plan for postponing decisions until the opportunity has passed.

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The government's position is straightforward. We will not approve projects merely because they promise investment. We will not ignore concerns about water, electricity, emissions or land. We will require proponents to meet the law, provide evidence and satisfy the relevant decision-makers. Where a proposal cannot meet those standards, it should not proceed, but we will not tell an entire industry that it is forbidden to even make its case.

The choice before the Assembly is not between an unregulated data centre boom and a moratorium. That is a false choice. The real choice is between a case-by-case system of assessment with enforceable safeguards and a sweeping freeze that takes no account of individual projects.

A moratorium would not generate another litre of water. It would not add a megawatt of electricity, reduce the demand for services or strengthen a single environmental condition. What it would do is stop proposals, delay investment, unsettle suppliers and signal to the world that the Northern Territory is prepared to close its doors before it has even examined the evidence.

Territorians deserve better than that. They deserve both environmental safeguards and economic ambition. They deserve an honest examination of projects, not an automatic yes or no. We have the opportunity to attract investment, build infrastructure, develop skills, and create jobs while holding proponents to the standards this community expects. We should be confident enough in our laws and institutions to test those opportunities properly.

A moratorium is the wrong instrument at the wrong time, aimed at the wrong problem. It replaces scrutiny with paralysis and calls that caution. This government will assess proposals on their merits. We will protect the Territory' interests and we will not surrender future investment in jobs to other jurisdictions because this House chose a blanket ban over proper decision-making.

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, before calling the next member in this debate, I note the Assembly is now considering both the Member for Johnston's motion and now the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations' amendment. When no more members rise to speak, I will put the question on the amendment. I will then call for any other members who have not spoken to the motion and then the Member for Johnston in reply.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Johnston for bringing this important motion to the House because as we are hearing more and more, community members across the Northern Territory are very interested and concerned. Some are very supportive; some are very against what is now becoming a new technology and new development opportunity in the Northern Territory.

I listened to the Member for Johnston's motion. I have a further amendment that I will circulate which will be amending the Member for Port Darwin's amendment. That will come around shortly.

I move an amendment to the amendment by omitting all words and inserting the following:

Call on the CLP government to

1. implement a moratorium on hyperscale data centre developments in the Northern Territory until 1 July 2027

2. commission an independent review into hyperscale data centre developments across the Northern Territory, including the economic, social, environmental and strategic impacts, use of the Territory, resources and long-term benefits to Territorians

3. ensure the independent review includes public hearings in all major centres across the Northern Territory, including the Darwin Rural Area, to provide Territorians, affected communities, industry representatives and other stakeholders with an opportunity to raise concerns, provide evidence and contribute to the review

4. publicly release the findings and recommendations of the review before the moratorium expires.

The reason I am putting this amendment to the motion and amending the Member for Port Darwin's amendment is because we have seen yet again an extraordinary show of arrogance by the CLP government in ignoring that very important community sentiment here in the Northern Territory. It is arrogance and is mixed in a bit with incompetence, depending on which minister it is.

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In terms of listening to the concerns of the community, we are not hearing that the CLP government is acknowledging those very important concerns, which is why the Member for Johnson has brought forward her motion. Territorians have raised those very reasonable concerns about major development that could have significant and long-lasting consequences across the Northern Territory. The CLP's response is to simply dismiss those concerns, bury its head in the sand and refuse to engage in proper debate. That is not just a once off. That is becoming its behaviour and pattern time and time again.

This is not leadership or responsible government. It is a lazy approach to governing where press releases take the place of policy, announcements take the place of scrutiny and political arrogance takes place of proper planning.

We heard the Chief Minister and her colleagues speaking on some of these issues and literally dismissing, just swatting away of the concerns of Territory community because they have decided that something good for the Territory should be the way that they say it should be and that Territorians should just simply accept it. Asking questions is somehow opposing development, wanting proper safeguards for our environment is somehow being anti-business, that Territorians should be grateful for whatever deals the government negotiates for them behind closed doors.

That is not how responsible government should work when we are talking about development that could consume extraordinary amounts of electricity, extract billions of litres of groundwater, clear thousands of hectares of land and fundamentally change the future of our economy. It is entirely reasonable that Territorians expect their government—whatever political stripes the government has—to have done its homework. That is simply not the case here.

Unfortunately we see time and time again the CLP government appears more interested in getting photographs taken with an announcement than actually answering reasonable questions from our Territory community that come after that big glossy announcement, which makes it seem even more difficult to stomach the CLP's rot that they are serving up for people to consume.

What makes this particularly concerning is that we have seen this approach before; history is repeating itself. Some of the CLP like to think that they have got history lessons behind their books, but we know that all they want to do is rewrite history—something eerily familiar about the CLP's approach to the hyper scale data centres. It does remind us of the approach that was taken by the former CLP government about hydraulic fracking. Under the former CLP government, the industry was allowed to progress without comprehensive independent scientific inquiry that Territory Labor subsequently established in its time in government. The CLP maintained that at the time existing regulation arrangements could manage the industry, and it was Territory Labor that introduced the moratorium and commissioned an independent scientific inquiry, which was led by Justice Rachel Pepper to properly examine environmental, social and economic risks and what happened. Well, after more than 15 months of investigation, 52 community forums, 151 public hearings and more than 1,200 submissions, Justice Pepper's inquiry delivered 135 recommendations to strengthen the regulatory framework and manage the risk associated with the hydraulic fracking industry.

One hundred and thirty-five recommendations were implemented under the former Territory Labor government and that is how much work was required to establish a comprehensive framework for an industry that the CLP had previously just said off you go and go and proceed without any changes to regulation and it was left to Territory Labor to do that work. It was Territory Labor that put science first, listened to community and the sentiment, established the framework necessary for informed decisions about the future of onshore gas industry.

The lesson should be obvious. When an emerging industry presents significant opportunities but also significant risks, governments here in the Territory have a responsibility to properly understand and articulate those risks before making irreversible decisions. Instead, the CLP seems determined to repeat the mistakes of the past, not learning from any of their predecessors, today the CLP are telling us their existing framework is sufficient for hyperscale data centres, that there is no need for an independent review, that we should just trust the CLP government to get it right. Unfortunately, we have heard it all before and quite frankly, the CLP government has given Territorians very little reason to believe that it understands the scale and the complexity of the new industry and it is so enthusiastically promoting without answering those very reasonable questions.

Territory Labor is not opposed to technology, innovation or economic development. Data centres are already an important part of our economy. They support banking, telecommunications, healthcare, emergency services, and the digital infrastructure that all of us increasingly rely upon, but there is an enormous difference between an existing data facility and the hyperscale data developments that are being proposed by the CLP

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government for the Northern Territory. We are talking about projects with electricity requirements comparable to major power stations. We are talking about industrial developments with substantial water requirements, significant land footprints, and potentially enormous greenhouse gas emissions, and if the CLP members mumbling on the other side even knew that I doubt that they would be out there getting their little happy snaps without answers to those important questions.

We cannot simply assume that a regulatory framework design for conventional industry industrial developments is automatically sufficient for the projects of this size and magnitude and scale of the Northern Territory, and now we have evidence from the Northern Territory's own independent environmental regulator, demonstrating just how many questions remain unanswered.

Since Parliament last debated data centres in August this year, the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority has released its decision on Project Ares.

I seek leave to table the NTEPA decision.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: This is a proposed one-gigawatt hyperscale data centre development at Murranji Station in the Barkly. The proposal includes gas-fired generation of up to approximately 1,038 megawatts and a substantial solar farm and battery storage infrastructure. It also proposes extracting up to four gigalitres of groundwater every year from the Wiso Basin. It has a primarily disturbance footprint up to 19,150 hectares.

These are extraordinary figures. They demonstrate the scale and size of the developments we are discussing and the importance of understanding the consequences and impact on the Territory.

On 15 September, the NTEPA determined that Project Ares required assessment through an environmental impact statement. The EPA identified the potential for a significant impacts across 10 environmental factors. They are all in the report; it is only 7 pages, so I encourage all the CLP members to read it if they have not heard of it. These included landforms, terrestrial ecosystems, hydraulic processes, inland water quality, aquatic ecosystems, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, community impacts and cultural heritage. The EPA raise serious questions in its report about whether the proposed groundwater extraction would be sustainable. It identified uncertainty about cumulative impacts on groundwater resources and the potential consequences for Newcastle Waters and Lake Wood.

The report also identified the need for further investigation into threatened species, habitat loss and extensive vegetation clearing. It raised questions about greenhouse gas emissions associated with proposed gas-fired generation and the lack of sufficient detail about how and when the project would transition towards renewable energy. Importantly, it identified shortcomings in consultation with communities, including Aboriginal communities, and insufficient information about social and cultural impacts.

Perhaps the most significant finding was the EPA’s conclusion that it did not have sufficient information to be confident that many of the potential impacts had been adequately predicted. It is there in black and white—or colour if you are lucky enough to have a colour printer—for all members of the House to read for anyone interested in looking up that report.

It also had a low level of confidence in the proposed measures to manage those impacts. That is the independent environmental regulator telling all of us that the important questions for that specific project remain unanswered.

Let us be clear about something: the EPA has not concluded that the project must be rejected. It has concluded that more information, more assessment and more community engagement are necessary. That is precisely the kind of evidence-based approach that Territory Labor is calling for.

The EPA’s assessment of an individual project is not a substitute for examining whether the Territory’s overall regulatory framework is fit for an entire emerging industry. It does not answer every question about culminative electricity demand across multiple proposed projects, or establish a Territory-wide strategy for water use, industrial land allocation, electricity infrastructure or community benefits. It does not resolve whether current laws provide the transparency and safeguards appropriate for developments of this extraordinary size, scale and magnitude.

That is why we need to call for that independent review and inquiry. The need for the review is not simply something being raised by environmental organisations. A wide range of stakeholders, including business

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representatives, engineers, unions, digital health professionals and industry organisations have identified important questions about how data centres should and could be regulated

The Property Council of Australia has called for a coordinated planning approach that considers industrial land, electricity, water, transport infrastructure and competing land uses. Data Centres Australia, the industry's peak body, has acknowledged that more work is needed on strategic planning, particularly to manage the culminative impacts of data centre developments.

The Electrical Trades Union has raised important questions about electrical demand, the network reliability, workforce capacity and the need to ensure that these projects genuinely support training and apprenticeships. Professionals Australia has also raised concerns about separating temporary construction jobs from long-term operational employment and ensuring that Australia develops genuine domestic technical expertise in this industry.

The Australasian Institute of Digital Health has also called for transparent reporting of energy and water use, proper community consultation and stronger consideration of data sovereignty and cybersecurity. The Environmental Defenders office has called for stronger safeguards in relation to environmental impacts, water use, public reporting and community participation.

These organisations do not all agree on what the final regulatory framework should look like. Some are enthusiastic supporters of data centre investment, others are deeply concerned about any of the environmental consequences. But that is exactly the reason why an independent review and inquiry is necessary. We need to ensure that we bring all of these perspectives together, examine all the evidence and determine what safeguards are appropriate for the Northern Territory.

We believe that the CLP government should be asking some very basic questions. Who will pay for any additional electricity infrastructure? How will we ensure households and small businesses do not end up carrying the cost of these enormous developments? What safeguards will protect our groundwater resources? How will human and environmental impacts be assessed when several developments are proposed within the same one region? How we ensure that traditional owners, custodians and affected communities are properly consulted?

What obligations will builders have to employ Territorians, train apprentices and invest in our local economy? What protections will apply to data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and strategically important infrastructure? Perhaps most importantly, what will Territorians actually receive in return for allowing these developments to access our land and our natural resources? These are not unreasonable questions. They are fundamental questions any competent government should be asking and answering. Yet rather than leading that discussion, the CLP appears determined to dismiss the Territorians who are raising these questions.

If the Chief Minister needs an example of what responsible governments are doing, she only needs to look at what has happened elsewhere in Australia. In August, the New South Wales Government announced a dedicated data centre policy framework. It established expectations covering environmental performance, energy and water infrastructure, community benefits, and training and jobs. It is also progressing reforms designed to ensure data centre operators contribute to electricity network upgrades they require, rather than transferring these costs to ordinary consumers.

New South Wales is also commissioned for a review of water pricing to consider how the full cost of supplying data centres should be recovered. In September the Victorian Government announced a Sustainable Data Centre Action Plan. Victoria has set out requirements for the new data centres to match electricity demand with additional renewable generation and storage, use recycled or non-drinking water for cooling, contribute to local communities and comply with stronger planning expectations.

Both governments recognise the economic opportunities, but both want to attract the opportunity for investment. Both also recognise that major new industries require clear rules. They are establishing expectations about what investors must contribute and how communities will be protected, and they are doing this while continuing the work with the Commonwealth.

Meanwhile, what is the CLP doing? In its own submission to the federal Senate inquiry, the Northern Territory the Northern Territory Government argues that existing arrangements can accommodate data centres without the need for any additional Territory-specific approval framework. This is an extraordinary position for a government of the Northern Territory that spends so much time talking about the Territory's unique circumstances.

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On the one hand the Chief Minister is telling us the Northern Territory is different to the eastern states. Yes, we have different electricity systems, different water resources, different geography, different climate conditions, different infrastructure challenges, different economic opportunities. On that point, I agree with the Chief Minister and I believe she is right, but if the Territory is so different, why on the other hand is the Chief Minister and her CLP government refusing to undertake the work necessary to develop regulatory response specifically designed for our Northern Territory context? Why is the CLP content with relying on those existing laws and whatever national standards eventually emerge down the track? Why is the CLP government leaving the difficult questions to Canberra while other jurisdictions are proactive in developing their own policies?

A national framework will have an important role in establishing minimum standards, but a framework design around electricity markets, infrastructure and populations centres of the eastern states cannot simply be assumed to address every issue that is facing the Northern Territory. We need to determine what is appropriate for our unique circumstances.

A point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing order 43, I seek an extension of time to finish my remarks.

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO: I appreciate it; this is a very important topic.

The answer is not to reject those national standards. The answer is to ensure the Territory has done its own work, that we can participate in those national discussions from a position of strength and integrity. If the Chief Minister refuses to develop a Territory-specific position, she is effectively surrendering our ability in the Northern Territory to shape our own rules that will govern one of the largest potential new industries in our economy.

The CLP talks endlessly about standing up for the Territory. Standing up for the Territory means more than just issuing statements and rubbishing Canberra. It means doing the work required for governing the Northern Territory in multiple facets, departments and topics. It means doing the work to establish our own policy priorities, understanding the risks in each of those areas and ensuring that the national decisions reflect the Territory circumstances. That is what true leadership of a government should look like.

I also want to address the proposal at Weddell in the Darwin rural area. This is a particularly important example of why greater transparency and genuine public consultation are necessary. The CLP government has entered a 12-month exclusive do-not-deal arrangement with Beetaloo Digital over approximately 185 hectares of government land. That is a proposal for a major integrated data centre, gas-fired electricity generation development. It is potentially one of the largest industrial developments ever contemplated in the Darwin rural area. The CLP government has moved to reserve public land for this proponent before demonstrating that it has an industry specific regulatory framework. We know that the Deputy Chief minister has publicly promoted the proposal.

These circumstances only reinforce the importance of transparency in public confidence in decisions that are being made. It has been reported the conflict of interest that is attached to the deputy Chief minister; the Member for Nelson and his sister-in-law, who is conducting some of that work as part of the work of the proponent.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 233; I remind members that they need to exercise the valuable right of freedom of speech in a responsible manner. In my view, this contravenes the damage that can be done by making allegations. Unfounded allegations made in the Assembly is inappropriate.

Madam SPEAKER: I think we all need to be reminded of sensitive issues regarding people who do not necessarily have an opportunity in within the Chamber to defend themselves. I do believe this has been raised within the public arena, within the media. It is public information, but I would caution the member to proceed very carefully and respectfully.

Ms UIBO: That is why I said it has been reported. It is not my personal knowledge; it has been reported and is in the public domain that these concerns are out.

The CLP government should be prepared to explain the commercial terms of its arrangement. How the site was selected; what assessment would occur; and how the interests of the Territory are being protected. I

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particularly would like to know what consultation has occurred with the people living in the Darwin rural area. What engagement has occurred with nearby residents? Some of this information, we do not know.

What discussions have occurred around groundwater, air quality, industrial development, roads, noise and the impact of major gas-fired power station? What has the Member for Goyder done to ensure his constituents have a proper opportunity to understand and discuss the proposal? What has the Member for Nelson done to ensure his constituents have a proper opportunity to understand and discuss the proposal? The people who live in the rural area deserve more than just finding out through a government media release what is being contemplated in their region.

Let us be clear about what a proposed moratorium would mean. It does not mean proponents must stop doing their feasibility studies or that they cannot undertake due diligence. It does not prevent them from investigating financing arrangements, developing proposals or engaging with communities. Indeed, that is exactly the work we would like to see undertaken.

Beetaloo Digital and other prospective developers can continue investigating their proposals and speaking with affected residents or they can use that time to simply try to demonstrate how their projects would operate, how the impacts would be managed and what benefits those projects would deliver.

Our team is saying that the construction should not proceed until an independent review has examined the broader consequences of hyperscale data centre development and the adequacy of the Territory's regulatory framework. This is hardly an unreasonable position.

The amendment that I have proposed provides a practical and responsible way forward. It calls for a moratorium on hyperscale data centre development until 1 July next year, 2027, and for an urgent independent review of the economic, environmental, social and strategic impacts of such development. It also requires that the review examine the use of Territory resources and the long-term benefits to Territorians. Critically, it calls for public hearings in major centres throughout the Northern Territory, including the Darwin rural area, not just a consultation paper plonked on a government website or a meeting with industry executives behind closed doors but proper public hearings where Territorians can ask questions of experts and industry, raise their concerns and ideas, contribute to evidence and have their voices heard.

We should be listening to those communities across Darwin, the rural area, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy and, of course, the wider regional and remote parts of the Territory—anyone who is affected by such a proposal development. We should be listening to traditional owners, pastoralists, environmental organisation, workers, businesses, engineers, energy experts and the people who live near these proposed developments.

We should publicly release the reviews, findings and recommendations before the moratorium expires. I will be clear: this is not about stopping development, it is about ensuring that any development that occurs has proper oversight, clear rules and public confidence. It is about making sure we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

The CLP government has before it a clear choice. It can continue treating every reasonable question about hyperscale data centres as an attack on the economy, keep hiding behind its announcements and pretending that existing regulatory framework answers every concern that has ever been raised or it can acknowledge that this is a significant and rapidly evolving industry that any responsible government should be willing to independently examine, both the risks and the opportunities of a new industry.

There is nothing shameful about admitting that additional expertise is required, especially when we are talking about new technology and development. There is nothing anti-business about establishing clear rules and there is nothing anti-development about ensuring that Territorians are properly consulted with developments that affect them and their regions.

What is shameful is refusing to engage with those concerns just because it looks politically inconvenient. The height of arrogance is a government that believes it already knows everything and it knows best, while refusing, at the same time, to answer the important questions that Territorians have.

That was the attitude and the characteristics of the former CLP government's approach to hydraulic fracturing. We are seeing the same habits creep in under this CLP government. It took a change of government at the time, an independent inquiry and 135 recommendations to establish a stronger framework needed for the new hydraulic factoring industry in the Territory, which has the strongest regulations in Australia. The Chief Minister should have learned from that experience. Instead, we are watching history

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repeat itself. The CLP is, once again, putting its faith in the adequacy of existing laws before properly testing whether they are up to the task and fit for purpose in the Northern Territory.

The CLP can vote against scrutiny, but that does not make those questions disappear. Unfortunately, we saw that earlier with the Member for Johnston's private member's Bill. The CLP can dismiss community concerns, but that does not make those concerns unreasonable. Territory Labor believes that the future of the Territory should be shaped by evidence, proper planning and meaningful consultation with the Territorians we represent.

I commend the amended motion to the Assembly.

Ms CAHILL (Trade, Business and Asian Relations): Madam Speaker, I will speak against the amendment to the amendment.

I reiterate that I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition is under a lot of pressure. There is a fractured group of people on the other side. She is fighting for her political life at the minute, so I appreciate that she may have missed the critical components of what I said earlier, which was that of course we listen to Territorians. Of course we have to respect their concerns and of course we have to address them.

I am concerned that the Leader of the Opposition has such little faith in our public servants that they will not do the work needed on any of these projects that come before them for assessment under our legislative framework. I think, most critically, the Leader of the Opposition is saying that she is not in step with the federal Labor government and the policy position that has been accepted by National Cabinet on this issue.

National Cabinet met, and the PM and every state and territory agreed that it was important to have a nationally consistent approach. They determined not to have a moratorium, but that there should be a consistent approach to data sovereignty, border security, energy security, water usage and planning. This government, under our Chief Minister, fully subscribed to that agreement. We are determined, as are all the states and territories and the federal government, to get it right and meet the expectations of the Australian public and to deliver in this respect.

As to the claims made in relation to the recent Environment Protection Authority's report on Project Ares, quite frankly, it is nonsense. Everything that she said is nonsense. The EPA was doing its job. The responsible minister is advised by the NT EPA on an environmental approval when it needs to be reviewed. If it needs to be addressed or assessed by them, it lets the responsible minister know. If the approval is considered sufficient or needs further assessment, that is reported back. In this case, it follows the legislation and the rules; it does its job properly.

That is what it did for Project Ares. It agreed that there were environmental matters to be interrogated further—10 of them, to be exact—through an environmental impact assessment (EIS). That project will now consider and provide more information on how it will avoid or mitigate the environmental matters identified. In doing so, the community will have the ability to view and comment on the proposal as it progresses through that EIS process.

This is the system working. That is what it is designed to do. This proves that the frameworks in place already do what is required and why it is unnecessary to call for a moratorium or review—noting, of course, that the previous Labor government already did a review into data centres. It already undertook this work and decided that data centres should be progressed within the Territory. With regard to Project Ares, this is environmental regulation operating as it should, ensuring that big, complex and important projects are properly understood and significant environmental impacts are avoided or minimised.

We are fortunate in the Territory; we have an *Environment Protection Act* that is participatory, independently advised and transparent—all the things the Member for Johnston wants to happen. To circumvent the process by intervention in a statutory process is just plain wrong and misguided. It understands what environmental impact assessment is and, fundamentally, to take a separate approach undermines the authority of the Act and the independence of the NT EPA.

Data centres are inviting strong public sentiment, both for and against, and it is important that if people have concerns and views that they express them. We respect their right to do so, but we have absolute faith in the systems that currently exist to make sure that nothing occurs in our Territory that is not good for our Territory, both environmentally and economically.

I move that the question be put.

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Madam SPEAKER: For the sake of *Hansard* and the record of this debate, the question is that the question be put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 16	Noes 6
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Ms Cahill	J Davis
Mrs Carlson	Mr McGrath
Mr Charls	Mr Smelt
Mr Edgington	Ms Uibo
Mrs Finocchiaro	Mr Young
Mrs Hersey	
Mr Howe	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	
Mr Maley	
Mr O'Gallagher	
Mr Patel	
Dr Rahman	
Mr Yan	
Mrs Zio	

Motion agreed to.

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

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6	Noes 16
Mr Brown	Ms Boothby
J Davis	Ms Cahill
Mr McGrath	Mrs Carlson
Mr Paech	Mr Charls
Mr Smelt	Mr Edgington
Ms Uibo	Mrs Finocchiaro
Mr Young	Mrs Hersey
	Mr Howe
	Mr Kerle
	Mr Mackay
	Mr Maley
	Mr O'Gallagher
	Mr Patel
	Dr Rahman
	Mr Yan
	Mrs Zio

Amendment to the amendment not agreed to.

Madam SPEAKER: The question now is that the amendment be agreed to. The amendment to the motion is open for more debate if that is the wish of the Assembly because the question that the question be put applied only to the amendment to the amendment.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I thank everybody who has spoken on this important issue of hyperscale AI data centres. I particularly thank the Member for Johnston for all the work that she has done on this with her community and people across the Northern Territory and for bringing this important motion to the Assembly today.

It is disappointing that Minister Cahill did not support the Member for Arnhem's amendment which included …

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Reflection on previous votes; the Member for Daly is talking about how the previous vote went.

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Mr Young: What is the standing order? He has not said which standing order it is.

Mr MACKAY: The standing order is on the third page.

A member: It has been defeated, so you cannot talk about it.

Mr Young: She spoke about it in her first speech, which is what I am referring to.

Madam SPEAKER: This is not for open debate. Do not refer to the decision made by the Assembly in regard to previous votes. That is a standing order. Please continue, but do not refer to what has just basically happened in the Chamber in terms of the vote.

Mr YOUNG: I was giving context to the speech …

Madam SPEAKER: Absolutely give context to the speech.

Mr YOUNG: Minister Cahill spoke about this amendment, which is in my speech, so there is context to what I am saying and we will get back around to that.

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 48: Dissent from Ruling. If a member wants to dissent from a ruling, it must be submitted in writing. The Member for Daly is clearly trying to disagree with you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: I will not get into this. This is a complicated process. I agreed with the first point of order you raised; members are not meant to reflect on a vote that has taken place in the Chamber.

Member for Daly, continue with your speech without referring to that.

Mr YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the clarification.

Until I was rudely interrupted, I was stating that Minister Cahill in her speech referred to the Member for Johnston's …

Mr MACKAY: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mr YOUNG: He keeps interjecting because he does not want to hear it.

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Member for Daly.

What is your point of order, Member for Goyder?

Mr MACKAY: Standing Order 34; members must be referred to by their title of office. It is the Minister for Children and Families or the Member for Port Darwin.

Madam SPEAKER: That is true. Keep it tight and use official formal titles, please.

Mr YOUNG: The Minister for Children and Families has come in here talking about the proposed GBD that was put on earlier by the Member for Johnston. She was criticising it because it was for a moratorium for which there was no end date. What the Member for Arnhem then did was come in here and make an amendment and propose an end date. It is hypocritical of this CLP government to come in here and criticise the Member for Johnston for not having an end date on a moratorium, and yet, we propose an end date of 1 July 2027 but then this CLP government vote it down. It is completely disingenuous to come in here and have a crack at this side because there was no end date to a moratorium. We put a solution to that, and they voted against it.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Daly, please pause for a moment. Leader of Government Business, I think I know where you are going with this. You are still reflecting on a vote that has just occurred in the Assembly, and you need to refrain from that. A member may not reflect adversely on a vote of the Assembly except during debate on a motion that a vote be rescinded. You are not rescinding the vote, we are not doing that, so do not reflect on what has just happened in the chamber in terms of the vote.

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Mr YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is completely disingenuous that there was a timeline proposed and yet the CLP government do not seem to look into that. Earlier in the year, the CLP government entered a 12-month exclusive 'do not deal' arrangement with Beetaloo Digital over approximately 185 hectares of public land at Weddell for a proposed hyperscale AI data centre. This raises serious questions about the use of public land, water security, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and the long-term impacts on our environment and rural communities.

Yet residents are still unclear about some of the answers that this project could mean for the rural community, their environment and their future. Before this government commits the Territory to a development of this magnitude, what we need is transparency from this government, independent scrutiny and proper assessment of the environmental and community impacts for the rural area. That is precisely why we called for that moratorium.

The CLP government came into a 12-month exclusive do-not-deal arrangement with Beetaloo Energy Australia. The company has promoted the proposal as a potential $40bn investment, but this proposed investment figure is not guaranteed of what will be delivered or what Territorians will ultimately receive. There are important questions the government must answer. What are the commercial terms of this agreement? How was this site selected? What environmental and economic analysis support the decision? What safeguards are in place to protect the public interest?

The government grants a company exclusive rights over a substantial area of public land, so Territorians deserve to understand what they are getting in return. A headline investment figure is not enough. We need to know the likelihood of ongoing jobs, opportunities for the local area, demands of public infrastructure, and the long-term cost and benefits for Territorians. We also need to understand the environmental risks before decisions become difficult to reverse. Profits should never compromise the Berry Springs Nature Park.

As the Member for Daly, I have been holding community consultations, along with the Environmental Defenders Office, in Berry Springs and Wagait Beach to directly hear from residents about this proposed development, unlike those in the CLP government.

The message from those consultations was clear. The biggest concerns residents raised were water security, energy usage and noise pollution. These are not abstract concerns; they are about the future of the places where people live, raise their families and build their livelihoods.

Water security was one of the biggest issues raised. Residents want to know how much water this development will require, where the water will come from and what the implications could be for groundwater, local springs such as the Berry Springs Reserve, water, lands and the surrounding ecosystems. In the rural Top End, water is fundamental for our communities and environment. Groundwater supports households, agriculture and our natural ecosystems that make this region so special. We cannot treat water as an ultimate resource. The government must ensure the project's water requirements are independently assessed and the needs of existing communities and their environment are protected.

Energy consumption is another major concern. A hyperscale data centre requires enormous amounts of electricity. This proposal includes gas-fired power generation. We would need to understand its total energy requirements and its long-term environmental impacts. We must ask whether this is a responsible use of Territorians' resources and how it aligns to the government's emissions reduction objectives.

As has been reported in the media, the AI hyperscale data centre in Berry Springs is proposed to use two gigawatts of gas-fired energy. That is more than six times the peak usage of Darwin, Palmerston and Katherine together. Many Territorians have come to me to ask how Beetaloo Energy can be given this non-exclusive deal and yet their energy prices are still rising. It is not reducing the cost of living in the Northern Territory.

As those of us who live in the rural area know, we live in the rural area for a reason. It is because we value our open spaces, natural surroundings and the rural lifestyle. They deserve to know what continuous industrial operations, cooling equipment and large-scale power generation could mean for the noise levels in their community, the air quality and the impacts on nearby wildlife. These impacts on the Berry Springs community must be assessed independently, including the cumulative effects of construction and ongoing operations, if this is to go ahead. Residents are not simply opposing development; they are asking legitimate questions about what this proposal could mean for their homes, environment and future.

I ask the Deputy Chief Minister and the Member for Goyder what meaningful engagement has occurred with rural residents about the water, air quality, noise, roads, land use and local amenity. Have you guys held

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public hearings with your constituents? I can tell you that when this was announced on 22 July, I had many constituents from the Nelson and Goyder electorates come to my office to raise the concerns that many people living in the Berry Springs area have in regard to water usage, energy usage, noise pollution and the environmental and community impacts that this development will have on our community. We have a so-called CLP rural member team over there who are trying to restore the rural lifestyle, but they fail to listen to their own constituents.

As I have said, residents are not simply opposing this development; they are asking legitimate questions about what this proposal could mean for their homes, the environment in their future. What the residents have actually been told and how their concerns influence the government's approach—the people of Berry Springs, Wagait and the wider rural region should not have to accept uncertainty about their water, their environment or the quality of their life simply because the CLP government is keen to attract major investments. I have heard those concerns firsthand, and I will continue to advocate for my constituencies.

There are also legitimate questions about transparency surrounding this proposal. As the ABC reported in September, the Deputy Chief Minister's sister-in-law works in a strategic engagement role for Beetaloo Digital. Mr Maley has stated that he made the required declarations under the ministerial code requirements, and the Chief Minister backed that up. I am not here to make allegations of any wrongdoing; I am just raising an issue in regard to public confidence.

When a senior minister promotes a major project involving a company that employs a close family member—his sister-in-law—Territorians are entitled to expect transparency about the relationship and the safeguard surrounding that decision-making. The public should also be able to understand what declarations were made, how potential conflicts were managed and who was responsible for those decisions.

Following the rules is important, but so is public confidence that decisions involve public land and private investments are made in the public interest. The CLP government should support transparent processes that allow these questions to be answered openly.

I return to the Deputy Chief Minister's role as a Member for Nelson. He speaks about backing the rural area, but backing the rural community means more than promoting investment and talking about economic opportunity. It means listening when residents raise concerns about the environment, their water, their homes and their way of life, not selling them out like the Deputy Chief Minister has done. It means standing up for those communities when major developments are proposed in their backyards.

He has completely gone missing on the concerns raised by many people living in the rural area. He has completely gone into hiding when it comes to this proposed hyperscale AI data centre. So has the Member for Goyder; he has been completely hidden away from this. I hope he gets up and speaks on this issue and lets his constituents know that he supports his AI hyperscale data centre proposed in Berry Springs.

It is disappointing that the CLP government are continuing to go ahead and not listen to the constituents of Berry Springs and the rural area and forge ahead with this proposed development of an AI hyperscale data centre, which will have huge implications for the people of the rural area.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I support responsible investment in data centres, and I support the motion put forward by the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations. I do not support the call for blanket moratorium on their development; I reject it.

What really needs to be said here and needs to be clarified is that this has been an important discussion at National Cabinet level. There is nothing higher in this country than National Cabinet; that is as high as it gets. There has been an agreement at National Cabinet between the Prime Minister and all state and territory leaders on data centres and AI. That agreement is for a nationally consistent approach to our data sovereignty, security, water use and planning. As a government, we have subscribed to that along with every other government in the country.

Some of those governments are Labor governments, including the federal government. Does Territory Labor not agree with the federal Labor government? Does it not agree with the other state and territory Labor governments? That is what it sounds like to me. Territory Labor wants to push ahead with a moratorium that has not been agreed to by National Cabinet. National Cabinet said that we should not do that, but Territory Labor obviously might know better than the federal Labor government—so it seems. What has been proposed by Labor, goes against its federal Labor counterparts.

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Every state, territory and National Cabinet have reached a consensus on the way forward for data centres and hyperscale data centres across the country. We need a national approach. If we all go at it piecemeal we will have serious issues.

What we got, what the Chief Minister was able to negotiate, was a specific piece regarding Beetaloo gas being able to power data centres. We know that there was discussion about how renewables would play a part in data centres. As we are not connected to the national electricity grid, we are unique in that respect. We will have plenty of gas, and the Chief Minister reached an excellent agreement about how we can power data centres.

I will now talk about what data centres mean to the Territory. This is not a debate simply about buildings filled with computers; it is about whether the Northern Territory intends to participate in one of the largest waves of global infrastructure investment underway. It is about whether we will use our natural advantages, energy resources, land, proximity to Asia, telecommunications links and workforce to establish a new industry. I have said publicly many times that it is about whether the gas from the Beetaloo Sub-basin will merely pass through the Territory on its way to southern markets or whether we will use some of that gas here to create a local industry, employment and long-term economic value.

Supporting data centre investment does not mean approving every proposal. That is something those opposite do not seem to understand. Yes, there is a 'do not deal' proposal on a piece of land. That is all it is—a 'do not deal' approach. There are no agreements. We have not greenlighted anything. It is just an agreement not to deal on that piece of land for 12 months. It does not say that we will give carte blanche for a business to develop that. It is just that we will not deal on that piece of land for 12 months while the proponents determine whether it is viable economically. If it is, and they want to proceed, the due diligence will take place.

It does not mean abandoning environmental assessments; giving developers unrestricted access to water, power or land; and transferring costs and risk to Territory households. That is something we would never do. It means assessing credible projects properly, imposing enforceable conditions and allowing projects that meet our standards to proceed.

A blanket moratorium is different. A moratorium does not improve assessments; it just stops assessments. It tells investors that regardless of the merits of their proposal, safeguards or the benefits they may bring, the Northern Territory is closed for business until further notice. Labor did this with the Beetaloo when it put on a moratorium. Look where that has put us economically. That would be a catastrophic mistake.

Demand for computing capacity is growing rapidly. Artificial intelligence, cloud services, cybersecurity, financial services, medical researchers, government systems, Defence capability and ordinary online services all depend on physical data infrastructure. Every email stored in the cloud, electronic medical record, banking transaction and artificial intelligence application ultimately relies on a data centre somewhere. The question is: where will those facilities be built, where will their energy be produced and which communities will receive the investment and economic benefits? If the Northern Territory declares a moratorium, global demand, of course, will not disappear. The projects and computing workload will not disappear. The investment will simply go somewhere else. We will continue to use digital services while surrendering the opportunity to host the infrastructure and capture its value. Why should that opportunity be denied to Territorians?

This is not a development strategy, it is economic self-exclusion. The Territory has several general competitive advantages. We are close to those Asian markets and connected through those subsea and terrestrial telecommunications cables. We have land suitable for carefully planned infrastructure. We have access to natural gas and the potential for large-scale solar resources and battery storage.

Most importantly, there is the opportunity to construct purpose-built energy systems around major industrial customers rather than trying to force every project into an already constrained urban electricity grid. That is our natural advantage.

These advantages are why a number of data centre developers are considering the Northern Territory. They are also why the Commonwealth understands that the Territory's position and has agreed to develop data centres primarily using thermal generation. The Weddell proposal being advanced by Beetaloo Digital involves a possible hyperscale computing precinct. The proponent has spoken of a potential investment of up to $40bn.

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They are the proponent's estimates but they are not guaranteed outcomes. The proposal still requires feasibility work, customers, finance, infrastructure and regulatory approvals. We have spoken about project areas as well. It is a proposed one gigawatt hyperscale data centre on Murranji Station in the Barkly region, approximately 52 kilometres north-west of Elliott. The proposal includes data centre infrastructure, solar generation, battery storage and gas-fired generation.

The proponent must provide the evidence about environmental risks, water emissions, biodiversity, cumulative impacts, rehabilitation and project management. This is what the process looks like—a good robust process. Of course, the interest in these projects is real. Due process will be followed as these projects develop.

The economic benefits are substantial but we should describe them openly and honestly. Data centres are highly capital intensive and their greatest direct employment impact normally occurs during construction. We should not pretend that a completed data centre will employ the same number of people as a labour-intensive manufacturing facility. It is equally misleading to suggest that permanent jobs inside the data halls are the only economic benefit.

A major data centre precinct requires civil works, structural steel, electrical, mechanical plant, telecommunications, roads, pipelines, accommodation, logistics and security. It employs engineers, traders, equipment operators, project managers, environmental specialists and construction workers. Of course, once operating, it requires network and cybersecurity personnel, facilities' managers, technicians, control room operators, security and specialist maintenance.

A one gigawatt facility is not a suburban office building with a large power bill, it is major industrial infrastructure. With its own generation, storage, cooling and telecommunications, such a project creates work across the energy, construction and digital sectors. In the Territory that scale can materially influence investment, employment, payroll tax, confidence and population growth. The potential construction investment could run into many billions of dollars. Even if only some proposals reach final investment decisions, they could materially expand the Territory's private sector capital base.

The benefits also extend beyond a head count at the front gate. Large industrial customers create demand for new energy production, and that underpins pipelines and generation assets, encourages telecommunications investment and strengthens the business case for technical training. The resulting telecommunications can support Defence, government, mining, remote health and education, while energy infrastructure can assist mineral processing, advanced manufacturing and fertiliser production. A major project has direct effects, but it also creates capability, infrastructure and demand extending well beyond the project itself.

One of the strongest arguments for a data centre developed in the Territory is to use Beetaloo gas. For years, Territorians have heard about the Beetaloo resource and its potential to supply domestic and international markets. Our ambition should extend beyond extraction and export; we should convert that resource into value added activity in the Territory. A large-scale data centre creates substantial long-term domestic customers for Territory gas. That demand can support an investment in wells, gathering systems, pipelines and generation providing producers with greater certainty, generate royalties and economic activity and create jobs across the Barkly, along the infrastructure corridor and greater Darwin. It can convert a Territory resource into a Territory industry. The producer receives a long-term domestic market; the data centre receives reliable firming energy and the Territory gains investment in energy and digital services.

Project areas, for example, proposes and integrated system involving solar battery storage and gas-fired generation. The Weddell concept similarly contemplates gas-fired generation combined with renewable energy and cooling technologies. The Beetaloo Digital has indicated potential requirement of up to 200 terajoules of gas a day for each gigawatt of generation and that demonstrates the opportunity and need for rigorous assessment, but these are matters to be examined through commercial and regulatory processes. They are not reasons to prohibit examination of a proposal altogether, which is what is being put forward here today.

One concerned raised is that large data centres could place pressure on the Territory electricity system and increase household prices. That concern does not fit the way these proposals are being developed. The data centres are proposed as standalone facilities generating their own power and may, in some circumstances, support broader generator capacity and support Territory customers.

Power consumption and grid stability are legitimate concerns elsewhere, but the Territory context is different. What happens down south in their grid does not fit our system. Where practical, they should strengthen rather

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than weaken the Territory's broader energy system. Our circumstances are different to those in Sydney or Melbourne. We are not proposing to connect an enormous new load to a congested national electricity market transmission system and hope that someone else builds enough generation. The Territory opportunity is to co-locate computing demand with new energy production, including Beetaloo gas and large-scale solar and batteries, and that approach can isolate financial risks from ordinary consumers while unlocking private investment in new generation.

There has been lots of discussions about water, and that is where the scaremongering begins. Water use concerns must be assessed in an appropriate manner and context. Some data centres use significant volumes of water for cooling, and no government in a dry jurisdiction should treat water as unlimited or free. However, use varies substantially with cooling technology, climate, facility design and operating models. Air-cooled, closed-loop and hybrid systems can reduce direct consumption, while recycled lower quality water may be suitable for some industrial purposes. The task of government is to require proponents to disclose what technologies they will use, how much water they will require, where it will come from and what impact extraction it will have, and we have due process to do that.

A moratorium provides none of that information. It does not improve water science, establish sustainable extraction limits or identify better cooling technology; it simply stops the projects, including those capable of demonstrating very low water use. Of course, there are arguments around gas power data centres and emissions, but the technology is changing. The gas coming from the Beetaloo was extremely low carbon, and the new generating technology in gas turbines produces very low emissions, but an honest emissions debate must be considered.

That does not automatically justify putting a moratorium on that development. A moratorium can shift emissions across a border without reducing them, because these things will go ahead whether they happen in the Territory or not. A better outcome is to attract projects demonstrating high efficiency, modern gas generation, strong controls, renewable supply and transparent reporting.

The real question should be: what standards must a project meet? Moratorium argument instead asks: how do we prevent any project from being considered? They are two different approaches.

We should be honest about the political campaign behind the proposed moratorium. Certain activists and sections of the community are not asking reasonable questions about water, energy or environmental regulation. Reasonable questions deserve reasonable answers. What we are seeing from some quarters is a deliberate campaign to frighten Territorians. Every proposal is described as an environmental catastrophe before assessment is even complete. Every use of gas is presented as reckless, regardless of the use of technology, safeguards or the role of renewable energy. The largest possible figures are repeated as immediate and inevitable, while the economic benefit, construction activity, regional investment and national security advantages are dismissed or ignored. That is not balanced scrutiny; that is fearmongering.

The formula is familiar: you take the worst possible scenario, present that as the expected outcome and assume every regulator and condition will fail and ignore possible safeguards and demand that the project be stopped before the evidence is examined. That is opposition by default. They demand an independent process, although they appear unwilling to accept that process unless it produces their preferred political outcome. That is not evidence-based decision-making. We should listen to community concerns but not allow fear to replace facts.

There is also a striking contradiction at the centre of the campaign. Many of the people demanding a moratorium are intensive users of the very digital infrastructure that they oppose. They use cloud storage, online meetings, streaming services, social media, operate campaign databases, circulate online petitions and undoubtedly use artificial intelligence tools. These people expect government services, hospitals, banks, universities and emergency services to remain securely connected around the clock. All those services rely on data centres. The campaign against data centres is somewhat ironically, as the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations said, is being done by AI and data centres. The position appears to be that digital capability is essential, provided the physical infrastructure supporting it is built in someone else's backyard. People would like the cloud, but not the building in which the cloud lives. They want AI, online services and instant access to information, but they do not want to accept responsibility for the land, energy, cables, cooling systems and other infrastructure required to provide these services. That is NIMBY politics.

It is easy to pretend that data floats harmlessly in the sky. The term 'cloud' is useful marketing in some respects, but it obscures the physical reality that data is stored and processed in buildings requiring land, power, cooling, infrastructure and a skilled workforce. If Territorians want secure digital services, those facilities must exist somewhere. The question is whether we build them under our laws, with our

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environmental standards and using our workers or outsource more of our infrastructure and become increasingly dependent on overseas facilities.

It is easy for activists in Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra to tell Territorians to reject investment. They do not have to explain where replacement private sector jobs will come from, how the Territory will diversify its economy and fund services from a narrow revenue base or why Territory gas should be exported south while Territorians are prevented from using it to establish industries here.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr YAN: I have a document produced by Labor's then Chief Minister Michael Gunner on 29 March 2022. It is titled, Data Centres Turning Darwin into Digital Hub. These are quotes from Chief Minister Michael Gunner:

> *NextDC's investment cements Darwin as Northern Australia's most advanced digital economy, and this will open the door to new opportunities for future investment in cloud-based computing services for advanced manufacturing.*

The document also states:

> *NextDC have also secured a first right of refusal over our second Darwin site (D2) that will provide for the long-term development of a hyperscale campus designed to serve the emerging Asia South region connected to Darwin by the new international submarine cable networks.*

A hyperscale campus—funny that. A previous Chief Minister, Mr Michael Gunner, put that up there.

Labor gave NEXTDC a first right of refusal over its second site—a hyperscale site. Again, we see the flip-flop from Labor. Labor members previously supported it and now they decided they do not support it. They do not know which sock to put on first or which side of bed to get out on. They probably have on odd socks and are wearing them with their flipflops.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: We might have a little quiet now so that I can listen to the Member for Namatjira's speech.

Mr YAN: In all seriousness, none of this means that community concerns should be ignored. People have the right to ask about water emissions, noise, land use, cultural heritage, public subsidies and electricity prices. Any government has a responsibility to answer those questions with evidence. However, legitimate community engagement should not be confused with campaigning designed to make people frightened of an entire industry; nor should the existence of opposition be treated as proof that a project is unacceptable. The moratorium campaign assumes that Territorians cannot be trusted to understand complex proposals and that our regulatory institutions cannot be trusted to assess them.

I reject all those propositions. Territorians are capable of weighing economic opportunities against environmental risks. Our regulators are capable of demanding further information, imposing conditions or recommending against projects that fail to meet the required standards.

The activists offer a false choice between accepting projects without scrutiny and banning them before assessment. Our position is more responsible: assess the evidence; impose conditions; and approve only those projects that demonstrate a clear net benefit to the Territory. The Territory already has environmental, planning, water, land access, heritage and development approval processes and they are robust. Water extraction requires licensing and scientific assessment. Sacred sites and cultural heritage also must be considered. Land tenure and planning approvals must be resolved. Major projects must secure finance and customers before their construction proceeds.

The proper response is to identify and fix any gaps. If data centres require project-specific guidelines, develop them. If government support is requested, disclose it and test the public benefit. If local procurement and training commitments are expected, negotiate and measure them. None of that requires a moratorium. A government should be able to welcome investment while scrutinising proposals. We should be able to support development while protecting water, use gas while expanding renewable energy and create jobs while

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enforcing environmental standards. The suggestion that the only choices are uncontrolled, rushed or a moratorium is false.

There is also a national interest dimension. Australia increasingly depends on secure digital infrastructure for government, Defence, health, transport and communications. We should not become entirely dependent on overseas facilities beyond our control. The Territory strategic position, Defence presence and proximity to the Indo-Pacific make northern computing infrastructure a valuable asset to national resilience, Defence supply chains, research, emergency management and government services.

Combined with subsea cables, terrestrial fibre, energy and secure land, it can make Darwin more than a capable landing point; it can make Darwin a place where data is processed, secured and turned into economic value. Darwin infrastructure offers the economic diversification successive governments have sought. It builds on our strengths and our resources in construction and energy while extending them into technology. We can advance our communications and services, and it adds another economic pillar and reduces dependence on Commonwealth spending and public sector employment.

It also creates new pathways for the young Territorians and apprentices. Those graduates can work in HV systems, cooling technology, fibre networks and of course the IT and data governance around AI. Local firms can develop capabilities in serving the Territory, northern Australia and the Indo-Pacific. That is how major investment becomes an industry rather than just an isolated project. A moratorium sends the opposite signal.

Rejecting a moratorium does not mean writing a blank cheque. The government should pursue clear frameworks for responsible data centre development. That is what has been put forward by National Cabinet and what we agreed to as a government with the Commonwealth.

Projects must pass all environmental planning, water and heritage assessments; proponents must demonstrate secure energy supply without compromising households and businesses; water use must be sustainable, efficient and transparent; gas generation must use efficient technology and meet applicable emissions and methane management requirements; and government support must be proportionate, transparent and linked to the public benefit. Territory businesses, regional communities and Aboriginal enterprises must have genuine opportunities to participate.

The Northern Territory stands at a significant economic crossroads. We can combine Territory gas, solar resources, battery technology, telecommunications and our strategic geography to build a major digital industry. We can use Beetaloo gas here to support reliable power, create a domestic market and convert a natural resource into high-value activity. We will attract private investment, create technical employment and position Darwin and the Barkly within Australia's sovereign digital capability. Why should the Northern Territory not have the opportunity to do that? Why should we be denied that right through a moratorium?

The answer to uncertainty is assessment, not prohibition. The answer to environmental risk is regulation, not economic surrender. The answer to energy demand is new supply, not closing the door. The answer to legitimate community concern is evidence, transparency and enforceable conditions, not just that blanket moratorium.

A moratorium will not reduce the demand for digital services, stop cloud computing or prevent activists from organising online campaigns using the very infrastructure they oppose. It would transfer the facilities and economic benefits elsewhere. The data will still be processed, and the energy will still be consumed. The difference is that the jobs, investment and infrastructure would not be in the Territory. That is not environmental leadership; it is economic displacement dressed up as principal.

The choice before us is not between development and responsibility. We can and must have both. I wholeheartedly reject the premise of a moratorium. It is short-sighted and based in ideology, not fact. We should retain rigorous assessment, insist on sustainable water use and credible local benefits, and challenge fear mongering when it replaces facts. We should expose the contradiction of demanding unlimited digital capability while opposing the infrastructure that delivers it. We should make clear the Territory is ready to compete for responsible investment in future industries.

I support a future in which Territory resources power Territory development; create Territory jobs; and build a stronger, more diversified and self-reliant Northern Territory economy. We need to and can play a part for our national sovereignty and security.

I move that the question be put.

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The Assembly divided:

Ayes 15	Noes 6
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mrs Carlson	J Davis
Mr Charls	Mr McGrath
Mr Edgington	Mr Smelt
Mrs Finocchiaro	Ms Uibo
Mrs Hersey	Mr Young
Mr Howe	
Mr Kerle	
Mr Mackay	
Mr Maley	
Mr O'Gallagher	
Mr Patel	
Dr Rahman	
Mr Yan	
Mrs Zio	

Amendment agreed to.

Mr YAN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I move that the question be put.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Was the last vote on the motion, as amended?

Madam SPEAKER: No; we just voted on the original amendment from the Member for Port Darwin. The Member for Namatjira has moved that the question be put.

Motion agreed to.

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

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION
Emergency Preparedness

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly calls on the Assembly to:

- recognise the importance of ensuring the Northern Territory is prepared and adequately resourced for emergencies during the current El Nino weather event and the heightened risk of extreme conditions
- ensure appropriate preparedness and response measures are in place, particularly given the upcoming and likely severe bushfire season exacerbated by the proliferation of buffel and gamba grass
- ensure appropriate support for landholders in preparing for upcoming severe weather events, as well as alert, evacuation and emergency shelter arrangements are in place for remote and regional communities.

As we know, Territorians are not strangers to severe weather. We have just seen, unfortunately, the wild storm in Alice Springs and across Central Australia. That short but severe weather event impacted communities and Territorians. We have seen in the last six months of this year alone severe weather events across multiple parts of the Territory affecting every region—Central Australia, the Barkly, Big Rivers, East Arnhem, the Top End, Darwin and Palmerston.

We are in a precarious position in the Northern Territory where we love our rugged country and are fiercely proud of our uniqueness. However, we are susceptible to severe weather events across the Northern Territory and unfortunately it is quite fitting when we placed this motion on the notice paper in the previous parliament sittings just several weeks ago in August.

Now, unfortunately, it is pertinent and relevant to just this week alone, let alone the whole year that we have experienced so far when it comes to extreme weather events, which is why our Labor opposition has proposed a question and some of those particular areas of the motion around emergency preparedness. We have heard far and wide, and we expect that government members and Independent members of the

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Assembly have also heard from constituents, family, friends, businesses, industry, visitors to the Territory, tourists and people who have been affected by some of those weather events in the NT.

We want to be constructive in this motion. We want to show Territorians that our Labor opposition is thinking ahead. We want to encourage the CLP government to ensure that they are doing the best possible job they can when it comes to emergency response across the Territory. Sometimes we see bushfires and at the same time flooding and severe rain, extreme weather and sometimes all in the same season, month or the same week perhaps.

We saw the hail in Central Australia just last week; again, our thoughts are with the Central Australian community right now. Some people's homes are completely destroyed, their businesses, their livelihoods and not accessible at the moment so we are thinking of Central Australian Territorians and visitors to the Territory who have been impacted by the last couple of days, but particularly the huge and very severe and phenomenal storm that ripped through Central Australia just the other day.

This is a timely motion. We want to put forward some constructive solutions, but we also want to acknowledge that Territorians have growing concerns when it comes to the CLP's lack of preparedness as a government—the Northern Territory Government responsible for governing the whole of the Northern Territory. Some of those emergency incidents over the past two years under the CLP's watch has raised those serious concerns and continue to raise serious concerns about the lack of leadership shown and the lack of connectedness, preparedness and planning showing Territorians that when something bad happens that the Territory government will stand up for them.

We have seen the CLP pick bizarre fights with the City of Darwin. They took hours to tell people about the water supply distribution at Darwin River Dam—one of the most important and main sources of drinking water for the greater Darwin region. They failed to alert Darwin residents that they were about to be flooded, left people living in tents for weeks on end in my electorate of Arnhem and people of Jilkminggan living in Mataranka, and left the people of Daly River without certainty, Palumpa, and Peppermenarti with some of those evacuations and left people to boil water for many, many months. It is still not talked about or a focus of the CLP government in the current era.

We saw Chief Minister, the Member for Spillett, say that she was doing an internal review of her government's flood response, despite initially promising that there was a public review that would be released. That is probably a good fact-finding exercise through perhaps a Freedom of Information request. We have not seen any signs or review, and we are starting to come into that change of season again, starting to get into the extreme hot weather in many parts of the Territory, especially in my electorate of Arnhem.

At the same time we are starting to see some early rains in parts of the Territory. Some of the severe weather that we have seen in Central Australia looks like a Hollywood movie, but unfortunately it is reality and has affected hundreds and thousands of Territorians and their businesses already this year.

We have not seen that review from the CLP government. It has not even spoken in advance of this next Wet Season and the summer season in your patch, Madam Speaker, in Central Australia. We encourage the government to do so. We want it to take responsibility for governing the Northern Territory and show that there have been lessons learned, particularly from the extreme Wet Season and summer season of earlier this year, and to see what the CLP will do better to show Territorians that it is prepared and will support Territorians and businesses to be as prepared as possible for the change of weather with the seasons.

One of the CLP's failings so far has been the $100m flood recovery fund. So far, by all of our calculations, the CLP government has managed to allocate only about one-third of this $100m. We heard the other week that the CLP government has pulled $7m out of that $100m fund to be used to move Territorians from the YiSSA site at Batten Road in Marrara to the Batchelor township, despite the CLP saying that the funds would be prioritised for rebuilding roads and bridges and flood mitigation works across the Territory.

Because we do not have any reporting mechanism whatsoever under the CLP government, it is unknown how much of the funding is being specifically rolled out. There are some key projects identified, but there is no progress website. There is no calculation being put together to show people—almost like a timer ticking down—of the $100m. Sorry; it is actually $93m now because $7m was used to have the residents relocated to Batchelor. The new location sprung up out of nowhere in an inconvenient undesirable location. The fact is that it is away from all the services that the people who are accessing short-stay accommodation require, need and deserve to have in terms of support. There is $93m that is left in the flood recovery fund. For many, there are feelings that the CLP government response has been too little, too late.

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Something that astounds me is the CLP took eight months to apply for the Commonwealth disaster relief funding, significantly delaying the much-needed recovery and support for many Territory communities. I could not believe it was eight months. I kept asking and the CLP government was sending organisations and people to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth was sending them back to the Territory government saying, 'No, no, they have to put in the business case and plan for the funding they need and how they will use it.'

For Katherine, the Arnhem region and the Daly region it took eight months for that support. We have heard just this week it has taken—what?—three days for the Chief Minister to act to put in those requests to the Disaster Relief Fund. Maybe the government is learning from some of the severely miscalculated mistakes of earlier this year. It needs to explain to the people of Arnhem, Katherine and Daly why it took eight months to submit its disaster relief funding application to the Commonwealth.

I have a huge gripe because the northern part of the Arnhem electorate, Baniyala community—which has other names such as Blue Mud Bay, the home of sea rights. The eye of Cyclone Narelle went directly over the Blue Mud Bay coastline. Thankfully, it went a bit further north. Numbulwar was evacuated safely. There was time to act early, and I thank the Northern Territory Government and the federal government with Defence, particularly the Royal Australian Air Force, for evacuating Numbulwar residents to safety in Darwin, and doing that response quickly and smoothly with excellent results in evacuating that whole community—which most people in this Chamber know is also my family's community, through my mother. That was one response done well, in the whole of this year, that I commend both governments on.

The eye of Cyclone Narelle, as it started tracking further across the Gulf of Carpentaria, started going a bit further north and it slipped over Baniyala. Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation self-evacuated all the homeland communities and residents, sending up to 30 charters back and forth to collect residents who could not evacuate via road out of the path of the cyclone to Nhulunbuy. People felt the gusts and winds of Cyclone Narelle as far north as the Nhulunbuy tip and the Gove Peninsula.

I visited Baniyala just a couple of weeks ago and there is still damage to houses and structures at Blue Mud Bay. They were not declared in the disaster zone because the CLP government failed to declare East Arnhem Regional Council in the disaster zone. Trees fell down in Gapuwiyak community, also in my electorate. A house was out of power for several weeks because the connection was severed by the trees that fell in that community. Thank goodness nobody was injured.

Places that are small and doing it tough have been left completely off the CLP government's radar, and may I say maliciously, on purpose and deliberately because it is in the Arnhem electorate. I dare say that and I say it publicly because I would love for the CLP government to prove me wrong and rectify the miscalculation of not declaring East Arnhem Regional Council local government area as a part of the disaster zone for that disaster relief recovery. It is a gripe I continue to hold.

As the local member I will continue to highlight and advocate for the rectification of that oversight, or perhaps that deliberate malicious attempt to not support Territorians who live in the Arnhem electorate because I am the local member. The community members, homelands residents, the township of Nhulunbuy—which is part of the Member for Mulka's electorate—and people along the East Arnhem coastline need to be supported, eight months later, with some of that disaster relief. That needs to be rectified urgently.

There was such a lacklustre effort to access the important disaster relief funding, resilience and preparedness that I am baffled. At first, I honestly thought it was just pure arrogance and pride, 'We do not need help; we will do it ourselves. Oops, actually, the Territory does not have the money to do it. Let us go and ask the Commonwealth.' However, it was many months for that process to go through, so I think honestly that it is complete incompetence. I think the arrogance of the CLP is to try to cover up how lacklustre, incompetent and bad a government it is. There is the big bravado—'You cannot tell me what to do'. There is the 'I know you are, but what am I' sort of schoolkid mentality and the immaturity of the CLP government under its leader, the Chief Minister. I think that was completely blown away—pun unintended—with some of the severe weather events.

The government was not getting advice from experts and not listening to community members on the ground when there were telltale signs, particularly some of those environmental hints and triggers of significance. Our Aboriginal ranger groups expressed concern that if the river at such-and-such floods at this level, we know our community will flood and we need to get out within a two-day period. Some of that important local on-the-ground knowledge was ignored by the CLP government.

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With the Disaster Ready Fund this year alone, the CLP managed to secure only a pathetic $1.4m to try to cover some of the devastation we experienced from Alice Springs to the Top End, in Blue Mud Bay and even across to Adelaide River, only an hour south of Darwin.

The list of priorities regarding disaster resilience, adaptation and preparedness was lacking from the CLP government. The CLP reduced funding in the 2026–27 budget for both the emergency services and Bushfires NT, despite growing threats of floods and wildfires. Let us make sure that they boost in the next budget, that is one thing they can control. We cannot control the weather, and I am not asking the CLP to perform miracles, but I am asking them to consider what type of funding is realistic for what we are experiencing in the Northern Territory. How can we make sure that there is a more preventative model around emergency preparedness, rather than the reactive model. That is something that I hope that they listen to, even if they do not want to do it, it is their responsibility as a government.

Bushfires, extreme heat, future cyclones and floods; we are in October 2026, and we have already seen it all. We need to ensure, and ask, that the CLP government listens to people's concerns, that they act and that they have better preparedness processes. The local emergency committees; a process that was established for the last couple of years. I would love to know from the Chief Minister who is responsible for emergency services under her various portfolios.

What type of processes are being delivered within the Northern Territory Government in partnership and across all the regions, when it comes to local emergency committees? What kind of training is being made available for the current and future emergency response volunteers? As for NTSES, how can we ensure that people who are in communities, townships or cities are able to boost some of the work that our frontline services must face as a daily professional risk? How can we get more Territorians trained in emergency response, as I have not heard anything from the CLP government. Perhaps they will be able to contribute to this debate today under this motion.

We know that Territorians have been crying out for leadership. They wish to see more being done in a manner that is sensible, responsible and shows there is an understanding that preparedness across the Territory is critical in our extreme weather conditions. In our summer, wet season, hot season, dry season, build up and when it is freezing cold in Central Australia; we need to see more of that preparedness.

Some of the conditions that we are seeing have not been experienced by some of the generations currently living in the Territory; they are becoming more frequent. The word ‘unprecedented’ was thrown around many times, but what if the unprecedented starts becoming the norm? What if that becomes our regular reality in a wet season? What if we see all our communities that flood seasonally, actually flood every year? That is going to become a huge impost on the government, Territorians, businesses, on people who come to spend their money in the Territory, our tourists and our seasonal workers.

We will see more focus on the resilience of the Territory built up, but also those practical structures in place. The Member for Katherine and Minister for Education and Training was put in charge of the Flood Recovery Fund, which was $100m but is now down to $93m. I thank her for inviting some feedback into that process. I took that opportunity straight away and I wrote my wish list, including constructive ideas. I also met with the minister and director-general, Mr Ken Davies PSM, who came out of retirement for this role. I thank them for meeting with me and going through my suggestions, ideas and concerns.

I would like to share with the Assembly some of the constructive ways forward that I suggested. Some of it was electorate-based—which is the whole reason I am here as the Member for Arnhem—and some of it was regarding regional response and some things that I believe we could see better collectively and more constructively across the Territory.

I will not read the whole letter, but I intend to table it. Based on the feedback I received across some of the affected townships, communities and homelands I am providing feedback in three parts: infrastructure; flood recovery; and preparedness and readiness, hence today’s motion—very timely. I am available at any time to talk through any of my requests and ideas below and thank you for the opportunity to present these items on behalf of the Arnhem electorate.

I went into part one—infrastructure—and I listed some of the areas that have been identified for work. Some of them have been on the infrastructure 10-year masterplan, which the CLP government has completely changed in some areas, politically, but they can respond to that if they want to. Some of the infrastructure ideas I put through is the Big Rivers purpose-built cyclone flood shelter. I spoke to many people in Katherine of having a purpose-built cyclone flood shelter, emergency evacuation shelter in Big Rivers, particularly on the high ground industrial area. Since 2014 there was some areas identified through the master planning and

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that would be great to see, not just for the Katherine township but the whole of the Big Rivers region would be well served to have some designs, scopes and work.

A Mataranka purpose-built cyclone of flood shelter, or one on a smaller scale. The reason I put this on the list was because Mataranka was cut off from Katherine. They had some access south but some rivers and damage to roads made it unsafe during that peak time. Roper Gulf has put it to the federal government to have the Mataranka airstrip sealed, because Royal Flying Doctors fixed wing cannot land on the soft soil and they must rely on rotary helicopter evacuations in an emergency.

Sadly, one of our knowledgeable and experienced SES volunteer's property in Mataranka flooded in the downstream of the Waterhouse River, flooding went through Wugularr, also known as Beswick, and then down to Mataranka and Jilkminggan. At two or three o'clock in the morning he was removing some batteries from his property, which is also his business, and sliced his arm completely on one side and had to be emergency evacuated. He is one of our most experienced volunteers in Mataranka. Thankfully, he has recovered, but at the time it was to protect his family, his property and livelihood. For him to be out of action meant that there was not any knowledge and resource in the community, so what preparedness is there for people who are on the ground that do not have that experience. A smaller scale Mataranka purpose-built shelter would be brilliant because the town hall and the school were not enough and people were camping in tents.

The Waterhouse River bridge upgrade has been addressed by the government, I think, under the $93m, but I will check that. The little Roper Bridge upgrade—the road that goes to the Mataranka Homestead—Salt Creek Bridge upgrade, the Roper Highway that was announced and agreed to by the government—thank you for that. It was Salt Creek Bridge that cut off Jilkminggan even when the waters had receded, and people could not get home safely. Another one the government has considered is Donkey Flat Crossing. The Member for Katherine has spoken about the Maud Creek Bridge upgrade on Gorge Road. It borders Katherine and the Arnhem electorate, which benefits the Member for Katherine and my electorate. Mulggan Town Camp road upgrades, including sealing road entries off Martin Road and Mulggan as well as bitumen roads within town camp and sealed walking paths and transitional housing area.

I forwarded my letter to the minister as part two recovery, and the two ideas that I put forward were small business hospitality grants to help recovery after flooding—for example, Little Roper Stock Camp in Mataranka, Mataranka Homestead and Djilpin Arts centre in Wugularr. They were the three main businesses in my electorate affected by the actual physical flooding. Other businesses were affected, particularly in Mataranka, because tourists and locals could not come and spend their money in that township. Those small business and hospitality grants would have been great as a little bit of a lifeline. That would have been an awesome opportunity for the government. Perhaps it is still considering that eight months later. It would go a long way if that was something that the government would announce from the $93m that is left.

The second idea was about materials and clear criteria and information about who is eligible for disaster relief payments. This has caused a lot of confusion and frustration, including amongst Katherine residents, and I heard that obviously locally as well.

The third part of my letter to the minister was about preparedness and readiness. Some of the offerings I provided were that State Emergency Service (SES) training be offered annually to local community members in townships, remote communities and homelands; investment in digital communication alerts—that is, short message service (SMS)—to ensure geotargeted messages with prewarning alerts about flooding, severe weather, cyclones and bushfires; investment in flood sirens in towns and communities that are prone to flooding; and investment in materials in multiple languages, First Nations, multicultural and AUSLAN, about preparing for flooding and what to take to a shelter versus an evacuation centre. This also created a huge amount of frustration and uncertainty, particularly in Katherine.

I also suggested a commitment to daily standups by NT Government ministers and senior government officials, providing warnings and updates in relation to flooding and severe weather events. In Queensland the Liberal Premier did daily standups about Cyclone Narelle. We did not necessarily have that with the Chief Minister or other senior ministers. I think that would go a long way because although something might be plonked on Facebook or online, a lot of people still listen to radio and watch TV. I think having those regular government updates would go a long way.

The last dot point I had under part experience was to develop memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with NT Government agencies—namely, the NT Police Force and NT Emergency Services—Aboriginal Land councils; Aboriginal ranger groups; and Aboriginal organisations and corporations in order to clearly outline responsibilities and actions when emergencies are in place. If I were to amend my own letter, I would also

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include local government organisations—municipal and regional councils. In some regions they felt out of the loop; in other regions they were looped in very well.

That was my wish list. That was my constructive list of suggestions to show the minister responsible and Mr Davies that there was a lot of feedback and concern regarding that process.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO: Thank you to Member for Drysdale who was going to step in and give me an extension. I appreciate it.

I seek leave to table the letter that I have just read, so it is on the *Parliamentary Record*.

Leave granted.

Ms UIBO: This is an opportunity, I believe, for the CLP government to show that leadership and that there is a preparedness to explain why some processes occurred or did not occur during the severe weather events we have experienced this year and to make sure that some of the clunkiness or mistakes are not repeated. I know for myself, particularly in Katherine, there was feedback, frustrations and a lack of understanding of why Tindal RAAF Base was not deployed to support Katherine residents. Obviously, there is a huge chain of command around who gets asked and how it is requested. It should come through the Northern Territory Government to the federal government and go through the Defence processes. However, having a clear mapping of that process I think would help people understand. Maybe something that went up on the NTG website to say these are the three or four steps if we are asking for support from the federal government and greenlight it almost; you could have 'Out of the three steps we have completed two. After number three we get our answer from the federal government or Defence.'

Unfortunately, when we were expecting the second wave of Katherine flooding, which fortuitously missed Katherine—the rain catchment from that depression of Cyclone Narelle did not hit the full and swollen Katherine River and the gorge—it went further north and got Adelaide River. When Katherine was bracing for a second flood in those couple of weeks due to the severe weather and the cyclone coming across from Queensland, RAAF Tindal personnel were deployed. Many of them were volunteering as civilians. If they were not on essential duties, the Wing Commander released them from Tindal duties to volunteer as civilians. That second anticipated flood thankfully did not occur. There were some rankings higher up who agreed. Maybe the request went out early for that extra Defence support and recovery.

There should be an understanding for Territorians about those processes, openly and publicly. We heard some of the tit for tat, 'They will bill us this much'. Just get it done. People do not care who pays for it; they just want the help. When their home is flooded, their businesses are not able to run, their property and livelihood is inaccessible and inundated, no-one gives a flying fox about how much money it will cost or who pays for the recovery; they just need the help when they are at their most vulnerable. We have seen many people asking these questions.

Clarity is what I am suggesting the government should take up. Instead of the tit for tat and the, 'They asked us to pay this and we do not want to', or 'How dare they charge us?', just get it done; worry about the bloody bill later. Just help Territorians and visitors who are in the Territory caught by those weather events, first and foremost, then worry about the squabbling later.

We heard the squabbling during the time of crisis when people had gone through some horrific and harrowing personal events with their businesses, homes, family and livestock. There were horrible, sad, multiple stories about livestock drowning and the affect on the livelihood of some of those pastoralists and people who have specialist animals as part of their business such as top breed horses et cetera. It was devastating to hear people lose the livelihood and the animals or their properties.

The big focus of this motion is how we can see a better approach to any emergency when it comes to severe weather events in the Northern Territory. Some of the projects that we have seen and the small amount of money that has been accessed already by the CLP is beyond me. If we are talking about the livelihoods of Territorians and their businesses and making sure that they are safe and prepared, why are we not seeing a harder, sharper and more aggressive pursuit of accessing the Disaster Ready Fund federally by the Northern Territory Government? It is beyond me.

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Of round 3, the CLP has only accessed $1.4m from a total $200m that would be available. It needs to explain why that has been the case. It needs to have some type of process other than rubbishing the Commonwealth in a media interview, a radio interview or whatever.

There needs to be some clear, open and available resources that show Territorians what the processes are. Do it in a layman's way that is accessible to multiple Territorians' backgrounds, language, literacy et cetera. Make sure that information is available when people ask those important questions.

One success is the Nhulunbuy cyclone shelter—a $30m project funded through the Commonwealth and NTG around the disaster relief. There was a clear process securing that having some of that work done formerly when Labor was in government. We identified several different communities that needed access to safe and secure emergency shelters. There are still other communities that are on that list, but that is a positive to see Nhulunbuy announced officially.

Some of the other work that has already happened needs to continue. Some of the work started with the former Labor government. I know that the Member for Barkly would appreciate the Borroloola Sports and Cyclone Shelter, a multipurpose community space that can be used in an emergency but also is an asset for the community in times when there are no emergencies and crises afoot. That sort of pre-planning can take years. The CLP government has been working over the last two years, particularly now learning from the severe weather events of the first half of the year, to make sure that we are prepared and Territorians, businesses, industries and visitors who come to the Territory are able to be prepared. We need to see what that work is—the framework, the policies, the processes and the one bugbear that I would really like to see enacted—and I think I heard of it once in the Cyclone Narelle—is that geo-targeting SMS?

Today—and it is a blanket assumption—often there is at least one person with a mobile phone in a family household or a shared household or in a community who can access a text message if it is Geo-targeted. I think that would be my number one ask for the smallest, smallest possible thing, is to make sure that that technology is accessed and utilised for this wet season, for this bushfire season, so that we can see people who are out on properties, who are not sitting on their phones and Facebook, they hear a ding or a message to say severe floods expected in the next 24 hours, please prepare your homes. They can at least open the gates for their livestock so the livestock can move to higher ground and will not drown because they cannot get through the gates, which is what happened in some cases. That is quite obviously saddening and heartbreaking for those property owners and those livestock businessmen and women.

It would be good to start some Geo-targeting when it is extreme weather like what we are seeing now in Batchelor, Jabiru, Bulman Weemol, Ngukurr, Katherine and in Mataranka, in all those little sort of stony country areas. Texts like watch out for dehydration, make sure you seek shelter, make sure you are appropriately dressed, make sure that you have access to shade and shelter, whatever it is. That would be fantastic if we could start to see more of those alerts.

I know there was the one used. I heard from some Gapuwiyak family that when Cyclone Narelle was going over Baniyala they received text messages two hours before the storm hit, but it is better than nothing, right; two hours. Eight o'clock in the evening was the time that my family told me that they got the text in Gapuwiyak—severe storm, please stay inside, etcetera.—and at 10:00pm it hit that night and thankfully not the brunt of the storm. The people in Baniyala were still waiting for that help and support for the damage to their homes because they were not declared in a disaster area, although they were in the very eye of Cyclone Narelle that went from Queensland to the Northern Territory and made it all the way to WA down the coastline unseen. I think three cyclones have done that, so Baniyala and places like that do deserve to be on the government's foresight. Thank you, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I speak to the Opposition Leader's motion, which I, unbelievably naively, after nearly 15 years in this parliament, thought was actually a constructive motion. I have just sat here for 40 minutes and listened to the Opposition Leader grandstand, spread misinformation, enjoy the sound of her own voice and largely talk absolute garbage. Here I was thinking, 'Oh, this is great'. We are coming into cyclone season, we are hitting the tail end of fire season, and we have just come off the back of five months of the worst weather we have ever seen. We held an Emergency Operation Centre for five consecutive months, 24 hours a day.

Leader of the Opposition, you had the gall to come to parliament and politically grandstand a bunch of dribbling nonsense because you cannot help yourself. To all the public servants and frontline workers, who I hope to dear god did not listen to those 40-minutes of rubbish, I apologise on your behalf. Shameful. What an absolute teardown on what was an unprecedented—I know you quote that in such a flippant way—weather event.

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Did every person in every step of the chain do everything perfect? No, they did not. Did they do it with conviction? Did they do it to the best of their ability? Did they do it with the resources they had available to them? Yes, they did. Shame on you for insinuating anything other than that.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31A: Reflections on members. The inference that the Chief Minister is reflecting in saying that was what I said, or that was the inference I made in my debate is wrong. I asked her to withdraw it.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is what you said, Opposition Leader. For 40-minutes, at ten different points, you criticised the response as if I am the person who does an entire Northern Territory-wide flood and cyclone response. That is not how it works. Public servants and frontline workers do it.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31A. I would like to hear your decision on asking the Chief Minister to withdraw her inference on what she is making into rapid, outrageous and crazy accusations of things that I said, which I did not say.

Mrs Hersey: I think you are embarrassed.

Ms UIBO: You should be embarrassed. What have you done for Katherine? Go and listen to your constituents that are running around up here.

Mrs Hersey: Goodness, me. You have lost the plot, love.

Ms UIBO: I listened to your mob, your own voters. It is not even my job to listen to them, it is yours.

Madam SPEAKER: Chief Minister, if you would like to rephrase please.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I certainly can rephrase it because the Opposition Leader is very sensitive. She is happy to stand up and sling as much mud as she can possibly conjure. She is happy to rant for 40-minutes and to say a bunch of things which are untested and untrue, however, I will rephrase it for her own sensitivities and out of respect for you and the parliament.

What you have done for the last 40-minutes whether you intended to or not—I am not judging—was that you impugned on the people who delivered the services on the ground across the Northern Territory. From Alice Springs to Murray towns, Katherine, Darwin, through to Numbulwar, Daly River and beyond, all the people in the chain delivering the response, did not do a good job. You spent 40-minutes trying to pin me on making every decision in what was a Territory-wide response; I think it is abhorrent. If people were listening, they would be upset.

Mr KERLE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20: No interruptions of Debate. I am trying to listen to the Chief Minister's contribution, and I cannot because of the noise from the other side of the chamber.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: I am hopeful that by six o'clock on a Wednesday evening everyone is hopefully at home with their family or doing something else other than listening to you. For correction, the insinuation that East Arnhem was not included in the emergency response or the emergency declaration is false. I do not know how to respond to that because it is not true; they were part of it.

Ms Uibo: Katherine got it. Why didn't Baniyala?

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: They continue to spread the misinformation about the military, our Australian Defence Force.

Mr KERLE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 20; I am trying to listen to the Chief Minister and there is constant noise from the other side of the Chamber.

Madam ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the rest of the Chamber did listen in silence, so I ask that you refrain from yelling across the Chamber.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: There was continued misinformation—we saw it from the Member for Daly—during this period of the floods and the cyclone about the military. 'Why don't we just call the military?' I had to explain

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time and again that there is a formal federal process you must put the request through. They say no; if you do not meet the federal criteria, they do not accept your application.

Those opposite were stirring up misinformation and upset in the community that did not need to be there. People were already upset and displaced. People's homes and businesses were already flooded and Labor, instead of working together with us—with the exception of the Member for Gwoja, who was incredibly helpful, productive, constructive and bipartisan throughout that entire period and largely again over the last couple of days. What the Opposition Leader and the Member for Daly chose to do instead was stir further confusion through misinformation, ignorance or stupidity—I do not know what—and cause further angst to people across the Northern Territory who were already suffering. The opposition chose to double down and say, 'They are already having a really hard time. Let us just hit them even harder where it hurts the most.' It was disgraceful, and every day when I stood up and did media …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31A; the imputations and inferences from the Chief Minister are outrageous. I ask her to withdraw.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: No.

Madam SPEAKER: I have just returned to the Chamber. I know you are not meant to refer to when you come in and out, but I have been listening to what has been going on here. I think the Chief Minister is giving her interpretation of what you said. She is not verballing you and she is not saying that you have said things that you have not; she is giving her interpretation which is slightly different.

Ms UIBO: The last comment the Chief Minister said made some wild accusation that because people were down and out, the opposition then chose to push them. She even did her little actions about punching down on them. I think that is outrageous for the Chief Minister to infer of another member of parliament who has raised considerate and respectful debate about what could be done better. Her inference, that is going personal rather than professional, is outrageous for a leader of this House.

Madam SPEAKER: I am hearing you both say the same thing, essentially. You are offended by what the Chief Minister is saying and the Chief Minister is offended by what you are saying.

I will say, Opposition Leader, is that you might like to address your thoughts on what the Chief Minister says in your closing speech. From where I sit, you are fairly evenly matched.

Chief Minister, please continue.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: This is farcical. You bring farce to the parliament, Opposition Leader. I said, when I started this debate, I was looking forward to this motion. I have been sitting here for more than an hour, maybe two hours, waiting for this to come on, thinking that this would be a constructive debate and it was not. For 40 minutes you grandstanded, criticised and critiqued. Now, every time I say something that hits a nerve for you …

Ms Uibo interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, cease your comments.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: You get upset about it and try to use the rules of the parliament to stop me from expressing how your politics is being perceived in the public.

I can tell you it caused confusion. Do you know how I know that to be a fact? I was the person standing up at the press conferences, doing the radio, providing the public commentary and the updates with all the emergency officials, the Power and Water officials, the housing officials and everyone else. I was having to answer questions about the issues that you were raising because it was confusing people. I was having to clarify the confusion. That is how I know that to be true, Opposition Leader, whether you like it or not and whether you intended it or not and whether it was through ignorance or stupidity or was deliberate. I am not casting a judgement on which one it was. I am saying the outcome of what you did caused confusion; it upset people at a time when they were already upset and I it was shameful, and all of that is a fact.

You want to talk about insinuation. In your ramble for 40 minutes, you made it sound like the local emergency committees had a (inaudible) that somehow this is a thing under Labor and not a thing under the CLP, yet it is enshrined in our *Emergency Management Act*, it is entirely part of the emergency process which is why I am defensive of all the people who contributed to what was a profound and complicated response, because

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it starts right down on the ground with individual communities and their local emergency committee. It starts right there. It starts with the local police, the local councillors, the local mayor, the leaders, the TOs, the people in those communities and it feeds right up into all the different structures right through to the emergency operation centre, that is how it works. It has not been changed under the CLP; it is in the *Emergency Management Act* of which we have to comply with in times of emergency.

Then there is the insinuation by the Leader of the Opposition that we are slow with disaster funding, and we do not want to call it, or we have not applied for it. Let me give you a little history lesson, opposition and Labor. The Northern Territory only just got paid for the disaster of Cyclone Marcus in 2022. Yet, apparently, I am too slow, and our government is too slow at applying for this funding which took the Labor government four years to pay for, but I waited three days, that was very slow. Can you see how ridiculous you sound. I hope you can reflect on—if you brought something constructive, we could work with that, if you want to come in here and say we applied for funding that takes four years to get paid for too slowly it is absurd. The Northern Territory taxpayer spent in the order of $300m over those five months to keep its communities safe, which we are very proud of and would do again in a heartbeat. The criticism is unfounded.

On top of the $300m we allocated $100m untied, no strings attached, flood recovery funding, and we put a little team in place to work through across the Territory, from Alice Springs right through Murray Downs region, right through Katherine, Daly, Top End, everywhere. How could we spend that $100m, acknowledging $100m will not do everything we want to do but we pulled aside $100m, despite our debt situation, despite spending $300m, despite still being in active recovery to say we have got to build back better, what are we going to do, how could we spend that money, the very best, which will provide reprieve to as many people as possible if this happens again, and so we announced on top of the $100m, I think it was $30m to $40m on roads funding alone which was not part of the $100m on top of the $100m. We spent $300m then we set aside $100m to be better next time plus we put in $30m or $40m to fix the roads immediately back to what they were, which we have done, and it has been an excellent piece of work.

Then we announced out of the $100m, $13.3m for the Katherine south levy works and the drainage works, critically important; $600,000 to go to Jawoyn in Katherine in your region, as they are very keen to do some planning and rectifications to one of the bridges because it always gets flooded at Maud Creek. Then we put $500,000 into consultation for a future plan for Nauiyu. The people of Nauiyu were evacuated twice, it was horrific and they were displaced from their homes for months. That strong community sentiment came forward which we left to the community to lead around what comes next and that money has been budgeted.

Then there was the $4m for the Katherine levy and drainage works. There was $4.9m for Alice Springs flood mitigation. We are working with the federal government on their terms and their rules, which is why we cannot talk about it the remainder of the funding. We hope, whenever they decide to get back to me, I will be able to talk about it.

You want to point the finger? Your own federal mates have a lot to be responsible for. I cannot talk about what we applied for. It is now sitting on the Prime Minister's desk, and I hope we get a response. We wait patiently. We will see what happens when we get that response. Once we get the response, we will obviously make that public to the community. I cannot do that until we have the response. You want to talk about Labor's legacy? I mean, the Tennant Creek weather radar. What a saga. I mean, when was announced—2019? There you go. I was thinking six years ago, seven years ago. Seven years ago, we were to go without $17m in funding. Where is the Tennant Creek and Katherine weather radar federal government? Like we are still waiting for that.

The Opposition Leader has been talking about how we should have a text message system. The federal government is rolling out AusAlert, and we have just had the trial of AusAlert. The federal government is moving to a national system for AusAlert of which we are a part of. The trial was in June, maybe from memory. We have just had that trial, that is progressing. There is not anything in that space. It is a national rollout of which we are playing our part and being part of.

Then it got me thinking about when the last time Labor managed an evacuation and a disaster. You know what played in my mind? ‘Wear and tear, wear and tear, wear and tear’. Who can remember what that was? The Howard Springs quarantine facility flood evacuation in 2023, where the joint got trashed. The Chief Minister at that point famously said, ‘Oh it is just a little bit of wear and tear’, and we all remember how badly that flood response was managed, whereas we had multiple evacuation centres operating for multiple amounts of time. Now we have invested $7m in a new facility at Batchelor, which means people do not have to ever again, is my plan if I had it my way if this all works out, never again will a flood evacuee have to live in Foskey Pavilion in that horrible centre on a stretcher bed. Is that not an incredible outcome for people who are being displaced? They will have a real bed, a real bathroom, privacy, dignity, kitchen facilities and laundry

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facilities. They will have somewhere calm and peaceful at a time of great upheaval and uncertainty. That is a good thing, and we are proud of that.

There was also talk about funding NTES and all this other general spray about what we are doing wrong within NTES or something like that, yet it was Labor who scrapped the Bushfires NT positions in the Barkly, and what did we have when the bushfire positions were scrapped? What event happened? I cannot remember what event that was. That is right—the catastrophic Barkly bushfires on Labor's watch after they canned having Bushfires NT at Tennant Creek. And what has the CLP done in two short years in fact, and what did they do in their first budget? Their first budget they put two full-time position resources for Bushfires NT into Tennant Creek. That is what we have done. You just think about the hypocrisy, and hypocrisy knows no bounds with Labor.

We just had a debate on AI, where they were talking about how we cannot have hyperscale and give away land. Michael Gunner was like, 'Here, NEXTDC, you can have free land; no worries. Let us hyper, baby.' Were you not there? I just cannot believe the hypocrisy. It is madness.

The flip and the flop and the, 'One day I wake up on this side of the bed, the other day I wake up on that side. Sometimes I just get out at the bottom of the bed.' I do not understand. Your bedroom must be a mess. It is unbelievable. You stand for nothing as a team. You are on gas, you are off gas; you are on Lee Point, you are off Lee Point; you are on data centres, you are not on data centres. Those opposite are all over the shop when it comes to policy direction and leadership. Sure, stand up and have the crack. We can take it; it is fine.

My whole speech was this positive thing to give a report on all the fires we responded to, all the work Bushfires NT did and all the incidents they went to, with all the preparation work.

The most comical thing about this debate and the speech you gave, instead of the speech you should have given, was yesterday at the Darwin Waterfront, I opened the Northern Territory Emergency Symposium on emergency management. Literally, for an entire day's session, we reflected, along with the NGO, academic and government sectors on our emergency responses and how we can do things better into the future. That was literally an entire day's session, which I opened yesterday morning. To pretend our professionals in the emergency space are not doing this work is a bit of a stretch.

That emergency operations centre had been running for five months, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That is the biggest exercise in the Territory's history. Did every person do every single thing, including myself, perfectly? No, we are all human. Did we all work tirelessly around the clock with competing and compounding demands, cyclone, flood, pressures, regions and resources? Were people tired and fatigued? Absolutely. I wish we never have to go through that again.

To have Alice Springs, in the last two days—the very nature of emergency management is dealing in the unpredictable. Planning and preparation is of course the best thing you can do to be ready if something happens. We have seen in the last two days an incredible response with teams flooding down—the camaraderie I saw on social media earlier. The Power and Water crews—the Alice guys all surged up to Darwin during some of our crises. Now all the teams are surging back. It sort of was like, 'Hey, we are paying you guys back. Thanks for helping us, we have your back too.' It gives me goosebumps just thinking about how special that is. It does not matter whether people are paid and that is what they have to do. Forget about the mechanics of it. How special is it that Territorians, no matter where they live, just get in and want to help straightaway? We mobilised teams so fast into Alice to provide that support.

To be getting from 9,000 homes down to, I think, 1,800 now—I have not got my latest update—is incredible. Is it horrible for the people in the 1,800 homes who still do not have power? Absolutely, but everyone is pulling together. Everyone is out on the chainsaws, helping their neighbour, helping their mate. That is the Territory spirit. That is the Territory I know and love, and we can be really proud of.

I thank all our incredible teams, whether it is our Fire and Rescue Service, Bushfires teams, emergency services, police, local emergency committees or everyday Territorians being amazing humans and helping each other out. You see it time and again. Whether it is people making leadership decisions or just the people on the ground like John Armstrong and Ben Parfitt.

That incredible footage. That Prado tried to go across the river, got flooded up to the top of the windows, the people and dog get out, and they fly in on a chopper, drop down in a flooded river and rescue everyone and no-one is injured. It is just incredible stuff. We have the best people. I thank everyone again for the work they have done.

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We virtually rolled straight into a huge bushfire season because there was plenty of water, which meant there was plenty of grass, which means there is plenty of fuel. That is good for cattle and not good for fires. Herein lies the great dichotomy of that.

Ultimately, I am really sorry the Opposition Leader's debate did not land where I thought we would go. I said in my speech yesterday at the Symposium for Emergency Management, which is live streamed—if you do not believe me, go back and watch it—that over that season wonderful bipartisanship happens in times of emergency. Some of those things are the most important that people expect at that time, yet it seems to have fallen away.

I wonder, had the Member for Gwoja been here, whether you would have given that same speech. I do not know whether he would have let you, Opposition Leader, to be honest, but that is a matter for you guys. You run your business, and I will run mine.

In closing, we are also thrilled that the federal government has backflipped on how they were allocating disaster funding—that was a huge national fight that would have left the Territory in a very precarious position. They have backed down on that, which is good news. Of course, we just announced the $30m cyclone shelter for Nhulunbuy—an enormous facility. The fact that we will be able to properly shelter 1,800 people in Nhulunbuy for that east Arnhem region, is huge because people want to be close to home. They do not want to live in these places. It is there for the moment when the incident happens and then everyone wants to get back on with the job of restoring their life and rebuilding their life again. That is great news and there is plenty more of that coming. We complete all the applications in case you are wondering. We have submitted the application for the next slot and we are waiting to hear if we will get it, and if we get it, we will let the community know.

Opposition Leader, in case for some reason you think out of the 26,000 public servants we have because it is the CLP government, no one knows how to write an application anymore, or I genuinely do not know what you think. For someone who was in government for eight years, you seem to have lost all memory of how it works, or perhaps you were not doing it very well, which is also a possibility because that is why your government failed Territorians and you are sitting on that side and we are over here. No one is perfect, and feedback is an incredibly important part of everything you do. It is actually embedded in the *Emergency Management Act* to review those weather events, which is exactly what is happening, so FOI your brains out, Opposition Leader, go your hardest. Ultimately our teams remain stood up and ready to be there side by side with Territorians when they need it most, and I just cannot, from the bottom of my heart, both as a Territorian, as a mother, as a chief minister, as a local member of parliament, as a human being, thank them enough for that work that they do and they have my full and utmost respect.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing on this important motion regarding emergency preparedness here in the Northern Territory. Firstly, I do want to thank all our emergency services on the ground, from our local emergency committees, our police, our firies, our volunteers, our local Aboriginal corporations who show up and help people in need when we see emergencies in place. What I will not accept from this Chief Minister is to come in here and try and politicise this issue here tonight. It is completely unacceptable for her to come and attack us and say that we have been disingenuous throughout this whole process and that we have not stood up for emergency service workers, for community members who have been affected by the floods or cyclones as she has suggested because we know our communities best.

I will tell you why the Chief Minister politicised this whole response to the emergency services because when the Nauiyu residents were first evacuated, do you know what she did, Madam Speaker? The Chief Minister actually called me to let me know that people were being evacuated and I thought great, we have finally got some collaboration with the CLP government who are actually working with us and letting us know what our constituents are doing—I think she did it about ten minutes to 2 pm on a sittings day—then the Member for Goyder came in here and asked her a question about the evacuation of Nauiyu residents from Daly River. She came in here and beat her chest, how great she was, that she spoke to me and other members and for letting me know that residents from Daly River had been evacuated and doing everything she can to ensure that people are safe.

Mr Edgington: That is fantastic.

Mr YOUNG: That is exactly right, Member for Barkly. I thought it was a fantastic move, and I was happy to see her finally come and work with us again. Then what occurred was residents went home after a couple of weeks, and the second flood happened.

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Do you know what I got from the Chief Minister at that time? Absolute crickets. Parliament was not sitting so she did not bother to ring me and did not have to beat her chest and grandstand how great she supposedly is and how she works with Territorians in the Northern Territory.

She initially came here to beat her chest and politicise the issue that people were being evacuated out.

During that second sittings I spoke to the Chief Minister and said, 'We need to put our political differences aside because I am getting many phone calls from constituents who are being affected by the flooding and people responding to the floods. I will give you that information and we can work together so you can respond appropriately.'

At the beginning, yes, there was a bit of correspondence between the two, but then complete silence. We were not getting any information. She was not providing any information to the response. When I was speaking to my constituents and then passing that up to her office, I was barely getting any response from her office in a timely manner to be able to let and people in our emergency services who were responding know what was going on because the issue they had was that there was mixed messaging on the ground so they were not able to respond to the flooding that was happening in Nauiyu, Wooliana, Douglas Daly and Palumpa in particular.

Do not come in here, Chief Minister, and be disingenuous about us not wanting to work with you because that is completely false. You have been caught out many times when community members started speaking about the lack of information that the CLP government was providing to people who were affected by the floods.

I think two ministers were shamed to go to Batchelor and face the residents at the time when they made this announcement without any consultation with the community to move people down to Batchelor. I thank the Batchelor residents because they were empathetic about the people who were affected by the floods.

The problem we had at the time was we did not have a shop that was open. There was no communication on how the health clinic would be impacted because of the lack of nurses and doctors there or how the school would be impacted and what that meant for the local students and the students who had been impacted by the residents.

Then I think it was Minister Hersey who went and told the residents, 'Why do you not show a bit of empathy?' I can tell you they were showing a bit of empathy. All they wanted was a bit of information about what was happening with the town when you doubled the population and the impact that has on services for community members …

Mrs Hersey: There was extra police and the supermarket there.

Mr YOUNG: It was not open at the time, minister …

Mrs Hersey: It was.

Mr YOUNG: It was not open at the time. This is exactly my point, Mr Deputy Speaker. Ministers are interjecting because they did not know the community at the time.

At that time, there was not a shop open. It did open, however, later on when residents had arrived. However, during that time there was no shop. It reflects exactly what I am talking about—the lack of understanding of what constituents need in their community …

Mr Kerle: What do you call the servo? There is a servo there.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up on the Member for Blain interjecting. I note …

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please pause. Member for Blain and Member for Katherine, can you stop interjecting and let the Member for Daly speak.

Mr YOUNG: I pick up on the Member for Blain's interjection. What has he said lately with the announcement of YiSSA being in Batchelor? Complete crickets. Before the flooding event and the shop was open in Batchelor, he tried to go and also beat his chest and pretend he was listening to the community, trying to say that I have not been around.

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I am sorry, Member for Blain, you have that wrong. The difference between you and I is I do not have to post everything on Facebook and big note myself like you. That is the difference between ourselves and the Member for Blain.

He has gone completely silent on YiSSA and has not gone down to meet with the residents. Why is that? A bit controversial for you, is it? Exactly, because you do not want to face up. You are gutless.

When we talk about the emergency preparedness, what we wanted to see, what many residents spoke to me about in response to emergencies, what many local emergency committees wanted to see was why were there not ministers allocated to areas?

Where was the Member for Barkly? As the Aboriginal Affairs Minister, why was he not allocated an actual region like Nauiyu and Palumpa to understand the constituents' needs during that time? Where was the Minister for Tourism who could have been allocated towards Wooliana Road, where we have many tourist businesses, to understand the needs of that community? Where was the Minister for Agriculture to be allocated in Douglas Daly to ensure they...

Ms BOOTHBY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! His imputations are completely not true. We have all been out to those areas many times.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Everyone has been having a little go at each other, but let the Member for Daly talk in silence.

Mr YOUNG: As I was saying—the Deputy Chief Minister cannot help himself because sometimes the truth hurts.

What happened was, during the time when people were evacuated they were nowhere to be seen. In fact, they had to be dragged kicking and…

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Standing Order 20; I believe you have already provided some warnings and your instructions for the Assembly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will say this again. Can we let the members be heard in silence?

Deputy Chief Minister, you were put on a warning by the Speaker previously. You are now on a warning from me as well.

Mr YOUNG: It does not surprise me that you have given the Deputy Chief Minister a warning.

What I was getting to was, where were they when people evacuated in? I remember going to Wooliana Road, after the waters had receded, there was a huge amount of destruction. We had seen sand, mud and silt completely spread throughout the whole Wooliana area and the Daly River region.

Guess what? I spoke to those tourism businesses, the local residents—No Chief Minister or minister had been there. No one had been down there to respond. It was this alien world down there; they did not know where it was.

It took the *NT News*—I thank Camden Smith for actually putting out a story because the next day, what did we see? We saw ministers and the Chief Minister there …

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, calm it down.

Mr YOUNG: All of a sudden, they cared about people. They were shamed through the media to actually go and do their job and understand the impact the floods had on people. They were shamed into it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Daly, take your seat. I have asked people to keep their comments down. Now, I am hearing it from both sides, including the Leader of the Opposition interjecting while the member is speaking.

Member for Daly, please finish your speech.

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Mr YOUNG: As I was stating, the shameful thing about this is the ministers were shamed to go down to Wooliana Road.

I thank our emergency services workers who were on the ground, doing the work and evacuating people. They were the ones on the ground, frustrated with the CLP government for not responding in a timely manner, making those decisions around a Cabinet table to ensure people were supported correctly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I note it is seven o'clock, so I will continue my speech at another time.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Tennant Creek – Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Officer Position

Ms CAHILL (Prevention of Domestic Violence): Mr Deputy Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 115, I have a response to the question asked earlier today from the Member for Daly in relation to the domestic violence position in Tennant Creek.

I am pleased to advise that the domestic, family and sexual violence coordinator officer position based in Tennant Creek was filled in August this year.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge the passing of Leo Izod and place on the record our profound appreciation for his life of service to the Northern Territory. Leo passed away on 2 August this year at the age of 92. Leo was a true Territory legend and one of our greatest characters. He was a gifted mechanic, an historian who dedicated much of his life to preserving the Territory's unique mechanical, industrial and cultural heritage, without which in Leo's words, we would not be where we are now.

Born in Melbourne in 1934, Leo came to Darwin in 1946 at the age of 12. His father, Eric, had served here as an Army Captain in WWII and loved the Territory so much that he decided to move north with his young family and call it home.

In the late 1940s Eric opened Izod Motors on the corner of Knuckey and Cavenagh Streets right in the heart of Darwin city. So much of Leo's life was to unfold from these two decisions. Izod Motors became the first Holden dealership in the Top End, quickly expanding its garages to Pine Creek and Katherine. At the age of 14 Leo left school to drive one of his father's trucks and by 16 he was hauling fuel to Katherine on the weekends.

In 1954 Leo married Marlene O'Neil, who I acknowledge is here this evening, and together they raised nine children, Ian, Shane, Leonie, Marlene, Tony, Margaret, Bernadette, Tanya and Sasha. In 1961 Leo joined the Northern Territory Administration. Throughout his career he set up government vehicle and mechanic workshops in Alice Springs, taught Aboriginal people in Areyonga to manage their vehicles and worked as a senior mechanic at Bamyili settlement, now called Barunga.

For nearly two decades Leo trained young Territorians at Kormilda College in Darwin and where I went to school. In 1998 Leo joined the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. As part of the regional museums program Leo fitted out museums from Milikapiti to Tennant Creek and from Pine Creek to Yirrkala. Due to government rules of the day, Leo had to retire a day before his 65th birthday, which now is a young pup. It was a huge loss for the museum, but Leo found a way to keep contributing to the community and nourishing his love of engines and his love of history.

From 1999, for over a quarter of a century, Leo worked at the historic 1934 Qantas Hangar in Parap as a founding and life member of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club. There he built the extraordinary and significant Izod collection, which today exhibits so much of our mechanical and industrial history and is truly a national treasure. He worked on major restoration projects such as the Sandfly locomotive, the AEC truck and the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club's Thornycroft. The collection includes some 80 engines, 40 of which are Australian made. The engines range from a 1912 Hornsby at the Adelaide River railway station to a Southern Cross engine that pumped a bore on the Brunette Downs. Leo recorded the history of the Northern Territory and Australia through objects rather than words. Leo believed that the humble internal combustion engine built in the Territory and that every engine scrapped or sold interstate was a piece of our shared story lost.

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Societies need people like Leo Izod, dedicated, meticulous and generous souls who preserve and catalogue so much of our history and help us understand ourselves. His encyclopaedic knowledge about the Territory stations, mines, machinery and industrial history was unmatched. Leo lived a good and full life. It was a life and story that speaks to a different time and a different Australia. His quiet, dedicated service leaves a legacy that will help generations to come understand and appreciate the history of the Northern Territory and its people.

In preparing this condolence motion, I corresponded with Leo's beloved daughter, Tanya. At the bottom of Tanya's email signature was the following quote by American author Leo Rosten:

> *… the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be honourable, to be compassionate. It is, above all, to matter: to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all.*

We can truly say that Leo Izod lived his life according to those tenants. His contribution to the Northern Territory and Australia over his life was both profound and enduring. Darwin and the Northern Territory mourns Leo's passing and will remember him with great fondness. On behalf of the people of the Northern Territory and on behalf of the Parliament, I extend our deepest condolences to Leo's nine children, 28 grandchildren and 37 great grandchildren—all of whom live in the Northern Territory—and to many of his friends who are here today who love him dearly. I acknowledge all the friends and family who have come this evening for this condolence motion. Thank you very much, and we are all incredibly sorry for your loss. May he rest in eternal peace.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, we were deeply saddened to hear the passing of Mr Leo Izod. The Northern Territory has been shaped by people who have helped build our community, who have rolled up their sleeves, and when there was work to be done, they did it. Those who have left behind a legacy for future generations. Leo Kendall Charles Izod was one such Territorian. His extraordinary strength, passion and a lifetime of hard work and creativity are some of the descriptions that are important to share this evening.

In 1946, 12-year-old Leo arrived in Darwin, joining his father, Eric, who had served in the Army during the war. The Izod family became part of the fabric of post-war Darwin. Leo's dad established Izod Motors in 1946 and by 1948, the business became the first Holden dealership in the Top End, later expanding into Pine Creek and my home town of Katherine. Leo's own working life reflected the demands and opportunities of a very different Territory at the time. At 16-years-old, Leo drove road trains that were three trailers long to Tennant Creek; this job was not for the faint hearted. At the 87 mile jump up, he had to uncouple the trailers and then move them one by one. It was the type of work that demanded grit and strength; qualities that would define Leo throughout his life. It was a tough introduction to Territory life, but Leo was clearly well equipped for it.

The Izod family had also helped establish the Fannie Bay Turf Club, with Leo using a Caterpillar bulldozer to clear sections of the track, often getting bogged in the mangroves. Leo was no stranger to taking all that life that threw at him; he took it in his own stride. In 1952, he transported racehorses to Tennant Creek for the Gold Cup. In a wild turn of events, the horses went missing overnight. Leo found them eight miles out of town the next morning and he rode one bareback, leading the others back in time for the race. From that day on, the Gold Cup remains a treasured family keepsake. This image of Leo racing bareback into Darwin is iconic. It captures the unique flavour of the Territory, as well as Leo's special character; one that is resourceful, determined and not one to shy away from a challenge.

In 1954, Leo married Lucy Marlene O'Neil in Darwin, where they raised their family and the generations here today. In the years that followed, he worked at Killarney Station, and from 1963 lived with his family at Bamyili, now Barunga, in my electorate of Arnhem, where he taught mechanics to local Aboriginal Territorians and kept the community's power supply running.

After returning to Darwin, Leo worked in education, including at Darwin High School and Kormilda College, before joining the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in 1988.

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Northern Territory noted in their condolences that Leo's hands-on ability was legendary, that his knowledge of the Northern Territory was second to none and that Leo was a dedicated, hardworking team member who travelled throughout the Northern Territory to help revitalise regional museums and preserve the Territory's industrial heritage. What an incredible way to be remembered.

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At the museum, he brought together his mechanical expertise and his passion for the past, rescuing and restoring engines, pumps, fuel bowsers and other machinery from across the Northern Territory. Boy, I am sure each part had its own history. Leo's collection now lives on at the historic Qantas Hangar in Parap in Darwin.

As Engineering Heritage Australia recognised in 2004, Leo's collection reflected decades of dedication to restoring machinery that might otherwise would have been lost to history. We are incredibly lucky to be able to visit Leo's work today and gain a true understanding and appreciation of what life was like back then in the Territory. Then Leo retired.

Leo Izod lived a life that reflected the spirit of the Northern Territory. Leo witnessed Darwin's rebuild and growth. He worked side by side with people in our remote communities and helped preserve the physical reminders of our shared past. Leo's knowledge, skills and contribution will be deeply missed across the Northern Territory.

On behalf of our Labor opposition, I extend my sincere condolences to all who loved Leo and acknowledge the lasting contribution that Leo has made to the Northern Territory and the broader community of Australia. I especially acknowledge, on behalf of my team, Leo's family and friends who are here this evening. Know that his proud legacy will live on through the many generations of Izods to come.

Vale, Leo Izod.

Mr MALEY (Nelson): Mr Deputy Speaker, today I have the honour to say a few words about the contribution of the great Territorian, Mr Leo Izod, who passed away at 92 years of age. I start by offering my condolences to Leo's friends and family. Some are here tonight. I just hosted a balcony function. Thank you for attending and sharing your stories.

I had the pleasure of knowing some of the Izod family as long-term locals in rural area. It was also one of the great Territory families who started here a long time ago.

In preparing this speech, I rang up my dad. I said, 'Dad, do you know about Leo Izod? He said, 'Of course I know Leo Izod because back in those days everyone knew everyone'. He recalled crossing paths with Leo on many occasions, especially when my dad became the President of the Litchfield Shire. He described him as the salt of the earth, a through and through good bloke who was always helping others, a true Territorian. Then he said, 'Also a man who could fix anything'.

When we look at Leo's life, that generosity and spirit is on every page of it. He gave his time willingly to support museums across the Northern Territory and shared his knowledge freely with fellow collectors, colleagues and friends.

I am also told that Leo assisted up to 33 regional museums across the Territory as the 'go and fix it' man who could put his hand on anything mechanical.

As you have heard tonight, Leo was well-known for his restoration of old projects, including the World War I AEC war truck. Leo procured parts from all over Australia to get that truck back together.

In the early stages of my career I had an opportunity to see Leo's work up close and personal at the 2 ½ Mile Workshop. As a young apprentice, I remember working on that war truck. For some reason I remember putting the fan belt on. I remember because fan belt was one you could not just buy off the shelf; you had to put it together bit by bit because it was a really big fan and putting it on. I remember the engine turning up on the bus and so I remember being a young apprentice my job was to clean it up, so away I would go with old Tom, the workshop foreman who would tell us what to do. I remember then him starting this thing. As a young fellow back in the day I thought, 'Wow, who would drive this truck anywhere?' It has a big fan and a big motor sitting there and it was just amazing to see that thing grow back into life.

I feel touched to be able to physically work on one of these projects that Leo had. It was Leo's work that enabled the amazing restoration and his experience for me as a young apprentice coming all the way from Howard Springs into the big smoke at the 2½ mile workshop. I understand that truck is still on display today.

A true Territorian, Leo Izod spent each day of his life quietly and steadily working to make the Territory a better place, preserving history for future generations. Tonight I am humbled to contribute to preserving his history, his legacy, as he did for the Territory.

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May he rest in peace.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also pay tribute to a remarkable Territorian, Leo Kendall Charles Izod, and I apologise in advance to some of the family members and friends here today. You might hear some stories repeating every now and again because we do not check each other's speeches, so sometimes we double up on some of the information, so hope you will bear with us.

Leo Kendall Charles Izod was a man whose life was woven into the history of the Northern Territory, and his contribution will be remembered for generations to come. I would like to also acknowledge Leo's family and friends and members of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club of the Northern Territory who knew him not just as a collector or a mechanic, but as a mate, a mentor and a genuinely wonderful Territory character.

Leo was born in Melbourne on 29 January 1934 and arrived in Darwin with his family in 1946 when he was just 12 years old. His father established Izod Motors in Darwin, and it was not long before young Leo developed what would become a lifelong passion for engines, machinery and absolutely everything mechanical. In fact, by the age of just 16, as we have heard, Leo was already driving semi-trailers loaded with fuel between Darwin and Katherine. Nowadays I think a 16-year-old driving a road train might raise a few eyebrows with some licensing authorities, but that was the Territory that Leo grew up in—a place where hard work, practical skills and the willingness to have a go were a part of everyday life, and Leo certainly had all three of those in abundance.

In 1954, at just 20 years of age, Leo married Marlene, beginning a lifelong partnership that would see them raise nine children, Ian, Shane, Leonie, Marlene, Tony, Margaret, Bernadette, Tanya and Sasha. Their family would grow to include many grandchildren, as we have heard, and many great-grandchildren—a wonderful family legacy alongside Leo's extraordinary contribution to the Northern Territory.

Throughout his working life, Leo travelled extensively across the Territory. He worked as a mechanic, a vehicle inspector and a mechanical instructor, including in Alice Springs, Areyonga, Barunga and at Kormilda College, but what made Leo truly special was that he understood something that many of us might easily overlook. He understood that the history of the Northern Territory was not just written in books; it was also written in the machinery that helped build it, the old entrance that pumped water on remote cattle stations, the generators that brought electricity to isolated communities, the trucks that carried supplies across enormous distances, the tractors, the drilling rigs, the machinery that helped develop the Territory long before the conveniences we take for granted today.

To most people, an old, rusted engine abandoned in a paddock might have looked like scrap metal, but to Leo it was a piece of Territory history worth saving, and save it he did. Over many decades, Leo travelled across the Territory, recovering, restoring and preserving historic engines and machinery that might otherwise have been lost forever. His collection grew to around 80 engines, many lovingly restored to working order, and he did not just collect them; he knew their stories, where they came from, what they had been used for, who had operated them and the important part they played in building our Territory.

Leo's remarkable skills also made him an invaluable part of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, where he helped preserve our industrial and transport heritage. Among many of his achievements, Leo was involved in restoring the historic AEC Government Road Train, and a 1918 AEC truck from the First World War. These were not simple projects. They required patience, ingenuity, determination and a level of mechanical knowledge that few people possessed. By all accounts, Leo had an extraordinary ability to look at a problem, reach into his pocket for a tape measure and somehow work out exactly what needed to be done—no complicated plans, no endless meetings, just Leo, his tools and a lifetime of experience.

There is something wonderfully Territorian about that.

Leo was also the founding and life member of the MBEC Club. For many years he could be found at the historic Qantas Hangar in Parap. For those of us familiar with that wonderful building, it is difficult to separate its history from Leo's contribution.

He spent countless hours there restoring machinery, sharing his knowledge, welcoming visitors and helping fellow enthusiasts. That is where I met Leo for the first time a few years back. That generosity is an important part of his legacy.

Leo was not someone who kept his knowledge to himself; he shared it freely, encouraged others and helped ensure that the next generation could appreciate the ingenuity and determination of those who came before us.

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There is something particularly moving about a person who dedicates so much of their life to preserving the past. In doing so, Leo was actually looking after our future. He was making sure that our children, grandchildren, your children and your grandchildren, and generations yet to come, would have the opportunity to understand how this extraordinary place was built—not just through photographs or written records, but through the machines that helped make it all possible.

As the Member for Fannie Bay, I feel particularly proud that so much of Leo's contribution is connected to Parap and the surrounding community. The Qantas Hangar stands as an important reminder of our Territory's aviation and transport history. Leo played an enormous part in keeping that history alive. I can confirm that every time I go in there, somebody is talking about Leo. His memory is definitely there.

I am extremely happy to bring my contribution about Leo to this Chamber. I thank everyone for supporting the opportunity for this parliament to formally recognise his life and his achievements.

However, today is more about recognising an extraordinary collection of machinery; it is really about recognising an extraordinary man who loved his family, his community, the Territory and dedicated so much of his life to preserving history.

To Marlene, the children, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, their entire family and their friends, I extend my heartfelt condolences. I hope that you take much great comfort and pride in knowing just how much Leo meant to so many people and how deeply his contribution is appreciated.

Leo spent a lifetime bringing old engines back to life and, through that work, he helped keep the stories of the Northern Territory alive and well.

The engines that he restored may continue to run for generations, but it is the generosity, knowledge, friendship and spirit of the man behind them that will be remembered the most. On behalf of the CLP, we value what Leo contributed to the Northern Territory. We thank you for allowing us to have this event tonight. Rest peacefully, Leo. Thank you for everything that you gave to the Northern Territory.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Mr Deputy Speaker, Leo Kendall Charles Izod passed away earlier this year on 2 August 2026. As we all know and have heard, Leo traversed the Territory rescuing pieces of our mechanical industrial history and ensuring they were not lost to scrap heaps or interstate collectors.

I could talk about the many dozens of engines he save, but we have heard quite a list today. The thing about Leo was he loved sharing his knowledge and passion for engine, motors and all things machinery. That love is, no doubt, why he spent 18 years as a technical instructor at Kormilda College and another 12 at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory as their technical officer, where he was responsible for the care and preservation of the museum's mechanical and industrial collections before retiring at the low age—now you would think—of 65.

For a number of years, Leo was a regular stallholder at the Freds Pass Rural Show as it was called then, the Darwin Show, the Katherine Show and museum pop-up stalls showing off his engines and displays to make sure that he could share his knowledge and the history of those engines with as many people as possible.

When you consider those decades of teaching, his work at the museum, his involvement in the motor enthusiast clubs and other various Darwin institutes and his countless display at the shows across the Territory, it is fair to say Leo touched the lives of thousands of Territorians. Whether it was a young apprentice or student learning the ropes, a fellow mechanic looking for advice, a child fascinated by an old engine roaring back to life or simply someone stopping for a chat, Leo always seemed to have the time to share with what he knew.

He did not just restore engines; he inspired generations of mechanics, collectors and enthusiasts to take an interest in our mechanical history, to learn how things work and to appreciate the ingenuity and hard work of those who came before us. Importantly, he did it because he genuinely loved it. There was no expectation of recognition or reward. He simply wanted to share his passion and make sure that an important part of the Territory's history was never forgotten.

The Territory, despite our large size, is a uniquely small jurisdiction. I may not have known Leo personally, but over the past few weeks as I have run into people, picked up the phone or had a chat with somebody, I have asked a simple question: 'Hey, do you know Leo Izod?' The answer time and again has been yes. What

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has struck me the most is not just how many people knew Leo or knew the family; it is what they had to say about him.

Not once have I heard a bad word. Now I do not know if I have not met the right people, but everyone I met just spoke about a kind, generous and genuine man who was always willing to lend a hand or stop and have a chat and share his knowledge—someone who was incredibly talented. That came up time and again from some of the old boys in Darwin. Apparently, he had a magic. He was a wizard when it came to all thing's mechanic. No matter what he did, he never lost that down to earth Territory character.

It should come as no surprise that Leo was so well known. Tracing his link to the Territory back to 1946 when he moved up, he spent time over the years in Alice Springs, Areyonga, Katherine, Barunga, Killarney Station at the southern tip of the Victoria River Downs district and, of course, Darwin. He traversed the Territory time and again, making sure to say hello to apparently everybody on the way. He well and truly made the Territory his home.

Raising the nine children we heard previously listed—and we know that his family has now grown to include the 28 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren, all of whom live in the Territory. It must be said that his contribution to population growth to the Northern Territory is probably more significant than anything the Northern Territory Government has ever done. That is an incredible amount of duty. That alone is an extraordinary legacy for generations of families with their roots firmly planted here in the Territory.

Kelvin Bugg, who knew Leo when Kelvin worked in Koolpinyah many years ago. Told me of Leo coming to rescue and repurpose some old engines and generators from the station for preservation. Kelvin described Leo to me as a lovely, honest man. He loved playing with those old diesel generators, the bloody great mechanic and above all else, an utter gentleman.

Danny Skewes described him to me as a stalwart Territorian, with a family known for being big community people, constantly giving back and a nice bloke.

I think those two descriptions capture Leo beautifully, A talented mechanic, an honest man, an utter gentleman and someone who gave back so much to the community that he called home.

I also want to share some of the comments that people have made on social media over the past few weeks because I think it is important they are preserved.

Liz Martin said, 'Leo was a true character of the heritage vehicle movement and an active member of several clubs in Darwin. He was a very enthusiastic participant in any and everything that happened at the old Qantas hangar at Parap. We send our love and condolences to Marlene, family and friends, especially to members of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiast Club of Darwin who no doubt will miss his cheeky grin, solid mateship and an outstanding knowledge well into the future.'

Bev Phelt said, 'Leo, you were the most amazing man. You and your team of other supermen have restored so much to SCADA machinery from stations and out bush and put it on display at the hangar. Another golden Oldie has left us.'

The Museum and Art Gallery paid tribute to Leo, acknowledging that the MAGNT staff were deeply saddened to hear the passing of Leo Izod and to extend their deepest condolences to the family of Leo at this difficult time. Leo joined MAGNT in 1988 from the Department of Education and went on to serve as a technical officer in the Territory history section until his retirement in 1999.

Leo's passion was the retrieval, restoration and preservation of historic industrial technology. From trucks and stationery engines to pumps and countless other pieces of machinery, his skills helped bring the Territory's history to life. His hands-on ability was legendary, and he was a valued member of the Regional Museums team, travelling throughout the NT to help revitalise regional museums for locals and visitors alike. Leo's knowledge of the Northern Territory's history was second to none, and his contribution to preserving the Territory's industrial heritage will be remembered with great appreciation. He will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

Judy Anictomatis from the Royal Darwin Show Society had this to say:

'Mr Leo Izard was a well-known, respected member of the Darwin community, particularly among members of the Royal Darwin Show Society, who fondly remember his passion for vintage engines, motors and machinery.

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‘Leo had a deep appreciation for the mechanical ingenuity and craftsmanship of generations past. Through his regular display at the Royal Darwin Show, he generously shared his remarkable knowledge of historical machinery, engines and mechanical relics, helping to preserve an important part of our history.

‘His enthusiasm was infectious, and he took great pleasure in sharing his knowledge and stories with fellow enthusiasts.

Leo will be remembered not only for his expertise but also for his dedication to keeping the machinery and traditions of yesteryear alive for future generations.

‘He will be sadly missed by the Royal Darwin Show Society community and his contribution to the Show and its rich history will be fondly remembered.’

When you hear all these tributes from friends, fellow enthusiasts, community organisations and the institutions he worked with, a clear picture emerges of the man Leo Izod was. He was a man who was respected for his knowledge, admired for his skills and, most importantly, loved for his character. He was the sort of Territorian who made our community what it is, someone who is prepared to roll up his sleeves, get his hands dirty, help a mate and pass on what he knew to the next generation.

While Leo may have spent much of his life preserving the machinery of generations past, his greatest contribution may well have been inspiring the generations who followed him. I have no doubt that there are mechanics working in workshops across the Territory today, collectors restoring old engines in their sheds and enthusiasts keeping our motor history alive, who can trace at least some of their interests and knowledge back to Leo. Some may have been taught by him directly; others may have met him at a show, popped by the old hangar, listened to one of his stories or watched in fascination as he brought an old engine back to life.

Those encounters may have seemed small at the time, but over a lifetime they add up to an extraordinary contribution—thousands of people across many decades who were fortunate enough to learn something from Leo, share a laugh with him or simply enjoy his company. Leo’s legacy lives on not only in those restored engines and memorabilia at the Qantas hangar, but in his friends, his family and everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. It lives on in the knowledge he passed down, the skills he taught, the friendships he made and the countless pieces of Territory history that otherwise would have been lost forever. It lives on in that generation of mechanics and enthusiasts who continue the work that he was so passionate about.

We often talk about the people who help build the Northern Territory. Leo Izod was someone who made sure that we never forgot how it was built or the people and the machinery that made it possible. But beyond all of that, he was simply a good man, a kind man, a true gentleman who gave generously of his time, his knowledge and himself. I think there would be no greater tribute to someone’s life than to be remembered so fondly by so many.

The Territory is a better place for having had Leo Izod help shape it and preserve its history. To his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, extended family and friends, I offer my sincere condolences.

Rest in peace, Leo. Thank you for everything you gave the Territory.

While I am on my feet, I would like to table a copy of Leo Izod’s eulogy, the Facebook post announcing his departure, a copy of the biography and personal profiles that can be preserved for future generations.

Leave granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the whole Assembly, I pass on my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Leo Izod. I ask—for those who can—to stand for one minute’s silence to honour his great life. Thank you very much.

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

Mrs ZIO: Mr Deputy Speaker, sorry; I got caught up in the emotion of my speech and mistakenly forgot to seek leave to table some photos of the early years of Leo Izod and Izod Motors. I am hoping I can seek leave to table the photos.

Leave granted.

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Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Mr Deputy Speaker, as everyone in this House knows, if I had the option today, being a Wednesday, I would be at my beloved Dinah Beach Yacht Club eating chicken wings from Ton's Bistro. Once again, I reiterate, these are the best chicken wings in Darwin, if not the country. I rise tonight though to make some serious observations regarding the Dinah Beach Cruising Yacht Association, as it is more properly known, specifically with regard to its economic and social value. I do so because I unashamedly today want to begin more clearly prosecuting the case for its need for infrastructure upgrades in the best interests of the Territory.

Supporting Dinah Beach gives us an opportunity to support community growth in our marine sector. Before I say anything else, let me again clearly state that I serve as the patron of Dinah Beach Yacht Club. I value it and am honoured to be recently asked to continue in that role.

Dinah Beach Yacht Club is situated in the inner harbour of Darwin on the banks of Sadgroves Creek. It is a unique community club. It is positioned just two kilometres from Darwin CBD off Tiger Brennan Drive, and it is a short walk from the Frances Bay Mooring Basin and also from the Tipperary Waters Marina.

From humble beginnings in 1982, the club now boasts a healthy membership that increases year on year, and the members are a diverse cross-section of people. You have inner harbour boat people comprising sailors and fishermen, pleasure boat and charter boat owners as well as the general public who use the facility. The clubhouse itself comprises a publicly accessible bar and open-air partially covered licensed premise which operates seven days a week and the kitchen is likewise open seven days a week and operated by an external contractor, Ton's Bistro, and is one of the fastest growing eating venues and catering operations in Darwin currently.

The club proudly has no gambling facilities, and the club receives little to no government support, including for its iconic Viking funeral, which it puts on in July every year which attracts some 2,000 participants locally and many from interstate. The site has a 92-bay parking vehicle facility which provides for overnight parking for those living on boats. It offers mail delivery, letter and parcel services for members on boats and Sadgroves Creek and in inner harbour, as well as basic DIY workshop space, a boat ramp, dinghy storage racks, dinghy storage, trailer space and so on and so forth.

Perhaps the most significant for today's purposes is the club offers a good range of practical DIY yachting facilities for both local and visiting yachtsmen and women from around Australia and internationally.

It is important for us to recognise that Darwin is the first point of entry for many yachts arriving from Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines. It is the preferred point of exit for boats leaving northern Australia. From this aspect, the club makes a significant contribution to both tourism and our local economy.

There is a common use facility at the site, a pontoon. It is the pontoon I want to draw your attention to today. Many people who stay for a few weeks or months, or dwell on their vessels on private or government owned inner hub moorings, rely solely on the club for access and ancillary services via this club's pontoon.

There is no other facility in Darwin that provides this all-tied land access where dinghies can be docked. There is no facility in the inner harbour that has all weather access to the land, notwithstanding in the outer harbour Cullen Bay and Mandorah do have similar facilities.

This means anyone trying to get off a boat to access our CBD, the city or the light industrial areas has to wait for the right weather conditions.

Stokes Hill Wharf boat ramp and other jetties in the inner harbour are all exposed to the swell, wave tides and tidal challenges. You can be the richest person in the world or a simple fishermen, but if the wind is blowing at 15 to 20 knots, it is unsafe to get off in the jetty in the inner harbour, unless you use that pontoon.

The investment made at Mandorah, Cullen Bay and, more recently, in the Gove boat harbour is required to allow safe access in the inner harbour.

Dinah Beach, with its ageing pontoon, is well positioned if that infrastructure is upgraded to address these needs. In much the same way we are investing in shift lifts to attract marine business to Darwin's inner harbour, we need to invest in an all-weather, safe landing place for tenders as well.

It makes little sense to have a northern harbour project without a safe landing space, but tenders coming from boats in the inner harbour or people from visiting vessels, who want to spend time onshore sightseeing

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or patronising local shops, with peace of mind their ship tenders are in secure locations during their visit to Darwin. If they leave their tender overnight, that it is secure in the knowledge that it is behind locked security gates.

Let us discuss the scale of what these services are. I have limited time today to go through chapter and verse, but Dinah Beach is the hub for yacht racing tourism recreation. There are significant economic benefits in this regard.

Dinah Beach operates a calendar of local, offshore and international racing which is cherished by our local communities and attracts national and international interests. Through their international Spice Islands connection, the yacht race has also nurtured strong connections with our Indonesian counterparts, in particular, and supported boats from up to seven other international rallies padding through Darwin enroute to Indonesia. This year it was my privilege to help support them in the inaugural Darwin to Banda Neira International Yacht Race where we had 17 boats participating, 14 successfully completing the race and many people involved, with a huge economic multiplier effect locally and, indeed, for Banda.

When you compare the payoff from cruise ships and from the Sail Indonesia rallies, you will see that we had a significantly larger number of vessels involved in this activity, with longer stays and more money being spent and so on and so forth.

Returning to infrastructure, the other thing I want to draw attention to is the hard stand facility and careening pole facility. The club holds an occupational licence of a Crown land CL 2318 where the pontoon is located. The concrete wall spans the southern face of the club's water channel. The club also occupies Lot 6475 in a regular land and water parcel of one hectare and 4,400 square metres and was granted a Crown lease in perpetuity for the purposes of the Yacht Association and ancillary from the Northern Territory Government in 1996, incorporating previous titles.

In addition to that floating pontoon which accommodates 20 dinghies, Dinah Beach provides that hard stand facility's 30 sites, including 24 long-side sites in the boat park and six short-term sites on the Dinah Beach Wharf. The careening pole facility's five sites two sites specifically designed for containment capture.

What I am getting at is that the significant issue of note is that the demand for these facilities is growing. There is considerable data to indicate that new sailboat sales are dropping, but the second-hand market is growing significantly. Upgrading those facilities is a great idea, because if you provide facilities to maintain and look after used boats, you are in a booming business position.

I will wrap up my remarks and come back to these at a later stage so as to give due credit to these remarks, if that is okay. I simply note my thanks to the General Manager, Wendy McCallum and Rear Commodore Sarah Meldrum and the Commodore Adam Gullo.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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