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15th Assembly



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Debates and Questions



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Madam Speaker Lambley took the Chair at 10 am.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Member for Nightcliff

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I move that leave of absence be granted to the Member for Nightcliff for personal reasons.

Leave granted.

HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 55

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Housing Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 55, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the *Housing Act 1982*. These amendments will allow the remote rent framework to operate, as originally intended, into the future. Specifically, they will clarify that in making future rent determinations the minister is not required to afford any person who would be affected by the decision an opportunity to be heard in relation to the determination.

The Northern Territory Government's remote rent framework introduced by the previous government commenced on 6 February 2023 and allowed for rents to be set for different sized dwellings in remote communities by determinations made by the minister under the Act.

Recent proceedings in the High Court invalidated the remote rent framework. I have instructed my department to conduct a comprehensive review of rent setting in remote communities with the intention of developing a robust, fair and sustainable framework.

It is vital to pass these amendments—and to pass them now—so that we have a legally valid remote rent framework. The proposed amendments are necessary to comply with the High Court decision.

I commend this Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be declared to be urgent.

Motion agreed to.

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I move that the second reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

SENTENCING AMENDMENT (MURDER) BILL
Serial 51

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Sentencing Amendment (Murder) Bill 2026, Serial 51, and table the explanatory statement.

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

In the Northern Territory domestic violence murders are seven times the national average according to ABS data. According to the Coroner, 87 women have been killed by their partners in the Northern Territory since 2000. Those numbers are confronting. They represent Territorians whose lives were taken and families whose lives were changes forever. There are children growing up without parents, parents burying their children and communities left grieving and angry. Enough is enough.

The purpose of this Bill is clear. It amends the *Sentencing Act 1995* to require a mandatory minimum non-parole period of 25 years' imprisonment for the murder of a current or former intimate partner except in exceptional circumstances. It increases the existing standard non-parole period from a 20-year sentence to a minimum mandatory sentence of 25 years non-parole. It places intimate partner murder alongside the most serious categories of offending recognised under Territory law, including the murder of a public official acting in the course of their duties and the murder of a child.

Other jurisdictions have recognised the need to treat this crime differently. In November 2025 New South Wales set a standard non-parole period of 25 years for intimate partner murder. The Northern Territory is going further. These changes will apply a mandatory minimum 25-year non-parole period. The Territory has the highest rates of domestic violence and DV murders in the country.

We are serious about driving down the rates of DV murders, and that is why I am bringing this Bill to the House.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms BOOTHBY(Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 4 March 2026.

Motion agreed.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL
Serial 51

Ms BOOTHBY: Madam Speaker, I present a Bill titled Electrical Safety Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 50, and table the explanatory statement.

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

The purpose of the Electrical Safety Amendment Bill 2026 is simple and practical: permanently remove unnecessary red tape without compromising safety. The Bill amends the *Electrical Safety Act 2022* to establish a permanent exemption from the requirement for electricians to issue a certificate of compliance (COC) for certain low-risk electrical work. Specifically, the exemption applies where electrical work involves the swapping out or replacement of an existing fitting or appliance connected to an electrical installation with a new one and where that work does not affect or alter the overall capacity, safety or functioning of the electrical installation.

In simpler terms, this means that electricians will no longer be required to complete paperwork in triplicate, lodge it with the Electrical Safety Regulator; and retain records for up to 30 years when undertaking routine low-risk, like-for-like work such as replacing a light fitting or appliance with an equivalent item. That paperwork did nothing to improve safety, but it added time, costs and frustration for electricians, businesses and Territory households who ultimately wore the extra cost.

In November 2024, the first few weeks of our government, we established the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce to provide expert real-world advice on easing unnecessary regulatory burdens on business and industry. The taskforce delivered its report, Saying 'Yes' to Business, to government in May 2025. One of its recommendations was that the Act be reviewed to identify new low-risk electrical work that could be exempted from the requirement to issue a certificate of compliance.

Section 42(1)(c) of the Act already allows the Electrical Safety Regulator to exempt electrical work from the requirement to have a certificate of compliance. Acting on the taskforce recommendation, the regulator issued an interim exemption under section 42(1)(c) for like-for-like electrical work, which took effect on 1 January 2026. That interim exemption has been embraced by industry. It has operated safely in practice, and it has done exactly what is intended to do: reduce unnecessary red tape without increasing risks.

This Bill now gives permanent legislative effect to that exemption. This is a clear example of how regulation should work. It is targeted, risk based and practical. It respects the professionalism of qualified electricians, reduces costs and delays for Territorians and maintains strong safety standards where they genuinely matter. For homeowners, small business and tradies, it means lower compliance costs and fewer barriers to get work done without any compromise to safety.

This Bill shows that we can restore the balance to cut red tape, support industry and protect the community at the same time

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a first time.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for report by 4 March 2026.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
The Year Ahead – 2026

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand alongside my government parliamentary colleagues, united as a disciplined and diverse team, ready for another year of hard work delivering on our plan to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle.

On Monday, in front of hundreds of Territorians, I outlined our government's year ahead. Last year the government promised that 2025 would be a year of action, certainty and security. I am proud to say that we delivered that. This year will be anchored by growth, certainty and security—growth in our economy, workforce and population; certainty for families, businesses and investors; and security in our communities, jobs and way of life.

Our focus on the year ahead is underpinned by the strong foundation we laid in 2025, which was our first year of government. It was a year of action, and we focused on the job that Territorians elected us to do. We made hard decisions and laid the groundwork for what comes next.

In 2026 Territorians will see us deliver the next phase of our plan for a better Territory. Reducing crime was the number one priority when we came to government, and it remains our number one priority today. Just eight weeks after the election we acted swiftly in response to Labor's crime crisis, delivering our reducing-crime package on urgency to strengthen police powers and restore community safety.

In 2025 we continued with a deliberate and consistent sequence of law and order reforms. I make no apology for our approach. Territorians elected us to do a job, and we are doing it. Our Reducing Crime strategy is clear: community safety comes first; victims come first; and serious offending is met with real consequences while we tackle the root causes of crime.

On 6 January 2025 Declan's law commenced in honour of Declan Laverty, the 20-year-old bottle shop worker murdered by a violent offender out on bail. Early signs showed that fewer high-risk offenders were being released back into the community, but in April, tragedy struck. Linford Feick, a beloved husband, father and shop owner, never returned home after being stabbed at his business—a place that he and his family committed their lives' work to and a bedrock of the Nightcliff community.

I recalled parliament as a matter of urgency and extended Declan's law to be the strongest bail laws in the country and to ensure judges must personally satisfy themselves that an offender does not pose a risk to the community through a double test.

We were determined that the lives and the pain and anguish of Declan, Linford and other Territorians who lost their lives, like Bangladeshi student Sifat Rahman and DV campaigner R Rubuntja, would not be in vain.

The results of our actions so far are clear. From January to November last year, the number of victims of crime fell by nearly 10%. That is 2,223 fewer victims of crime in less than a year. There is more work to do. Our efforts also delivered a 2% reduction in domestic violence, which grew by 80% on Labor's watch. Territory-wide commercial break-ins are down by 26%, and home break-ins are down by 30%. For the first time in a long time people in Alice Springs feel good, and locals are loving it.

We had one of the best summers; we cannot wait to get the full data. I quote some feedback I have received over the summer:

'There are no sirens around town all day and night. People are venturing out to eat after hours, and the town is far better than it has been in a long time.'

'My wife and I are even going to the movies tonight'.

'The Christmas period was the best period for quite a few years as antisocial behaviour and all things crime were noticeably improved'.

What we are doing is working. The CEO of Tourism Central Australia, Danial Rochford, said, 'After a better-than-expected summer, tourism operators are not talking about concern; they are talking about confidence. Upcoming bookings at the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre are up by 10% from this time last year, and for the first time in a long while there is a genuine sense of optimism about the year ahead.'

That is a powerful sign of confidence returning. When communities feel safe, people stay, families invest, businesses grow and towns thrive.

In 2025 we delivered the first tranche of our *Youth Justice Act* amendments to expand the list of serious offences ineligible for automatic youth diversion. We made sure the courts can now consider a youth's full criminal history when sentencing for adult offences. We also removed detention as a last resort and gave stronger powers to our hardworking youth justice officers. This was on top of lowering the age of criminal responsibility; introducing new public nuisance drinking laws; increasing police powers to protect domestic violence victims; delivering our election commitment for a 000 call centre in Alice Springs with Aboriginal language speakers; and appointing Martin Dole as the new Police Commissioner—a Centralian with a deep appreciation of law enforcement across the Northern Territory.

We did not just back our police with words; we backed them with action, stronger powers and the best pay deal in 20 years. We also strengthened banned drinker orders, extending them from seven to 28 days following clear evidence from Katherine. A shout-out goes to Terry Zhang from Katherine; police did excellent work and showed that with targeted action to reduce alcohol harm, the community thrives. In the last six weeks alone, police issued more than 1,000 banned drinker orders to problem drunks, which is a great result. All that aside, there is much more work to do.

In 2026 the work continues. We will review our 12-month OC spray trial, which started in September last year. This decision empowered Territorians in their own self-defence. More than 3,000 canisters have been lawfully purchased, and there have been only eight reported incidents of OC spray usage since the start of the trial. If that trial continues successfully, we will legislate to make it a permanent option for people to use as self-defence.

This month we will welcome our first squad of police public safety officers through the police college. We have been working on this project all year, and late last year we passed the legislation and did the groundwork for this biggest policing reform in a generation.

Our new police public safety officer stream will amalgamate some of the police auxiliary streams—for example, PALIs in the regions, which is important; transit safety officers on buses and at bus depots; and public housing safety officers who respond to concerns in public housing. It brings them all together under the police umbrella with police training, and their sole focus will be public facing. The police public safety officers will be at public events, in public spaces, at shopping centres, at public housing, on public transport and at bottle shops in the regions. They will be a huge part of the change over the coming years as we build those numbers.

In Question Time yesterday I mentioned that the first squad will start on 23 February, and we have a full squad ready to go. Forty people applied; we wish we could take 40 on a squad, but we cannot. There is plenty of interest in this new role, and we are looking forward to it.

Mr Howe: Drysdale is excited.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Drysdale is excited; that is what I want to hear. We will send a few your way, Member for Drysdale.

This is on top of the three full constable squads that we will put through the police college this year off the back of the 201 new police who graduated last year.

This year we will deliver our second tranche of the youth justice and sentencing reforms—thank you, Attorney-General.

In 2025 we injected $237.1m into our justice system to address Labor's systemic failure in this space. On top of that, we created the Targeted Intervention Group – Early Resolution Taskforce (TIG-ER) to intervene earlier in cases because of the huge remand and court backlog. It was not delivering for victims. That team alone—that one policy decision—has resulted in the finalisation of 602 matters that were clogging up our court system, not delivering for victims and not delivering justice, and 65% of those early resolutions ended up with an early guilty plea, which is a good result.

We also appointed the largest number of judges in the Territory's history and delivered a $1.5bn historic law and order budget. This work saw remand pressures decrease. Between May and September it eased by 12%, and as of 30 June the length of time people spent on remand dropped by 7%. This is despite the enormous pressure we put on the system through our strengthening of laws and more people being held accountable for their actions. These reforms are delivering justice to victims sooner, which is what we want.

When we came to government, a lack of planning and investment saw prisoners crammed into watch houses, impeding the ability for police to do their job. Labor was using police watch houses as prisons, which meant that police could not use them. Thanks to our Corrections Infrastructure Master Plan delivered by the Deputy Chief Minister, Gerard Maley, we created 740 new prison beds last year; that is effectively an entire new prison. That emptied the Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs watch houses of prisoners and, importantly, prison officers, who are custody professionals and need to be in prisons supporting the work to reduce recidivism.

By the end of last year we also reopened the Darwin watch house, which had not been used by police as a watch house for three years. That is good news for the constituents of Fannie Bay, Fong Lim and Port Darwin because it means that police are back on the street faster because they do not have to drive to the Palmerston watch house to deliver their arrest, go through the process and turn around and come back. It means they can deal with the arrest faster. We will continue to put on that pressure, because it is important.

On top of that we also added 226 Corrections staff and streamlined prison management to stop police and Corrections officers from acting as babysitters and taxidrivers for courts and hospitals. These are jobs that police officers and Corrections staff should never have to do. Thanks to the reform by the Deputy Chief Minister, private contractor G4S now does those jobs. Territorians will see that build-up of G4S continue in 2026. Thirty-five recruits are starting this month, which is fantastic.

I want to give everyone an idea of the amazing benefit that G4S has to the system. At the Alice Springs court police used to do all the security work. They were the ones watching the prisoners and securing the court. There were seven dedicated police resources doing that babysitting job. By having G4S there, we have put seven police back on the front line, which is an incredible result. When we replicate that for hospital transfers and people coming in and out of court every day, the efficiency and impact adds up. We will continue to upscale with G4S.

We will also focus on rehabilitation and training of prisoners. We did a power of work on that last year. I shout out to Corrections staff, because they have done an incredible job. That agency has gone from being buried at the bottom of Attorney-General and Justice to being a fully-fledged independent agency that is kicking goals, delivering community safety and rising to every challenge we throw at it. I cannot thank the agency enough for the work it has done. I am so proud of that agency.

We will focus on our mandatory alcohol treatment program, led by Minister Edgington, starting in the Corrections system and getting on with tackling the root causes of crime.

Just in the six months to 31 December 2025 we now have 124 prisoners in work camps, going out and working every day; 35 prisoners in Sentenced to a Job working for private industry every day, putting on the uniform of a private contractor, doing a hard day's work and coming back to prison; and 442 prisoners who have completed or are participating in accredited education or training courses. Prisoners are mowing seniors' lawns, doing community service and doing woodwork and metalwork, all of which had been pushed away and was off the table under Labor.

This year we will build a 198-bed prison work camp at CDU's Katherine campus, just outside of town. The Deputy Chief Minister just opened an 88-bed women's facility at the Darwin correctional precinct. That is a fantastic result. We made it clear at the election that we wanted women out of men's prisons, and that is what we are delivering.

In Central Australia we created the new bail support accommodation for young people so that people who are bailed through the courts can comply with all the requirements put on them and address some of the

reasons they offended in the first place. The youth boot camp facility in Alice Springs is going well. In the first half of this year we will complete construction of the remand centre, which is coming along nicely. That work continues, and the centre will open this year. There will be a need to build additional prison facilities in Darwin, and we will have more to say on that as the year progresses.

It is clear that tackling the root causes of crime is a focus for 2026. We need fewer people turning to a life of crime in the first place. We know that early intervention, rehabilitation, boot camps, getting kids to school and holding parents accountable helps break the cycle of offending. That is why the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, Robyn Cahill, invested $35m in programs that address domestic violence and support at-risk families with late-night interventions like our Circuit Breaker Program.

Many of the team have been out with the Circuit Breaker staff. I have spoken to them many times at the patrollers' group meeting in Alice Springs, which is held at 7 pm every night with all the agencies. They are doing an incredible job. This is when child protection professionals come in and deal with kids who are out on the street when they should not be. They are not offending, but they are not safe on the street, so we need to provide a different response.

The wraparound service we provide to ensure there is follow-up with families has been excellent. Evidence of that is the 200 family responsibility agreements that were signed last year. It is an incredible result. That is a contract between the government and the parent on what the expectation is for a parent, and we provide wraparound support to families to set them up for success in every way we can. We want success.

This year we will leave nothing to chance. We will legislate to make family responsibility agreements enforceable by the courts. We make no apologies for that.

In 2025 the Minister for Education and Training, Jo Hersey, delivered school attendance officers who are actively engaging with youths and their parents, even during school holidays. This is big, particularly in Alice Springs and for the regions. Those staff play a critical role in delivering the reducing-crime package over the busy summer months. I thank them for that. We had the opportunity to meet with them in Katherine, and I can tell you that those staff are committed and doing excellent work.

We empowered those officers not only to provide support but also fine parents for neglecting to send their children to school. We have been clear from the start that no parent has a right to deprive their child of a future. Again, we do not apologise for that.

Upon coming to government—and much has been said about this—1,600 young people, the future generation, were dumped from attendance lists because they had not gone to school for more than 20 days. They were buried in the corner so that they did not make the data look bad. We are not afraid of that data and the hard work to get kids who are highly disengaged from school—that is putting it mildly—back to school. Five hundred of them are now back engaged in school.

Let me be clear: we have to continue to drive higher attendance rates and do the difficult work of supporting those young people in the classroom. They have been highly disengaged from school, sometimes for years. The level of schooling is low, so schools are adapting to provide the environment, support and connection to keep them in school, getting them back up to speed and having them come regularly.

That impacts our data. There has been much public criticism saying that school attendance officers must be a failure because they have not improved attendance across the board. This is a decades-long issue, and when you bring a child back to the school environment—maybe one or two days or a couple of hours per week—it is highly disruptive, and they do not have the literacy and numeracy levels of the other children in their class because they have not been going to school. We recognise that hit to the data, but fighting for those children to have a chance at a future is worth it every day of the week. We make no apologies for that. We will not write off any child.

In 2025 we began referring families to income management up to 70%. We did a lot of work with the federal government on that. We have referred up to 100 families to income management, and in 2026 we will expand that. It will be a big year of cracking down on antisocial behaviour in public housing and failure to pay rent.

A couple of days ago the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development, Steve Edgington, announced our new housing policy reform and how effective it has been. That agency's hard work coupled with the new police public safety officers will make a big improvement to the amenity and safety of public housing. That will be a combined whole-of-government effort to have sustained pressure on the amenity of public housing.

In 2026 we will strengthen the *Care and Protection of Children Act*—the minister has had much to say on this—to put the safety and wellbeing of a child above everything else. Every child is worth the fight.

In short, the actions we have taken to deliver a safer, stronger Territory in 2025 are working, and in 2026 we will stay the course. There is much more work to do. We cannot take our finger off the pulse.

Rebuilding the economy is a critical part of our mission. We promised three things, and that was number two. As we begin 2026 I am proud to say that crime is going down, and the economy is going up. That is exactly the direction we want those arrows to continue. In 2025 the Territory turned a corner. For the first time in nearly a decade we moved from the bottom of the CommSec State of the States ranking—where we placed last for nearly a decade—to fourth place. This is a huge jump forward. Do we want to be number one? Absolutely. We know that we are on a journey, but we will take jumping from last to fourth. The last time the Territory ranked fourth and the economy was moving was under a previous CLP government. The proof is in the pudding. That is delivering.

We led the country on economic growth, population growth, housing finance and dwelling starts. It is unbelievable. We maintained the third-lowest inflation rate in the country, consistently below the national average, which is good news for families. A lot of these results are because of the success of our home ownership grants and tax cuts for small business delivered by our Treasurer Bill Yan. These are fantastic policies that get things moving in the Territory, and we are proud.

We also ranked as the third-best place in Australia to do business by the Business Council of Australia's Regulation Rumble report. We want to be number one but, again, we will take number three for now. That is one of the KPIs in our Rebuilding the Economy strategy. That is fantastic.

Do not just believe us; the Australian Cruise Association said that we had a 13.3% economic increase for the season, and Deloitte Access Economics forecasts GSP to grow by 6.8% this financial year—the fastest growth nationally. It is not just us saying it; there are credible third parties. It shows that our Rebuilding the Economy strategy and the reforms that we have put in place are working. While momentum is building, there is more work to do. The Territory is moving forward for the first time in a long time. That is a fantastic result for everyday Territorians. The Territory is being recognised as a competitive place to live, work, visit and invest.

I will recap 2025 because it was so good that I do not want to miss a thing. We removed payroll tax for small and medium businesses.

We started delivering 48 of the 70 recommendations from our Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce's Saying 'Yes' to Business report. All 48 are due for completion by July this year. Opposition, I will be disappointed if you do not hold me to account on that, because I cannot wait to tell you how we did it.

We modernised procurement by simplifying direct purchasing from Territory businesses, raising the tier 1 and 2 purchasing caps and appointing long-term local Tom Harris as our Territory Procurement Champion.

The Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment has also been busy. He abolished third-party merits review in the *Planning Act, Water Act* and *Petroleum Act*. He stopped taxpayers from funding the Environmental Defenders Office and instead gave the money to Landcare—wow! That is actually doing something for our environment. Who would have thought? Amazing.

We amended the sacred sites Act to allow the transfer of authority certificates between parties.

Deputy Chief Minister Gerard Maley scrapped the unrealistic and expensive $50bn target of 50% renewable energy for grid-connected electricity by 2030 and introduced landmark reforms to the Territory's electricity market to deliver system security and reliability at the lowest cost. Cost of living is a serious issue, and Territorians deserve to have reliable and affordable energy. In 2026 that reform work will continue. You will see much more in this space as we progress affordable and reliable energy.

Last year we approved two game-changing infrastructure projects worth $210m: the Territory's first-ever Beetaloo pipeline, which is just about done; and approval to recover appraisal gas for sale, paving the way for construction of the $140m Sturt Plateau compression facility. Together, these projects establish the first clear pathway to market for Beetaloo gas in 2026. In quarter 4 of this year we expect to see Beetaloo gas powering Territory homes and businesses. Tamboran Resources and Beetaloo Energy have now cleared all necessary approvals to get to market, so it is over to them now.

Santos is ready to commence a major drilling program as well, which further strengthens confidence in the Beetaloo and the Territory's energy future.

We have been, and will remain in 2026, focused on our five key economic drivers and the natural inherent strengths we have as a jurisdiction to make the changes necessary to rebuild our economy. For those of you who have forgotten, those five key strengths are: energy; Defence; agriculture; mining; and tourism. Together, these five account for 45% of our gross state product. We will unashamedly play to our natural strengths as a jurisdiction. It makes sense.

Last year live cattle exports through Darwin Port reached nearly 392,000 head in the year to November, which is a 25% increase and the highest total in a decade. Of that, 274,000 were Territory cattle, putting us on track for the strongest result in 10 years.

A week or two ago the first LNG cargo from the Barossa project was successfully loaded at Darwin LNG and is off—it might even be there by now—to the Sakai terminal in Japan.

With the east coast forecasting year-round gas shortages from 2029, the Beetaloo places the Northern Territory at the centre of Australia's energy future.

Our message is clear: the Territory has everything that this nation needs to be successful. We can deliver a strong, secure Australia, and our gas industry can underpin that.

In 2025 large-scale goldmining returned to Tennant Creek after more than two decades …

Mr Edgington: The land of opportunity.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The land of opportunity, the Barkly, is where it is all happening. The economic engine of the Territory is the Barkly.

The $94m Nobles project is well and truly in production. We had a fantastic visit there, Member for Barkly. It is truly amazing.

In 2026—great news for the Barkly; the Member for Barkly will like this—we will deliver the largest exploration program in Tennant Creek for more than 20 years.

In 2026 we expect to see Arafura's Nolans rare earths project, located just 130 kilometres north of Alice, reach final investment decision. Everyone is waiting for that announcement. Again, this will occur in the Barkly. This project has been identified under a multibillion-dollar critical minerals agreement signed in Washington last year between President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, highlighting its national and international strategic significance. I read in the paper today that there is a hold-up with the Germans; I do not know what they are waiting for—get on with it!

Preparedness, posture and position is key to a secure future for all Australians, and that starts and ends with the enhancement of the Australian Defence Force in the Northern Territory and support for our allies through training and forward basing.

Late last year the US Government announced a $15bn investment in Indo-Pacific infrastructure alone for places like Guam, Timor-Leste, PNG, the Philippines and, hopefully, the Territory. We are focused on capturing a share of that investment.

This year I will travel to Pearl Harbor to meet with Admiral Paparo, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, to discuss expansion and investment between INDOPACOM and the Northern Territory.

Ninety cents of every Defence dollar spent in the Territory goes directly to local businesses. It is putting food on the tables of Territorians. We must secure more of that investment.

Under the guidance of Minister Marie-Clare Boothby, the cruise season increased by 13% on the previous year, and overnight trips increased by more than 20%, with visitor spending also rising. People are spending more and staying longer, which is great news.

Events are drawing more visitors, injecting more money into the local economy and extending the typically Dry Season tourism season. Events like Parrtjima, the Dolphins NRL game in April, Red CentreNATS, MXGP, Alice Springs Masters Games and Darwin International Laksa Festival are all extending the season.

We are doubling down on international cricket with a massive announcement by the Minister for People, Sport and Culture, Jinson Charls, who I am starting to suspect is a cricket fan. For the first time in 23 years, Darwin will host test cricket this year. That will be Australia versus Bangladesh. I hope there will not be much rivalry going on with the Member for Fong Lim. Not only will we host Bangladesh versus Australia in the Territory for test cricket; we will also host not one but two T20 internationals in 2027.

This year in Central Australia we will have the most significant new tourism experience in the Territory in a decade, backed by a $10m investment by the Collaborative Investment Program, with the Uluru–Kata Tjuta signature walk, which will be amazing. We invested $4.8m in Tourism Central Australia for a brand-new visitor centre in Alice Springs. It will be a beautiful welcome to people visiting the heart of our nation, the Red Centre.

We also secured the opportunity for the Territory to host G'Day Australia for the first time. This is Tourism Australia's biennial trade event for international frontline travel agents. More than 600 delegates will attend the conference in the Northern Territory, including 300 agents, in what will be the largest tourism trade event the Territory has ever hosted. That is on top of the work we did on our Visitor Economy Strategy 2032, which will be implemented to deliver bigger visitor numbers, better experiences and more product to market.

The Northern Territory is Australia's own battlefield, and nowhere else comes close. We are actively pursuing visitor growth for the Territory's rich military history. Last year the minister launched the Territory's first military tourism AI trip planner, and new digital and immersive experiences are coming. There will be enhancements to key heritage sites and support for businesses that rely on military history as their product. Work is also underway to leverage Exercise Pitch Black, which I am looking forward to seeing back in Darwin this year.

In 2025 we established the role of Territory Coordinator, the most significant economic reform in a decade, to unlock growth and advance planning, coordination and delivery of significant strategic projects. Over the past year we have mapped out the Territory's strategic future.

On Monday we announced the first use of the Territory Coordinator's powers. I hope the Member for Johnston is listening because she often asks me what powers have been used; they are about to get cranking, Member for Johnston, so keep an eye out. We saw the designation of the first Territory development area, the Northern Marine Complex. This move, using powers under the *Territory Coordinator Act,* means that the Northern Marine Complex will be an economically significant precinct coordinated to optimise national and international markets.

The 246-hectare Northern Marine Complex at East Arm will include the …

Ms Uibo: Fifteen months! That is a great use of $21m.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: Sorry, Madam Speaker; the Opposition Leader is carrying on about something.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Ms Uibo: You could have used the money better; that is all.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, please show some respect.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Everyone will remain silent, including the Opposition Leader and the Deputy Chief Minister.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: The 246-hectare Northern Marine Complex at East Arm will include the ship lift facility and all the adjacent components of the ship lift, as well as the Marine Industry Park. By developing it right, we can set up our future maritime industry for long-term growth and success.

At its core will be the 5,500-tonne capacity ship lift and all the supporting infrastructure that allows for dry docking, the paint shed and all those assets. There will be a purpose-built industrial subdivision in the complex with large-scale workshop areas, and it will be only 600 metres from the ship lift, so it makes perfect sense to have this as a well-planned and strategically delivered complex for not only the servicing of vessels but also maintenance, fabrication and manufacturing components. The complex will also include 10.3 hectares of hardstand, which is significant. That will provide a secure and expansive area to grow our fabrication industry, storage and maintenance operations, as well as a multi-user barge ramp offering all-tide

access to ensure seamless vessel movement and logistics. In 2026 we will also deliver a pricing and access regime for the ship lift.

The marine sector represents a strategic growth engine for the Northern Territory, underpinned by our geographic location in the Indo-Pacific and its role as Australia's northernmost maritime gateway. By designating this a Territory development area, we enliven the powers of the Territory Coordinator who will oversight the Northern Marine Complex's development with whole-of-government coordination to ensure that taxpayer value is protected and delivers something that maximises economic growth. That is what we need.

In 2025 the Minister for International Education, Migration and Population, Robyn Cahill, redesigned the Designated Area Migration Agreement, expanding the list of occupations for skilled overseas workers; implemented tax relief for employers with apprentices; and invested in more targeted training initiatives.

To grow our economy we must also grow our population. CommSec ranked us as first place for population growth, which is fantastic, but we want to do better than that. We have to continue to push for more. We want people to come to the Territory, stay in the Territory and build their lives here, just like we all have.

Our HomeGrown building scheme is helping Territorians who want to achieve the dream of home ownership and those who are coming to the Territory. This has given significant confidence to our construction industry. More than 400 Territorians have taken up the $50,000 first home build grants and the $30,000 grants for anyone who has already owned or currently owns a home and would like to build a new home to live in. Since May last year an average of 25 home grants were issued each week. If you calculate an average build at about $450,000, those 400 grants represent about $180m spinning through our economy through the construction industry, supporting jobs, strengthening supply chains and contributing to long-term economic growth.

Behind each of those numbers is a story of families like the Duwadi family in my electorate, who moved from Melbourne to the Top End to study, grow their family and put down roots. Through the $50,000 HomeGrown Territory Grant, they built their dream home and moved in just last month. Stories like that make us incredibly proud to welcome new Territorians, support local jobs and help people build a future in the place we love.

Growing up here, my grandparents and parents always reminded me of how fortunate I was to be a Territorian—don't I know it—and we want that same sense of pride and opportunity for our kids and generations to come.

The HomeGrown Territory Grant means that families like the Duwadis can raise the next generation of Territorians, and that is exactly what we want. On Monday we announced the scheme's extension to September 2027, giving families, builders, businesses and everyone the certainty and confidence to keep growing and building their future in the Territory.

In 2025 we also signed a strategic agreement with INPEX to, amongst other things, formalise support for the exploration of INPEX's decarbonisation journey with carbon capture and storage and its broader renewable energy footprint. We signed an MOU with Indonesia to strengthen collaboration on critical minerals and strategic supply chains. Our work re-engaging with Asia has been extensive and continues with vigour in 2026, much to the jet lag of the Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations.

The Territory is different, which we should all be proud of. Our unique Territory lifestyle is worth fighting for, which is why restoring our lifestyle is a pillar in our plan for a better Territory. When people feel safe, they live freely. When communities are strong, people stay. The Territory lifestyle is unlike anywhere else in Australia. It is bold, adventurous and authentic; that is why Territorians love it and why people from around the country and the world want to experience it.

That global interest was reinforced recently, with the Top End ranked as the 14th best place to visit in the world for 2026 by the *New York Times*. We also ranked as the best place to visit in Australia, and I made sure my National Cabinet colleagues knew all about that on Friday. I do not think they appreciated my gloating, but I do not care because I am so proud and will scream it from the rooftops. You cannot buy this type of positive third-party endorsement. It puts the Territory in global headlines for all the right reasons; we were sick of having headlines for all the wrong reasons under Labor.

Tourism is a driver of our economy, and I have already spoken about that, but let me be clear: the things tourists love are also loved by locals. While other jurisdictions experience visitor decline, we experience an increase due to a lot of hard work. The Minister for People, Sport and Culture, Jinson Charls, was buzzing around all year, and people shared in that buzz.

We had the Motocross GP track racing here for the first time in Australia in 24 years and the international cricket games held in Darwin for the first time in 17 years. It was amazing to be there; it was so good that words cannot describe it.

In 2026 we are looking forward to Exercise Pitch Black. This year all global eyes will be on us for the Motocross GP in September, and in April we will have the NRL blockbuster in Darwin, with the Dolphins taking on the Panthers at TIO Stadium—fins up—as part of our new rugby league deal which will deliver one Dolphins game every year for three years.

Our lifestyle is a lot more than events and tourism; it is about making everyday life better for Territorians. In 2025 we expanded access to existing hunting reserves, and in 2026 we continue to work on securing a new hunting reserve.

In 2026 you will see fewer abandoned vehicles on our roads; thank goodness for that—what an eyesore. From 21 January we have shrunk the time it takes for abandoned vehicles to be cleaned up off our streets. It used to be seven days under Labor; it is three days under our government. I encourage everyone: if you see an abandoned vehicle, report it straightaway because the sooner it is reported, the sooner we clean that thing up. This is about community safety, restoring pride in public spaces and getting rid of the rubbish.

Recent tragic events, including those at Bondi, have been a stark reminder that now more than ever we have to stand united as a country, as a community and as Australians. Last week, as the start of the school year kicked off, the minister for Education, Jo Hersey, made the announcement about the mandatory singing of the national anthem in all Territory schools, reinforcing that shared value of respect, belonging and national unity from a young age.

As discussions continue nationally on issues such as gun reform between state and Territory leaders, I will always put a Territory-first approach to any reforms that impact Territorians.

For Territorians who love the outdoors—camping, fishing, four-wheel driving and exploring—we are protecting and expanding access to what makes this place so special. Last year we purchased 30,000 hectares at Silkwood, the largest addition to the national park estate in 25 years. This groundbreaking purchase will give confidence to generations about our lifestyle, as well as the tourism benefit. It will open areas for camping, four-wheel driving, swimming and hiking. It includes previously inaccessible waterfalls, gorges, wetlands and hot springs. It is incredible, and we are so proud of that acquisition.

In 2026 we will plan the trails, facilities and campsites. We are also investing in national park infrastructure and facilities, with modern digital tools that make access, bookings and information easier than ever. There is a lot of work to be done there to make it easy for people.

Needless to say, protecting our parks and outdoor spaces is central to preserving the Territory lifestyle now and for future generations.

I could not get through talking about lifestyle if I did not directly address fishing, because people love to fish. That is why in 2026 we are working with traditional owners and land councils to provide certainty for fishing access while respecting Aboriginal land and country.

We have taken stock assessments of the Territory's fishery and have started strong action to rebuild numbers of golden snapper and black jewfish so that Territorians can keep enjoying the fishing we all grew up with. I do not know about you, Deputy Chief Minister, but my biggest jewie was 20 kilos.

Mr Maley: That is a big fish.

Mrs FINOCCHIARO: That is a big fish. We will have to go through the history books and dig out your biggest fish.

In 2026 Minister Maley is spearheading a suite of programs, including a four-year golden snapper stocking program; the rollout of fish aggregating devices—we have seen some of those go in already; and artificial reef installations to create new reef fish habitat.

In 2025 we significantly boosted the Top End's barra stock with the release of 109,000 fingerlings and 500 larger fish into waterways across the Territory, including in local suburban lakes like in Gunn and Durack, encouraging kids to get on their bike and have a fish. In Palmerston we see all the time kids with a little

backpack and the rod sticking out the top; they are off to have a fish. It is so good to see. We want kids off iPads and out fishing. It has worked a treat.

Cost of living is also an important factor in a stronger lifestyle in the Territory. That is why last year we provided free drivers' licences and trailer registration, and ongoing we have abolished light vehicle roadworthy inspections and expanded the Container Deposit Scheme.

In 2026 families will see the $200 Back-to-School vouchers, two rounds of $100 Sport Vouchers and two rounds of Learn to Swim vouchers for little ones under five. This is because lifestyle also means peace of mind, and we are focused on the health and wellbeing of Territorians.

Last Friday I signed a landmark deal with the Prime Minister and state and territory counterparts to deliver an additional $25bn for the nation's public hospitals, which includes up to an additional $1bn for Northern Territory hospital funding. This five-year funding agreement locks in the single-biggest contribution by the federal government to the Territory's hospitals. Do I wish we got more? Absolutely. We will always fight for more funding from the Commonwealth, but this will help plug a significant gap in our hospital funding system. I thank the Prime Minister for working with us to deliver this increase; it has been good.

In 2026 we will continue our free meningococcal B vaccinations for infants under the age of two and teenagers aged 15 to 19 years. Last year more than 18,000 free meningococcal B vaccines were administered, including 7,739 doses to adolescents, which is a difficult cohort. It was an incredible number. This is the legacy of beautiful baby Skylar, who lost her life to this deadly disease.

Territorians deserve confidence in their healthcare system, particularly families relying on maternity services. Ensuring safe, accessible and reliable care for mothers and babies remains a priority for us in 2026. Darwin is now the only capital city without private maternity services following Healthscope's decision to pull the service and its subsequent receivership.

Following Healthscope's announcement, the federal government has been leading a process, on behalf of state and territory governments, focusing on ensuring patient care continuity. We supported that process every step of the way, and I have made it clear that when a new provider is determined, we want a seat at that table. We have been clear that any new provider must return private maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital. We were told that answers would be delivered by the end of last year, and they have not, which creates uncertainty for patients, staff and the broader health system. We do not like uncertainty; we want certainty.

The Minister for Health, Steve Edgington, has renewed his call to the Albanese government to stop treating this issue as an afterthought. Territorians deserve the same certainty, stability and access to healthcare as every other Australian.

Last week it was promising to see the Prime Minister announce the appointment of Ozcare as the preferred operator of a new residential aged-care facility in the Top End. We have committed the land and to pay for the headworks near Palmerston Regional Hospital to help get this much-needed facility moving, but we need real timeframes for delivery by the federal government. Last year the goalposts shifted, so we need to get solid timeframes and commitments on what this looks like for Territorians.

The foundations laid in 2025 form the basis for the year ahead. In 2026 Territorians can expect to see that same fire in our bellies, discipline and focus to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our unique Territory lifestyle. Reducing crime remains our number one priority in 2026. It sets the foundation for growing the economy and improving liveability for every Territorian. That is the work of a government focused on the future and a resilient and ambitious Territory. After years of going backwards, we are going forward; in 2026 that is the only direction we will go.

Last year was the Year of the Snake, a time of shedding what no longer served us. This is the Year of the Horse, and it carries us forward. It brings wisdom, prosperity and strength through the energy and drive of the Fire Horse. That is the Territory we are building—one that supports people and their kids to achieve their dreams and aspirations now and into the future. That is the year ahead.

I move that the statement be noted.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the Northern Territory is an incredible place full of incredible people. It is a place full of potential, opportunity, trailblazers, groundbreakers and people who are prepared to have a go, give back to their community, look out for each other and strive for better, together.

The role of government is to focus time, effort and investment in ensuring every Territorian benefits from that potential and opportunity. Every Territorian can thrive no matter who they are, where they come from, where they live or what their background is. It means doing everything in the government's power to remove the barriers to success, clearing paths and opening doors to ensure our people are strong and can step through those doors. It is not just for some people; the government's job is to look after all Territorians. It means investing in things that drive social and economic progress. The job of the government is to move the Territory forward towards an even brighter future, not take detrimental steps backwards.

My focus for 2026 is a future that our Territory kids and grannies can grasp with both hands. My Territory Labor team has already galloped into the Year of the Horse knowing that we must muster all our strength to fight hard for Territorians and hold the CLP government to account—something it is already prancing away from. We will be fighting back to make sure that barriers are broken down so that Territorians can achieve their full potential, advocate on the issues that concern them and have a voice and a platform to do so. My team will support Territorians to do this to ensure that they can thrive.

My team and I spent much of last year listening to Territorians from all walks of life in remote, regional and urban centres. From industry leaders to school students, families, young people, small business owners and union leaders, Territorians have been generous with their time and provided us with honest insights. I thank them all for that.

My team and I are using the focus of these conversations in 2025 for 2026. We heard time and again about key issues that are top of mind for Territorians. Their priorities are my team's priorities: cost-of-living relief; safe, affordable housing and more of it; a health system that works; opportunities for all through education, training and jobs; and better outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians. This is what I will fight for in 2026. I will spend my energy on what matters to Territorians and what will have the biggest and most positive impacts on their lives. My Territory Labor team remains committed in 2026 to being the voice of Territorians who are not being heard or getting the representation they deserve from the CLP government.

It is hardly headline news that people are feeling the financial squeeze and hoping that it will not get worse. The next time Territorians open their power bill, it is likely that they will see the biggest one in a long time, as the full impact of recent policy changes made by the CLP hit Territory household budgets.

Interest rate pressures remain a real factor for families paying off a mortgage and for young Territorians who are looking to get their foot in the door of the housing market and buy their first home. Rent prices are at a record high in the Territory, shooting up by 8% last year. For more than half of the Territory's population this means that more of their weekly income is eaten up by rent before they can even think about paying other bills, feeding their family and buying groceries. I hear all the time, particularly from young people, families and individuals alike, that rents are high.

They are not the only ones feeling it. Local governments are worried that cost shifting from the CLP government is putting pressure on them that will ultimately impact council rates. When governments push costs down the line they do not go away; Territorians end up footing the bill.

We hear other stories of cost shifting. For the first time, this year nursing students in the Territory—homegrown nursing students—are being hit with an $80 fee per day by the CLP government when they do their practical training at a hospital. This is incredibly mean-spirited of the government during a cost-of-living crisis and will turn young Territorians off nursing as a profession as they are not getting the support from the government they deserve. It is a short-sighted counterproductive policy from the CLP without vision or empathy. CLP members say that they care about health, but Territorians will suffer.

The CLP promised action on fuel pricing at the election. The Member for Spillett talked about it relentlessly when she was the Opposition Leader. Since she came to government, we have not heard a single word from her—just complete silence. When we asked her about it last year, she did her usual attack and deflection, saying, 'The world is a horrible place because of everybody else', but she offered no answers or practicalities. She did not have a single thing in her pocket to address this real and pressing issue for every Territorian.

It is becoming a clear pattern that the Chief Minister is more focused on her image rather than action. She runs and hides when the going gets tough. She sticks her head in the sand, waits for things to blow over and then pops up somewhere else with another diversion.

Another thing that Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro has been silent on is airfares. That is another massive financial pressure for Territorians and those wanting to come to the Territory. It impacts those wanting to visit family down south or those travelling within the Territory for medical, family or work purposes. Airfares are a

shocker at the moment. They stink. You either pay up or miss out on important moments in life and the visits that help our hearts and minds.

I put in a submission to the Senate committee looking at this issue, and I strongly urged the committee to fully break down airfares to understand every hidden cost for Territorians so that we can know why we are being stung so badly and who is doing the stinging.

Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table my submission to the Senate inquiry.

Leave granted.

Madam SPEAKER: At this moment, I ask you not to refer to members by their names, just their titles.

Ms UIBO: Okay.

There is a significant Productivity Commission review into airfares coming up. There are real opportunities to draw attention to this massive cost-of-living issue for Territorians. I hope that the CLP takes up this important opportunity to fight for the Territory; my Labor team is. Like Territorians across the width and breadth of the NT, I understand that the government cannot single-handedly bring down the cost-of-living pressures on our family budgets, but it has levers it can pull to ensure that family budgets are not impacted at a high rate.

There are many external factors impacting the cost of doing business, fuel, groceries, mortgage repayments and rent, but the CLP government could offer real relief to Territorians to keep their costs down by putting in place tangible measures to relieve cost-of-living pressures on our Territory families, seniors, young people and businesses. Instead, the CLP has squandered $40m-plus on a Territory Coordinator, who so far has only drawn a line around a map, and a truancy program that has seen student attendance fall across the NT. Affordability is not just about prices; it is about dignified work. It is about economic stability and whether Territorians can access essentials that make their lives simpler and easier, such as affordable airfares, decent healthcare and making sure no-one misses out on services as fundamental as maternity care.

Despite record levels of federal Labor investment and an economy that was already improving when the CLP took office, it has become clear over the CLP's time in power that the CLP government under the Chief Minister's leadership has no comprehensive plan to deal with housing costs, public services or cost-reducing initiatives that will impact Territorians for the better. Territorians deserve better than drift, waste, empty slogans, broken promises and glossy pictures. They deserve a government with a plan that goes beyond prison builds and short-term punitive measures to keep our community safe.

Whether you are renting, paying off a mortgage or looking to get your foot in the door of your first home and enter the property market, everyone in the NT deserves a decent place to live. You should have enough left for groceries and bills after forking out for your rent or mortgage. Increasing supply—including more social and affordable housing—is one of the most effective ways to ease the pressure on prices and ensure that all Territorians have a good, solid roof over their heads.

Territory Labor wants to ensure that everybody in the Territory can look after themselves in their own home, renters get a fair deal and people looking to buy their first place get the hand-up that they need, but there is no serious, coordinated effort to address our housing challenges. There is no medium or long-term vision from the CLP. Instead, we have seen ribbon-cutting on projects funded or started by the former Labor government while the forward infrastructure pipeline has shrunk by $1bn. There is no certainty for the construction sector or for Territorians wanting to get into the housing market.

The CLP government has walked away from agreed targets under the National Housing Accord, which is aimed at significantly increasing housing stock across the Northern Territory. It makes no sense. The government is doing nothing to address labour shortages that will have a massive impact on the construction sector's ability to push through and make sure we have new builds, including social and affordable housing. We are about nine years behind the rest of the country.

The CLP has tinkered around the edges of relieving regulatory burdens that have a significant impact on the cost of housing builds. Access to housing is an issue throughout the Territory, not just in Darwin; there are significant housing shortages in our major centres of Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. This is seriously impacting our ability to attract and retain teachers, doctors and nurses in our urban, regional and remote communities. It is impacting our major projects, the economic growth of the Territory and opportunities for Territorians and businesses to get ahead.

There has been no genuine attempt by the CLP to meaningfully address this issue. The CLP has stopped investing in public housing. We hear time and again that it has slashed the repairs and maintenance budget, meaning that Territory houses will start to fall into further disrepair. This is hurting local businesses and contractors who rely on the repairs and maintenance pipeline to run their businesses and feed their families.

In the short time since the CLP government's decision to stop funding repairs and maintenance, work has dried up for local Territory businesses. This hurts Territory businesses and tenants. Some of these businesses are in my electorate of Arnhem. They are worried about the lack of works in the pipeline for their business.

The vast majority of public housing tenants are doing the right thing. They are responsible and deserve somewhere safe and decent to live. Public housing is also a critical part of ensuring that adequate housing options are available for Territorians. Unliveable public housing puts tenants in dire situations, living in unsafe structures or forcing them out to the streets. This is bad public policy.

The CLP government needs to do better in ensuring a good supply of decent public housing. At the least, the CLP has continued to roll out the remote housing program, which was a landmark deal struck by the former NT Labor government with the Albanese Labor government. That deal is proof of what can be achieved when governments at all tiers work together in the best interests of Territorians.

With a Labor government in Canberra doing the hard yards to increase housing supply, invest in remote housing, support more apprenticeships and invest in training, we ask ourselves what type of government we have in the Territory. Our team strongly urges the CLP government to work with the Albanese Labor government to address housing supply and increase social and affordable housing options. These affordability issues need to be addressed in a coordinated and strategic way.

We heard CLP members talk about the extension of the home-building scheme and the 400 or so Territorians who have accessed the grants to build their own homes. It is a great start, and we acknowledge that work. However, those opposite are starting to forget that the most popular part of the scheme was the grant to buy an established home. More than 800 people accessed that grant. The majority—two-thirds—of grants for Territorians wanting to get into the established housing market have been scrapped. Now people must fit into a small category to access the homeowner scheme because the most popular grant has been slashed by the CLP. You will not hear the CLP members say anything about that because they do not want to acknowledge it.

Rents have hit all-time highs. It is much harder for Territorians without their own home to cover their rent and have enough money left over after paying bills. The Northern Territory has the highest percentage of renters in the country, yet we lag behind on reasonable reforms to protect renters. The former Labor government started work to improve protections, including banning rent bidding, standardising notice periods for terminations by landlords and providing better safeguards for victims of domestic and family violence. The reforms have languished under the CLP.

Shockingly, the CLP has gone so far as to mock Territory renters and call it a Labor issue. That shows utter disdain and disrespect for the 45% of Territorians who rent their homes. We support Territorians' rights to purchase an investment property to shore up their family's financial future, but at the same time there needs to be a balance to ensure that the system in the NT is fair for renters and landlords and will benefit all families. We will continue to fight for every Territorian to have access to safe, quality and affordable housing no matter where they live.

Every Territorian deserves access to high-quality, timely and affordable healthcare. The latest annual report paints a stark picture of the Territory health system—something that Territorians experience on a daily basis. The Territory system is in crisis, and the CLP wants to blame everyone else rather than do the hard work to improve it.

More people are waiting longer in emergency to be seen, and more people are waiting longer for elective surgeries. Staff shortages are at a critical level for doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and support staff.

I congratulate the federal Labor government and those opposite on the recent hospitals deal. It is a good start. One of the first things I mentioned publicly in opposition and directly to the Health minister was that the Territory needs to lock in a better health deal with the Commonwealth Government. We agreed.

Now we need the CLP to start running the health system properly. It is about much more than funding; it is about making sure health staff have the wages and conditions they deserve, attracting and retaining quality staff, thinking about flexible work models and investing in preventive measures and primary healthcare to keep people healthy and out of our hospital system in the first place if possible. It is about investing in quality health services in communities so that people are not forced to travel to urban centres to access what is a basic right in other parts of the country.

We have seen how the Minister for Health has failed Territory families when it comes to maternity services, eroding choice and continuity of care in Darwin. The Minister for Health has had more than a year to sort this out. This is where we are at now: no private obstetricians; a midwifery service stalled in Darwin and Palmerston; and no plan thus far to unlock the $10m that was offered by the Labor Commonwealth Government to upgrade the public maternity infrastructure at Royal Darwin Hospital. It is a disgrace for Territorians who are suffering because of the lack of action by the CLP. The CLP needs to simply do the plan so we can get the $10m to upgrade maternity services and infrastructure. The CLP needs to get on with the job.

The government is on notice. It has a deal with the Commonwealth for an extra $1bn over the next five years. The CLP has no excuses to hide behind. It needs to get on with delivering real improvement in our health services by reducing waiting times, increasing access to services and investing in a strong and supported healthcare workforce.

We believe that every Territorian in the city, regions and bush deserves fair pay, quality education and training and real pathways for local jobs. They deserve the chance to build and secure a future for themselves and their families no matter where they live or start out. Our vision for education, training and jobs for Territorians is built on our core Labor values of fairness, dignity and shared prosperity. It includes:

- investment in the early years so every child has the best start to life
- an education system that sets up every child for success in a positive and engaging way
- a system that values our teachers
- fair pay and secure conditions that ensure workers are supported, respected and able to provide for their families
- a strong local workforce backed by practical investment in training and retaining so that Territorians can seize new opportunities instead of being overlooked for interstate or FIFO labour
- opportunities across regions, ensuring people in the bush and in our towns can access quality education, training, jobs and economic pathways close to home
- a smarter regulatory environment that clears unnecessary barriers for small businesses and helps local entrepreneurs get started, succeed and grow in their industries
- procurement that puts Territorians first so that government spending builds local capacity and capability, supports Territory small businesses and keeps the wealth circulating within our Territory community.

A fair go in the Territory means backing our people, building our skills and ensuring every community can share in jobs of the future.

In stark contrast, the CLP has so far presided over its failed $21m truancy program that has done nothing to lift the dial on school attendance and engagement, increased power prices for our schools and failed to engage meaningfully with parents and communities in a way the ensures they are connected and valued in their school community. It is no wonder we keep hearing questions about whether the Education minister is up to the job.

The last Labor government delivered the historic EBA deal for teachers, which ensured more funding flowed to schools and classrooms, where they should go. We laid the foundations for a strong education system to support our current and future generations. We will continue to hold the CLP to account to ensure that it honours those agreements and invests in real training and employment opportunities for Territorians.

One area that makes the CLP uncomfortable is ensuring that Aboriginal Territorians are supported. Aboriginal Territorians make up one-third of the Territory's population. Our people have enormous strength, resilience,

creativity, innovation and skills that are critical to the success of the Northern Territory. The contributions of Aboriginal Territorians across our community cannot be understated, nor can they be minimised by rhetoric and policies that seek to indiscriminately target, undermine and divide the Territory. The CLP is ripping funding from remote communities, local community safety initiatives, school initiatives and local Aboriginal services that deliver health clinics.

At the first strike of being in government, the CLP ripped funding from Territory roads, which affects access for remote Territorians. This approach will ultimately make the Territory weaker, less safe and less cohesive.

Territory Labor will continue to stand up strongly for Aboriginal Territorians and their communities. We will honour the legacies built in the Territory, including caring for country, each other and our communities. We believe that decisions affecting communities are best made by the people who live there, grounded in cultural authority, local knowledge and lived experience.

Territory Labor is committed to genuine partnerships supporting self-determination and delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians to ensure that the whole of the Territory can be lifted. We are committed to policies that remove barriers to the success of our people and communities.

We believe in investing in community-led justice solutions. Those initiatives work, and we will continue to advocate for investment, policies and pathways that seek to lift and strengthen our Aboriginal communities. Strong, healthy and supported communities means a strong Territory for all.

More than a year into the CLP government's term, Territorians have rightly asked: are we better off? Those opposite do not like evidence, but here are a few facts about their achievements:

- a cut-and-paste economic vision, with a lot of photo-ops on projects that were well underway before the CLP came to power
- the much-hyped Territory Coordinator, after 15 months on the job, has only just announced a single economic zone for a project started by the former Labor government—this is after $21m was wasted on office setup
- little in the way of financial relief for Territory families and businesses
- sugar hits without any meaningful reform or coordinated effort to grow housing stock across the Territory and put downward pressure on prices
- deep cuts to economy-building infrastructure projects, impacting all our community businesses and local jobs
- no real plan or reform for a struggling health system beyond blaming or putting its hands out to the Commonwealth
- an education approach that fails to meaningfully engage students and set them up for success
- an overloaded justice system likely to entrench more people into a life of crime, with little investment in prevention, early intervention or rehabilitation
- policies that seek to leave behind Aboriginal Territorians rather than lift them up.

Over the coming year, Territory Labor will make Territorians' priorities our priority. We will fight every day for cost-of-living relief; safe and affordable housing; better healthcare; education systems that Territorians deserve; and to ensure that Aboriginal Affairs is not swept under the rug with an out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality like that of the CLP. We will fight every day for every Territorian no matter who they are or where they live.

Territory Labor believes that it is our responsibility to lift all Territorians. Our vision is a Territory that realises its potential and ensures every Territorian has the opportunity to thrive.

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I will talk about a few issues raised by the Opposition Leader. In her closing remarks she talked about the Australian Labor Party's vision. She had 30 minutes but did not outline one part of that vision. That shows that Labor does not have a vision whatsoever.

She raised federal issues that the Australian Labor Party caused for the Territory and Australia—for example, interest rates, which were raised this week. The Australian Labor Party—which the Leader of the Opposition belongs to—cannot control its spending. I think there is a $57bn black hole, and Labor overspends, which puts upward pressure on interest rates.

She spoke about airfares, which is also controlled by the federal Labor government. The Opposition Leader spoke about federal issues, not Territory issues. When she talked about a lack of vision and forward planning, she had a crack at her own party.

She also spoke about the $40m spent on the Territory Coordinator. I remind the Assembly that the previous government paid $35m to juveniles and then tried to hide it. It instructed its lawyers to suppress it so that Territorians would not hear about it.

Ms Uibo: Who brought on the royal commission?

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mr MALEY: It merely shows that this opposition has no vision or plan. She said that the NT needs to lock in a better deal. The previous Labor government had eight years. In fact, Labor has been in office in the Territory for about 19 …

Ms Uibo: That is how long it took. It took nine years to get the deal.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, please pause. Opposition Leader, silence! You were given silence throughout your speech; the Deputy Chief Minister is owed the same.

Mr MALEY: The previous government, which the Leader of the Opposition was part of, had eight years to lock in a deal. In fact, Labor has been in power in the Northern Territory for 19 of the last 23 years, and it could not lock in a deal.

It took the leadership of Lia Finocchiaro to go down south to do a deal with the federal Labor government. We have been in office for about one-and-a-half years. Lia Finocchiaro negotiated a better deal for the Northern Territory of $1bn over five years.

The Opposition Leader was a senior minister of the previous Labor government and could not lock in a better deal. Shame on the opposition. Clearly, Labor has no vision or plan. It gave this government an opportunity to show that the federal Labor government is causing issues across Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about pressures on families and the cost of living. Interest rates put pressure on cost of living. It has been going in an upward direction this week because the federal Labor government failed Australians.

The CLP has a plan and vision. The agencies that I am lucky enough to have control of play a part in this. This is the first sittings for 2026; I will speak about our plan ahead because the government is laser focused on crime, the economy and lifestyle. They are three important points we promised Territorians we would focus on. That is what my portfolios plan to deliver.

Primary industries are entering 2026 in a position of strength. Live exports through the Darwin Port totalled just under 450,000 head of cattle in 2025. That is an 18% increase on the previous year and the highest volume in a decade. Importantly, 70% of those cattle were Territory-bred—an increase of 22.8%—putting us on track for the strongest outcome in 10 years.

Growth has been driven by strong demand, especially from Indonesia, backed by government action to improve market access compliance opportunity for Territorians. It shows the work that Minister Cahill is doing regarding trade. It has made a massive difference to the Northern Territory, opening up those markets. The previous Labor government cut that portfolio. I give a shout-out to Minister Cahill for the work she is doing to promote the Northern Territory to the north of us.

Indonesian interest is expanding in the live cattle export industry for food security, presenting a strong opportunity for the Northern Territory to maintain world-leading animal welfare standards, guarantee NT cattle and seek new markets with confidence. At the same time, we continue to engage with emerging markets, including Malaysia and Vietnam, creating more opportunities for Northern Territory businesses.

In addition to beef, there are further opportunities with our Indonesian counterparts. Indonesia's nutritious meals program is driving demand for milk and other dairy products. This presents an opportunity for tropical dairy production in the Northern Territory. Our work on riverine buffalo herds provides practical foundations for supporting that research. This is an emerging sector which this government will work with industry to support as it evolves.

It is important to note that the government also supports our horticulture industry. The Territory leads the nation in mango production, supplying 52% of Australia's total mango crop. Agriculture is a major economic driver for the Northern Territory and continues to grow strongly. As the Chief Minister pointed out, it is one of our major pillars in relation to rebuilding the economy.

The industry remains a strong economic driver for the Northern Territory, supporting more than 3,500 direct jobs during harvest and producing fruit across almost 6,500 hectares of mango farmland. Mangoes supplied to the domestic markets contribute to international exports, including Asian and global markets. I am pleased to say that the Territory produced a huge 4.5 million trays of mangoes in the 2025–26 season. That is about 16 trays per Territorian. This performance highlights the vital role of agriculture in rebuilding the diversity of the Northern Territory economy. This year the Northern Territory Government secured a new protocol allowing Territory mangoes to be sold in Western Australia, giving NT growers greater certainty when trading interstate.

Agriculture is also the cornerstone of the Territory economy and includes the exciting new Duxton Farms. Duxton Farms is progressing a large-scale mixed farming operation on the Wildman agricultural development near the Bark Hut on the Arnhem Highway. In 2024 Duxton Farms acquired the freehold portion of the development area. In 2025 it finalised a development lease with the Northern Territory Land Corporation for the remaining land required to deliver this project.

The broader Wildman agricultural development covers approximately 28,000 hectares, with about 1,200 hectares previously developed. A further 8,000 hectares is proposed for cropping, subject to regulatory approvals, which will determine the final development footprint of this plan. Stage 1 cropping is planned to commence this year, focusing on sorghum and fodder production.

We also support our cotton industry, with more than 5,000 hectares planted at the end of last month.

My department is strengthening the NT's cropping sector through multi-year trials involving cover crops, fertiliser strategies, cotton establishment and industry capability. It also introduced cottonseed to the Crops for Cattle program to evaluate its potential for a local Dry Season food.

This government will continue to back the agriculture sector with certainty, support and practical reform. We are undertaking a review of experimental research farms across the Northern Territory to make sure we provide practical reform.

Innovation is also driving diversification. This year marks the completion of multi-year research exploring black jewfish aquaculture. Working with industry, we have progressed breed stock management, spawning and on-farm performance. This is a clear example of government working with industry to grow the economy through innovation.

A central pillar to 2026 is the development of our mining and energy sectors. This government is committed to developing affordable, reliable and abundant Beetaloo gas for Territorians. Developing the Beetaloo is critical for our energy security, the budget and the long-term economic future of the Northern Territory.

Guaranteeing gas supply is essential to attracting private investment in energy-intensive industries which are needed to rebuild our economy. The east coast is forecasting year-round gas shortfalls from 2029. As the Commonwealth develops a national gas reservation policy, the Beetaloo will be central to our national energy security.

It is essential that Canberra recognises this value and works with the Territory to ensure gas flows into the market. The Beetaloo will make the Northern Territory an energy powerhouse of the nation. Combined with our strategic location close to Southeast Asia, our port and rail infrastructure, available land and a hardworking population are the building blocks for a future manufacturing superpower. We expect Beetaloo gas to be powering Territory homes and businesses in the second half of 2026.

The Northern Territory Government approved the first-ever Beetaloo pipeline, which is expected to open this year. It is a 37-kilometre pipeline connecting the Tamboran Resources Shenandoah South Pilot Project to

the Amadeus Gas Pipeline. Tamboran Resources and Beetaloo Energy received all approvals required for final investment decision late last year. Santos is set to commence drilling this Dry Season, and investor confidence is growing because the Territory is the best place to do business.

We are streamlining regulations, fast-tracking approvals and supporting industry through the Office of the Territory Coordinator and Minister Burgoyne's work across the Northern Territory. Gas will be cheaper than our current emergency supply and create jobs for essential services. We need gas to keep the lights on. The previous Labor government dropped the ball, resulting in gas shortages to our gas-fired power stations. We will continue to support the onshore gas industry in all ways we can. This will be the year of the Beetaloo.

Mining is back in the land of opportunity. I have been to Peko, 14 kilometres from Tennant Creek, and seen the work being done. In January the first shipment was exported, with 60,000 tonnes out of the annual 750,000-tonne target. It is turning a legacy site, an old mine, into a site which is making money and improving environmental challenges there. They are using old product, reprogramming it and then putting it on a ship.

Nolans is one of the world's most advanced rare earths projects, and a final investment decision is targeted this year. Nolans—again in the land of opportunity—is the country's first fully integrated rare earths ore-to-oxide production for about 4% of global demand.

In the Barkly large-scale goldmining has returned. Nobles Nob is another project, with 160 ongoing jobs. Tennant Mining will process up to 60,000 ounces of gold each year, with plans to increase production to 100,000 ounces in the medium to short term. This is wonderful news for the region.

Mr Edgington: The land of opportunity!

Mr MALEY: The land of opportunity.

This year we will introduce amendments to petroleum pipeline legislation to support the Beetaloo development and enable the onshore carbon capture and storage industry.

We will also implement historic electricity market reform that we passed in 2025, because we inherited a failing system from the previous government. We are developing whole-of-system electricity reform and a plan that will guide new infrastructure; strengthen governance; and improve reliability across Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. This includes a new public procurement model in Darwin and Katherine; a single wholesale supply for Alice Springs and Tennant Creek; and creation of an independent system operator to oversee planning, markets and procurement. Exploration remains the engine room for growth, and we continue to do that.

With more than $130m spent on mineral exploration last year, in 2026 we will focus on the Resourcing the Territory program. This co-funded exploration will deliver world-class pre-competitive geoscience data to people in the Northern Territory.

In 2026 we will reform the *Mineral Titles Act* to address technical difficulties, enhance environmental protection and improve administrative efficiency. These reforms aim to modernise the framework for exploration and extraction, encouraging active mining operations while improving compliance and land management.

We cannot talk about the Northern Territory without mentioning the Territory lifestyle. Economic growth must go hand in hand with protecting our unique Territory lifestyle. Hunting and fishing are central to the Northern Territory lifestyle. This government supports NT hunters. We expanded access within Harrison Dam. There is a new rock wall where you can access more of the hunting area. We have firmed up the hunting season to give certainty—the Chief Minister spoke about certainty—to people who plan to bring their families to the Northern Territory and to spend their money here. We have shored up the bag limit. Silkwood has more areas of land for people to enjoy our lifestyle.

In 2025 the Golden Snapper Stock Assessment showed stocks at 14% of unfished levels. This quarter our government will finalise a golden snapper recovery plan informed by a cross-sector advisory group. Territorians are invited to have their say in April, and more will come from that because fishing for golden snapper is important to Territorians. This plan includes investment into the placement of artificial reefs in our harbour and the deployment of …

Mr PATEL: 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 MALEY: The Member for Casuarina knows how important the lifestyle is—honk, honk.

We are delivering our election commitments, including practical infrastructure and a new pontoon at Corroboree Billabong to improve safety and access. Construction will begin after the Wet Season, and it should be finished this year depending on the Wet Season. The area is flooded due to a lot of rain.

We will continue discussions with traditional owners and the Northern Land Council to provide greater certainty regarding recreational fishing access, respecting the rights of Territorians who own the land—the Aboriginal traditional owners. I look forward to continuing conversations with the Member for Barkly.

As we look forward we also need to look back at what we have achieved and how we are delivering for Territorians. Last year this government delivered the strongest animal protection reforms in the Territory's history, strengthening animal welfare and imposing the toughest penalties yet for animal cruelty. The amendments to the *Animal Protection Act 2018* and the Animal Protection Regulations 2022, alongside changes to the Criminal Code, reflect the government's commitment to animal welfare and delivering on community expectations. We now have stronger penalties, clearer powers for inspectors and new protections against bestiality and abuse. This regulatory framework ensures that animals in the Northern Territory are treated humanely.

Recently, officers acted to enforce existing court orders, executing lawful powers to secure and remove animals from ongoing care at a private property. All the animals now have appropriate care arrangements, with independent veterinary checks undertaken.

Our approach is constant across the government. We are setting standards while investing in places that Territorians use every day, making a difference to Territorians and the things they do day-in, day-out.

The Northern Territory Government committed a $1m investment to install lights at the Freds Pass Norbuilt Oval. The Member for Goyder and I see families going to the football club for their home games, which have now been moved back. The men play at night, which means that the juniors who play earlier no longer play in the heat of the day. They can spread out the use of the oval for games and training across the day, so everyone gets to play in better temperatures. It is a great asset to Freds Pass. This lighting upgrade is a win for that football club and for our communities, with more people able to enjoy watching the footy at night.

The Lia Finocchiaro government is backing the rural area and families. It is making sure that the rural area continues to grow and thrive.

In 2025 this government laid the foundation for a safer, more accountable and more rehabilitative Corrections system. In 2026 we will continue to build on that foundation. Our prison system has been under extreme pressure. Prisoner numbers were rising sharply, and our workforce was stretched. We relied on police watch houses to hold prisoners. As the Chief Minister outlined, in the last 18 months we reformed the Corrections system to focus on rehabilitation and breaking the cycle of reoffending, which the previous Labor government dropped the ball on.

Since August 2024 we have strengthened our frontline workforce, with a record 333 new officers across the Territory comprising 268 Corrections officers and 65 youth justice officers. This includes 181 officers recruited to Darwin and 87 to Alice Springs.

As well as the successful completion of an extended South Australian secondment in 2025, which delivered clear benefits to both jurisdictions, we have also implemented major structural reform through the engagement of G4S. This partnership freed up custodial officers to return to the front line where their expertise is essential. This will ensure the prisoners behind the wire are given the opportunity to enter programs, have structure and undertake training.

In 2026 we are continuing to strengthen this model to ensure every officer in this position delivers the greatest impact on maintaining safety, delivering programs and supporting rehabilitation. The stabilisation of staff has underpinned everything we have done to achieve this.

We changed the *Bail Act* because crime was out of control. The previous Labor government neglected Territorians and let crime spiral. The flow-on effects were that our economy went down, people were leaving

and we were at the bottom of the State of the States report. In just 18 months we managed to turn that around.

The Chief Minister went through the stats. We have risen in the State of the States ranking; I think we are fourth now, and we were last for decades under Labor.

We increased the total bed capacity to more than 3,000 available in December last year. That additional capacity has been critical in reducing the reliance on our watch houses. We have allowed watch houses to go back to police so they can do their job of attending arrests, keeping the community safe, putting criminals in custody, then going back out on the job.

We have delivered 742 beds, with a further 196 coming on in March this year. We recently opened sector 11 at Holtze, which means that 88 women are now located outside the male-dominated prison environment. It transitioned women to repurposed spaces to allow them access to facilities, healthcare and wellbeing dedicated to women's interests so they are not cat-called and abused by men as they walk in and out of the main prison.

A new women's facility will open in Alice Springs this month. This year we will finalise design and planning for a second work camp, with an additional 200 low-security beds in Katherine. These are not just additional beds; they are modern, fit-for-purpose Corrections environments that support safety, rehabilitation and work.

Debate suspended.

The Assembly suspended.

VISITORS
YouthWorX NT

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of young adults from YouthWorX NT accompanied by their leaders. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

NOTICES

Mr EDGINGTON (Housing, Local Government and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Local Government Legislation Amendment (Code of Conduct and Other Matters) Bill 2026, Serial 54.

Mr YAN (Logistics and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Legislation Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2026, Serial 53.

Ms BOOTHBY (Attorney-General): Madam Speaker, I give notice that on the next meeting day I shall present a Bill titled Bail Amendment Bill 2026, Serial 52.

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

1. recognises that the independence and effectiveness of the Auditor-General are fundamental to public accountability, transparency and trust in government spending

2. notes with concern that the Northern Territory Auditor-General is currently ranked last in Australia for independence, lagging behind every other Australian jurisdiction and international neighbours such as Papua New Guinea and Fiji

3. acknowledges that, unlike other Australian jurisdictions, the Northern Territory Auditor-General lacks the statutory power to conduct performance audits, which are essential for assessing whether government programs are operating effectively and efficiently

4. notes the urgent calls from the Australasian Council of Auditors General (ACAG) and the NT Auditor-General for a full rewrite of the *Audit Act 1995* to modernise the office's mandate and align it with best-practice standards

5. calls on the government to:

   (a) develop and introduce amendments to the *Audit Act 1995* to explicitly grant the Auditor-General the power to conduct performance audits, ensuring the office can examine the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure, not just financial compliance

   (b) ensure these amendments provide the Auditor-General with full discretion to exercise a broad audit mandate without interference from the executive government

   (c) commit to providing adequate and stable funding to the Auditor-General's Office to ensure it has the resources necessary to undertake these expanded performance function reviews effectively.

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

1. recognises that gross domestic product (GDP) is a limited measure that fails to capture inequality, environmental sustainability or the true health of our communities and that an economy should be designed to serve people and the planet rather than the other way around

2. notes the success of international jurisdictions such as New Zealand, Scotland and Wales in adopting wellbeing frameworks that prioritise early intervention and intergenerational equity

3. calls on the government to:

   (a) develop a Territory wellbeing framework that moves beyond simple economic metrics to include a dashboard indicator measuring social, environmental and human capital

   (b) implement a wellbeing budget process similar to New Zealand requiring all budget proposals be assessed on their long-term impact on human health, social cohesion and climate resilience

   (c) adopt a community wealth-building approach to procurement and economic development, ensuring that public spending is retained locally to support Territory jobs and businesses.

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

1. recognises the importance of foundational supports for people with disability in the Territory and the urgent need to work to reduce systemic barriers in place

2. notes that a significant portion of people with disability in the Northern Territory are eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), but NDIS services are in short supply, making many reliant on mainstream and foundational services that are often under-resourced and inaccessible

3. acknowledges that Aboriginal people with disability in the Territory often face double disadvantage due to the intersection of disability and discrimination and that culturally appropriate services are critical for their wellbeing

4. recognises the unique challenges of service delivery in rural and remote areas where thin markets and workforce shortages prevent many Territorians from accessing the daily support they need

5. calls on the government to:

   (a) invest in robust foundational supports outside of the NDIS to ensure that the majority of Territorians with disability who are ineligible for the scheme or cannot access services due to shortages can still access essential assistance, transport and community participation services

   (b) commit to increasing the supply of accessible social and affordable housing that meets universal design principles, noting that people with disability are disproportionately affected by the Territory's housing shortage and overcrowding

   (c) support the growth of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to deliver disability services, ensuring that supports are culturally safe, trauma informed and available in remote communities where mainstream NDIS providers are often absent.

QUESTION TIME

Maternity Services

Ms UIBO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Territory women, their families and frontline clinicians have been waiting more than 15 months for you to finalise the $10m funding agreement with the Commonwealth to upgrade maternity infrastructure at Royal Darwin Hospital. Why have you failed to deliver the plan that is required for this funding, and when will you act to support maternity services properly in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we went through this last night; perhaps the Opposition Leader missed it. Let us have a look at the history. This might be offensive to the Leader of the Opposition, but the maternity suite at Royal Darwin Hospital has received no upgrades in the last 15 years. Labor had plenty of opportunities during eight years in government to make changes to the maternity ward at Royal Darwin Hospital but chose not to.

Over the last 12 months private maternity services in the Northern Territory closed because Healthscope went into receivership. We have taken on board 200 to 250 additional births per year. The current capacity of Royal Darwin Hospital allows for the 200 extra births to be delivered there.

There are two issues here; the Leader of the Opposition is confused with upgrades versus capacity. The staff, midwives and doctors are doing an amazing job at the maternity ward, not only at Royal Darwin Hospital but across the Northern Territory. They will continue to do that. They do it every day of the week. Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, they are delivering services and babies. They are providing the best possible care that is safe and secure for mothers expecting babies in the Northern Territory.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; my question specifically asked about the plan and what will enable the $10m for infrastructure upgrades.

Mr EDGINGTON: Once Healthscope closed, which was June last year, it closed the private maternity ward at Darwin Private Hospital. At the time, not long after the Australian Government got through the caretaker period, we wrote to the Commonwealth Government asking for $35m. The status of the funding is that the federal government …

Ms Uibo: Should have rung the federal minister earlier; I could have given you his number if you needed it.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Mr EDGINGTON: Rather than offer $35m to do a substantial upgrade of the maternity ward in Darwin, the federal government …

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: The minister is answering the question, but I am willing to listen to what you have to say.

Ms UIBO: I appreciate that, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 110; conciseness about the specifics of the question.

Madam SPEAKER: There will be no more points of order. Please continue, minister.

Mr EDGINGTON: It appears that they do not like the answer because they know that over the last eight years in government they failed maternity services and left us $200m short for the Health budget. They left us $200m short for primary care, aged care and the CareFlight contract, yet they are whingeing and complaining about something that they simply did not do.

Daly River Flooding

Mr MACKAY to CHIEF MINISTER

Over the past week the Northern Territory has experienced widespread rainfall, including persistent showers and severe thunderstorms across multiple regions. The Bureau of Meteorology has reported significant rainfall totals, with Nitmiluk Gorge recording the highest weekly total of 316.2 millimetres.

Can you update the Assembly on the current situation across the Territory, including any impacts on communities, infrastructure and essential services, and outline how emergency services are responding to ensure the safety of Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is a significant issue. I have just come back from a meeting with the Police Commissioner, Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and the Chief Officer of the Northern Territory Emergency Service at the Territory Emergency Operations Centre at Peter McAulay Centre in Berrimah. On my way back I called the Member for Daly so that he knows what I know, being the local member.

To that point, I just signed the emergency declaration for Daly River. It will now undergo a process of evacuation over approximately the next 24 hours. We are hopeful to have people out of that approximately 450-person community this afternoon. The remainder will be tomorrow if we cannot do that this afternoon.

There has been extensive planning. Our Emergency Service has been watching this throughout the entire two-week period. Yesterday we stood up the Territory Emergency Operations Centre to make sure that we had co-location of all the agencies, including the Bureau of Meteorology, Defence, Children and Families and Power and Water Corporation; everyone is ready to go. Power and Water Corporation already has people on the ground ready to disconnect power and whatever needs to happen. Police are putting in additional resources, as has the Emergency Service.

The community has been getting ready. This community is incredibly resilient and is prone to flooding. People know what they need to do. I spoke with Dr Miriam-Rose late last night to find out what it was like on the ground. She expressed that people were getting ready, and everyone knew what they had to do.

It is just under 13 metres today, which is a minor flood level. The bureau is predicting that it will move to a major flood level, which is why we have to undertake evacuation. People will be housed at Foskey Pavilion at the Darwin Showgrounds. St Francis Xavier Catholic School made its decision to close today, which is fair enough and entirely a matter for it.

The community is in good hands, and all the planning and preparation work has been done. The EOC was ready to go with buses, and the forward plan is happening. The stretchers have been pulled out, and our prisoners will go to Foskey to make sure it is ready. The community of Daly River is in good hands, and I committed to keep the Member for Daly updated so he can support his community in the best way possible. This will progress over the coming days.

Midwifery Service Tender

Mr YOUNG to MINISTER for HEALTH

Why did you award a $1.1m contract to a private midwifery service despite serious licence conditions imposed on that service by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia and significant concerns raised by the medical profession? Why was NT Health in secret talks with this private provider at least six months before putting out a tender?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this government wants and expects that the highest levels of clinical and medical support are available to all patients who present at Royal Darwin Hospital and who receive medical assistance from NT Health.

These issues arise as a result of the closure of maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital. I spoke about this decision last night. The actions of Healthscope removing private maternity services in the

Northern Territory left women without options. As I have said many times, NT Health stepped in where Healthscope stepped out, developing supports for those who wish for private-style maternity services in the absence of alternative options.

All NT Health procurement follows strict governance standards, and as minister I expect nothing less from government. You said that I approved the specific contractor; correct me if I am wrong, but ministers do not approve those sort of contracts, Member for Daly. Those delegations sit with NT Health, so do not try to put words in my mouth.

NT Health advised me that details of the procurement process and the yet-to-commence contract between NT Health and midwives in Darwin, designed to support the provision of private midwifery services to private patients at Royal Darwin Hospital, remains commercial-in-confidence in line with NT protocols. NT Health is working through the issues.

Member for Daly, as I have said previously, I make it clear that no contractor has started and no services have been delivered, so when you suggest a range of things …

Mr YOUNG: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, if you could direct your comments through me. I do not think there is a point of order. The minister has been answering the question.

Mr YOUNG: Standing Order 110; relevance. There was a specific part to the question: why was NT Health in secret talks with the private provider at least six months before putting out a tender?

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Member for Daly.

Mr EDGINGTON: I am not aware of any secret talks. NT Health manages procurement services on behalf of the Northern Territory Government. Importantly, I am advised that the services intended for delivery in this contract are yet to commence. The commencement of the service will simply not occur until such time as these matters are satisfactorily resolved.

We continue to focus on making sure expectant families are well supported, and all our NT Health staff are doing a terrific job. When it comes to this contract—I have said it many times before—Healthscope closed private midwifery services at Darwin Private Hospital, and NT Health is stepping in where Healthscope stepped out.

Beetaloo Sub-basin

Mr O'GALLAGHER to MINISTER for MINING and ENERGY

In the media recently we have heard several major milestones in the development journey of the Beetaloo Sub-basin, which thankfully our government got started after Labor's inertia. Delivering on the CLP government's commitment to rebuild the Territory economy is closely tied to the development of affordable and abundant energy from the Beetaloo Sub-basin. Several local supply and service companies owned and operated by residents in my electorate are winning more business and employing more locals as a result.

The Finocchiaro CLP government recently approved a beneficial use of gas (BUG) application for Beetaloo Energy Australia, allowing for recovery and sale of appraisal gas. Can you update the Assembly on the outcomes of that application and the work our government is doing to deliver affordable Beetaloo gas to Territorians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Karama understands how important cheap, reliable energy is to the Territory and his constituents. Mining and energy are a key part of our government's Rebuilding the Economy strategy 2025–28.

In December 2025 the CLP government approved a beneficial use of gas (BUG) application from Beetaloo Energy, which is another major milestone in developing the Beetaloo Sub-basin and, importantly, unlocking gas from the Northern Territory.

The CLP is delivering real outcomes to secure affordable, reliable energy for Territory households, businesses and industry by bringing Beetaloo gas online. Our government is making history in developing Territory resources, and this is the second landmark agreement in relation to the beneficial use of gas.

This is important because we changed legislation to allow the recovery and sale of appraisal gas. Previously this gas was just flared off into the environment. Now that gas is captured, compressed and put in the pipeline, and companies that are spending a lot of money in the Beetaloo have an opportunity to raise revenue.

This is an important development because it keeps gas going to our gas generators. We do not have coal; we rely on gas. Gas into the generators makes cheap, reliable energy for Territorians for use in their homes and businesses.

This will also deliver royalties not just for the Territory government but also the traditional owners of the land where the gas comes from. This also gives traditional owners the opportunity to have jobs on country and to stay in their communities. I have spoken to traditional owners and their family members in both areas where they are currently operating in the gas industry. They are happy to have that there because they know they get to stay in their community. They get real, meaningful jobs and jobs for their children as they move forward. That is an important milestone for the Territory.

The gas from the Beetaloo Carpentaria project is critical to the Territory because it gives us increased investment and development. Beetaloo Energy is spending money here. It is engaging local suppliers and people who will drive out there to supply toilet paper. Those jobs and the supply chain are there to improve the Territory and our bottom line.

Maternity Services

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for HEALTH

There are two birthing suites that are sitting unused at Darwin Private Hospital while the public maternity ward is bursting at the seams. Your government has the legislative power to keep these private facilities open. Please explain to Territory mothers and their families why you have failed to act on this. Why did you knock back a proposal from private obstetricians that would have allowed them to continue using these facilities?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is becoming repetitive. The opposition tries to push the blame towards the government, but let me go through this once more. In June last year Healthscope made a decision to close maternity services in the Northern Territory. We are as frustrated as every mother and family around the Northern Territory who has been paying private health cover for years, in many cases, to find that the only private maternity service in Darwin has been closed because Healthscope is in receivership.

I plan to meet with the receivers while I am interstate next week to get a further update. We were expecting an update from the receivers and the federal government by the end of last year, but nothing came through. There was the suggestion that we would hear something by the end of the year. We still have not heard anything, so I will take that up when I am interstate next week and discuss that issue with the receiver.

Once a new buyer is identified for Darwin Private Hospital, we want to be at the forefront, having discussions with the new provider to ensure that we bring back maternity services to Darwin. That is what we want to see.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; why did the minister knock back the proposal from the obstetricians?

Mr EDGINGTON: Those discussions are ongoing with the federal government and the receivers to find out when there will be a new buyer for the private hospital in Darwin so that we can advocate for new maternity services at the private hospital.

The Member for Arafura has suggested that there is legislation we can use to take over the private hospital. Let me assure you, Member for Arafura, that there is no legislation that allows us to take over Darwin Private Hospital. Any suggestion that there is legislation that we can use is misguided. We want to work with the new private hospital provider who is identified through the receivership process and have the conversations to restore maternity services in Darwin.

HomeGrown Territory

Mr HOWE to TREASURER

Thanks to the CLP's nation-leading HomeGrown Territory program and this government turning our economy around, more families than ever are wanting to put down their roots in the NT. As we enter 2026 with a growing economy, workforce and population, it is clear why people see a bright future for themselves and their children that was never possible under the former Labor government.

Can the minister update the Assembly on how the CLP government will help more Territorians realise their dream of home ownership?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, what a great way to kick off our year of growth, certainty and security. The Member for Drysdale is passionate about this because he came from the construction industry and knows the benefits of this program for not just Territory families but also the construction industry.

This government is about action, not excuses. That is why the government announced on Monday that we are extending the HomeGrown Territory Grant to September 2027.

To say that this program is a success is an understatement. We have already approved more than 400 grants, representing an injection of more than $180m into our local economy. That is 400 households putting down roots in the Territory and setting up themselves, their children and their families for a bright future. Whether it is a $50,000 grant for first homebuyers or the $30,000 for existing homeowners, our grant is investing in their future and that of the wider Northern Territory.

The Duwadi family, Territorian parents who shared their story with *NT News* for Australia Day, said that the $50,000 was used as a deposit and was key to settling in the Northern Territory. That is what we want to see. Now we have a happy settled family in Palmerston working in the much-valued disability sector. We know there are more Territorians not quite ready to apply, and we do not want them to miss out—that is for sure. That is why we are extending this grant and why it is so important.

It is not just about houses; it is about jobs in the construction sector. This extension gives our builders, tradies and suppliers a clear pipeline of work for the next two years. As Sallyann Innes from Master Builders Northern Territory said recently, 'When the Territory builds, the economy grows'.

The CLP is transforming the Territory. Under the previous Labor government the Territory was on track to build the lowest number of houses since records began. Those opposite sat on their hands while the industry struggled. We have turned that around. We are making it happen for Territorians. We are seeing new houses and people moving to the Territory, putting down roots and calling the Territory home.

This program is anchored for growth, certainty and security. This government is not slowing down; we are just getting started and speeding up.

Maternity Ward Royal Darwin Hospital – Air Conditioning

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for HEALTH

You have been in government for more than 520 days. For 500 days Territory mothers have gone without a working air conditioner in the maternity ward of the Darwin public hospital. For more than 500 days Territory mothers and their babies have had to strip down to their underwear and bring in fans to keep cool. For 500 days you have ignored their health and welfare. You talk about a year of action; what have you done?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I again acknowledge the hard work of our doctors, nurses, midwives and staff at the maternity ward in Darwin. When Healthscope closed in June last year …

Mr PAECH: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja, he has only just started.

Mr PAECH: Yes, I am aware of that. I make the point that this is not about the private hospital; this is about the Darwin public hospital and why the minister has not addressed the air conditioning in the maternity ward.

Madam SPEAKER: The minister has the call.

Mr EDGINGTON: The maternity ward in Darwin is being operated by midwives and doctors every day. I again commend their work in delivering services at the Darwin maternity ward.

When Healthscope stepped out of private maternity services, workers at Royal Darwin Hospital took on roughly an extra 200 births per year. The advice I have is that the maternity ward can cope with the additional 200 births per year.

We have been in constant negotiation with the federal government for some time regarding upgrades for the Darwin maternity ward. We initially asked for $35m to do upgrades. The latest correspondence we had was that the federal Health minister would consider a $10m grant to assist with upgrades at Royal Darwin Hospital. As I have said many times before, $10m will not increase capacity at Royal Darwin Hospital. It would be for some cosmetic changes at the maternity ward. Next week I will meet again with Minister Butler to discuss funding for the maternity ward. I will also discuss many other issues with Minister Butler.

We received a $1bn increase in funding, and I thank the Chief Minister for all the hard work she did to get that National Health Reform Agreement over the line. We are still short by $95m for remote health. We are paying more than $50m for the CareFlight contract and $40m per year for people needing aged care who are in hospital beds. That is not satisfactory; they need dignified care.

We are delivering services on behalf of the Commonwealth which are unfunded by the Commonwealth. Maternity and health funding negotiations will continue. I look forward to meeting with the federal minister.

Maternity Ward Royal Darwin Hospital Air Conditioning – Supplementary Question

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for HEALTH

You just expressed that the government will receive an additional $1bn from the federal Labor government. Will you commit to air-conditioning the maternity ward at the Darwin public hospital to ensure that Territory women do not have to strip to their knickers and bras while giving birth to a child? Will you make that commitment?

Mr Maley: It is pretty hard to give birth in clothes, mate.

Ms Uibo: Funny, is it? You should be ashamed of yourselves.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Member for Gwoja for the yelling and screaming, but I assure him that the maternity ward is air-conditioned.

Ms Uibo: It is not working; don't you know? You are the Health minister.

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, cease your interjections.

Visitor Economy Strategy

Mr PATEL to MINISTER for TOURISM and HOSPITALITY

As we look at the year ahead, we see that the visitor economy will play a critical role in growing the Territory economy and restoring certainty for businesses and the regions. Tourism is identified as one of the five key pillars to growing the economy, and the government has laid out a clear direction through the Northern Territory Visitor Economy Strategy.

Can the minister update the Assembly on what this strategy means in practice; what the next steps are as it is finalised with industry; and how the year ahead will look for tourism, major events and visitation across the Territory?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Member for Casuarina is passionate about tourism because he worked in the tourism industry for 20 years before becoming a local member.

We live in a place like nowhere else in Australia. We want to make sure the rest of the world knows it. Our focus on reducing crime and rebuilding our reputation is starting to make a difference. What better way to hear it than from far away, with the *New York Times* ranking the Top End as the best place to visit in Australia for 2026. It is the best place in Australia. We were also ranked 14th out of 52 in the whole world. It is fantastic.

Our government is putting us in international headlines for all the right reasons. The Australian Cruise Association told everyone in Australia that we were the best place for cruises to visit, with the season seeing an increase of 13% on the previous year.

Tourism Research Australia told us that overnight trips increased by 20% and that people were spending more money in the Northern Territory per trip. It also shared that we have the strongest growth in visitor numbers and expenditure in the nation for the year ending June 2025. That is fantastic.

Mr Howe: They feel safer.

Ms BOOTHBY: That is right, Member for Drysdale; they feel safer. In the year ahead, we are staying the course.

Member for Casuarina, your constituents will love this: we are bringing back international test cricket for the first time in 22 years.

Mr Edgington: Howzat!

Ms BOOTHBY: That is right, Member for Barkly. I cannot wait to see you there. Hopefully you will take a catch for the first test cricket in Darwin.

Mrs Finocchiaro: Two beer cans, mate.

Ms BOOTHBY: That is right; two beer cans.

Australia will play Bangladesh after last year's T20 sellout matches that our government brought to TIO Stadium. It is exciting.

Mrs Finocchiaro: First time in 17 years.

Ms BOOTHBY: That is right.

We are lengthening the tourism season. We want to bookend our season. The NRL Dolphins—I have my pin on today; fins up—will play in April. Early on, before the Dry Season, they will play the Panthers. I will go for the Dolphins, just in case they want to know. There are the friendly games, the Alice Springs Masters Games—Member for Braitling—in October. Will we put a team together? I do not know.

We launched our plan for the year ahead, which is about growth, certainty and security. Tourism and Hospitality are front and centre.

Youth Detention – Healthcare

Mr PAECH to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

A recent Children's Commissioner report found that young children in detention are not getting the critical healthcare they need to support their rehabilitation. These children have serious health conditions. With a single allied health position in Darwin's youth detention centre and one vacant, when will your government get serious about ensuring children in detention get the health support they need so that rehabilitation can be a reality?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that we are taking rehabilitation and health seriously in our Corrections system, unlike the previous Labor government, which neglected it and ended up putting prisoners in watch houses across the Northern Territory. We fixed that and are making sure that beds and wraparound services are available for prisoners, including rehabilitation.

Every time someone goes into detention they get a full health check. I make that clear. That health check is broad and comprehensive to ensure that if someone needs healthcare or medication, they get it at the Corrections facility. It is important to note that. Unlike the previous Labor government, which neglected it, we are taking it seriously and making sure we have prison officers to have those services available.

We are moving women from behind the wire to their own dedicated space to ensure better wellbeing and health services for women.

I do not understand the preface of the question. The Corrections system is expanding. We are putting on more officers, and G4S is doing the runaround services around the edge. This does two things: puts police back on the beat; and allows experienced Corrections officers to work behind the wire to offer better services, industries and healthcare. This will make the Territory safer.

Health is a personal responsibility, and some of the people in detention have bad health outcomes. We are not sure why. It may be that they were not accessing healthcare themselves, but we are not neglecting that. We are offering health services to inmates, youths and adults to ensure that they have the best outcome because we want to break the cycle of reoffending.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question was specifically about whether the vacant allied health position will be filled and how we will support rehabilitation through the health lens the minister just talked about.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, continue.

Mr MALEY: We are filling those positions, and Health is doing a great job. I shout out to the Health staff who go to prisons on a daily basis to do these checks because they do a magnificent job. The federal Labor government …

Ms Uibo: There is no-one going in if the role is vacant.

Madam SPEAKER: Cease your interjections, Opposition Leader!

Mr MALEY: The federal Labor government underfunded Health by almost $400m over a long period. We are putting those services back in Corrections and filling those positions so that we can offer services.

We make sure that people coming into detention have a comprehensive health check to ensure their medication and health are good for a better outcome at the end.

Early Childhood Education Safety and Quality

Mrs ZIO to MINISTER for EARLY EDUCATION

Our government is committed to improving outcomes for our youngest Territorians by delivering world-class early education. The early years shape a child's future, and we want families to have confidence that when they go to work or pursue study, their children are safe, nurtured and receiving the best start to lifelong learning.

Can you update the Assembly on how our government is supporting families and ensuring safe high-quality learning environments for our youngest Territorians, like the many in the Fannie Bay electorate?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, our government has placed early childhood education at the centre of its agenda through our Early Childhood Safe Start, Strong Futures Plan.

We are driven by the belief that every child deserves a safe environment and a strong foundation for lifelong learning. This is in stark contrast to the former Labor government, which for years allowed early childhood providers to operate under repeated waivers, failing to meet the National Quality Standard—some for up to eight years. Despite breaches of national law, not a single provider was fined. This lack of accountability put children at risk and culminated in a tragic circumstance.

Under the Finocchiaro CLP government a clear line has been drawn in the sand. Accountability is being restored across the sector through an increased number of compliance officers, strengthened oversight and a firm expectation that all services meet National Quality Standard 2, Children's health and safety, by 30 June. All centres will have undergone a compliance check by the end of the year, and 85% are expected to meet or exceed all National Quality Standard areas. Safety will not be compromised.

Our government is also lifting education quality by requiring all degree-qualified early childhood teachers to be registered and investing in the workforce through 25 early childhood education scholarships.

This commitment is backed by delivery. Last week the Member for Fannie Bay and I were with staff, students and ex-students at the opening of the $8.7m Parap Preschool, demonstrating that our government builds, delivers and finishes projects on time and under budget.

Following the tragic death of Ebony Thompson, our government is taking national leadership. At the upcoming Education Ministers Meeting, the Northern Territory will call for stronger national fencing requirements to be embedded in the law. This is about honouring Ebony's memory through action, ensuring accountability and that such a tragic accident never happens again. This is the first time that the Northern Territory has put something on the national agenda. We are proud that we are putting these reforms on the national agenda to have this changed nationally.

Corrections – Youth Detention

Mr GUYULA to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS

In January the Office of the Children's Commissioner released a report about the transfer of children from their desert home to Darwin. How long will this inhumane movement of children away from their families and country continue? Why did the government reject all the recommendations of the Children's Commissioner, which contained, reasonably, the use of interpreters and the responsibility of notifying families of the children who are to be transferred? Do you have respect for the expert advice from the independent Office of the Children's Commissioner, whose job is to protect children of the NT?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I point out that the inquiry examined 2023–24 when the previous government was in office. That is probably the reason Labor is in opposition now; it failed Territorians on many fronts, and youth justice is one area …

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Please cease interjections and listen to the answer.

Mr MALEY: For example, the Holtze Youth Detention Centre was two years overdue and $75m over budget. Just imagine what two years and $75m could have been spent on, like rehabilitation, training, healthcare and better outcomes for those children.

Alice Springs cannot be forgotten. It was two years overdue and $22m over budget. The previous Labor government mishandled $60m for youth justice. It built a brand-new, world-class facility at Holtze; mind you, it was two years late and cost about $150m. When the youths moved in they trashed it straightaway because the previous Labor government could not design it properly. We fixed all that, and now we do a great job.

I give a shout-out to the youth justice officers who do an exceptional job every day supporting young children with complex needs in a challenging environment. The obligation to look after children does not start when the child is in the back of a paddy wagon; it starts way before that. Families, community and government organisations have responsibilities well before the young person ends up on a criminal path. I ask: where are those families and communities looking after these children before they end up in the paddy wagon?

Some of these children have severe health and mental health issues that have not been treated. If you are serious about your child and they do not come home for a couple of days, would you not ask where they are? They do not seem to make those inquiries. The health of these young people is in a bad state.

Some of the young offenders are getting better healthcare, meals and a blanket. They are not exposed to drug and alcohol abuse. It is important to know that these responsibilities should be to support education, set boundaries and engage early intervention if you have a child with issues. This does not seem to happen. Years of neglect and truancy cannot be …

Madam SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

Trade, Business and Asian Relations Portfolio

Mrs CARLSON to MINISTER for TRADE, BUSINESS and ASIAN RELATIONS

This portfolio was brought back by this government. Supporting business investment and rebuilding the Territory's economy is a key priority of the CLP government. We are focused on restoring confidence, positioning the Northern Territory as the best place to do business and backing industries that drive growth and jobs. Across the Territory businesses are progressing projects for delivery in 2026 across energy resources, digital infrastructure and local supply chains. This investment is supporting population growth, strengthening regional communities and creating opportunities for Territorians.

Can you update the Assembly on how businesses are gearing up and how the government is continuing to attract investment, support industry and create those jobs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the passion that the Member for Wanguri has for this area is extraordinary. Given her background in finance management, she understands how important it is to get this messaging right and to make sure that our businesses are equipped to take advantage of opportunities in the Territory.

The reality is that for our Territory to thrive, families to have security and small businesses to grow, support for business investment is paramount and a foundational building block as we continue to work to rebuild the Territory's economy.

The good news, as demonstrated by the success of the inaugural NT Investment Summit, is that interest in investing in the Northern Territory is at an all-time high. Over the past 12 months I have met with investors, nationally and globally, looking for opportunities in the Northern Territory in advanced manufacturing, the digital economy and generational infrastructure projects. Unprecedented opportunities are presented to us by the Beetaloo Sub-basin gas.

One of the most exciting opportunities that development of the Beetaloo offers is data centres in the digital economy. With Beetaloo gas, the Territory has the three critical elements needed to create a digital data centre economy: land; cheap energy; and water.

The final component is connectivity. An extensive data cable network is under construction, which will link the Northern Territory nationally and globally. We are seeing an unprecedented opportunity to create a network of data centres in the Northern Territory that will create jobs, build services underneath and provide small businesses with an opportunity that they have never had before.

An example we already see is the NEXTDC small data centre. I call it the grandbaby because it is only a little one. We are now building the daddy data centre, which is seven times the size of the original data centre. That was being built within 12 months of the operation of the first data centre commencing, such was the confidence that business had in the future of the Territory.

We will work with businesses over the next 12 months to show them the business opportunities and prepare them for the business of the Beetaloo to make sure they are ready to support the growing investment opportunities in their small businesses, cafes and networks. We will see a boom as we continue in our year of growth, certainty and security.

Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee

J DAVIS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I seek clarification. On 3 September 2025, in answer to my question about how many times the Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee had met, you said that it had met twice in 2025. You have now responded to my written question number 179 and said that the Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee has not met since 10 October 2024.

Which answer is correct? Did you mislead parliament in September 2025? If the committee has not met, can you advise why, given that there are, on average, at least 70 child deaths per year in the Territory and noting that section 219 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* requires that the committee meets at least three times a year?

Mr BURGOYNE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 109; imputations. If it is a direct question to the minister, that is fair enough, but there were imputations that she lied. That can only be moved by substantive motion.

Mr Paech: Let her answer the question.

Ms UIBO: Speaking to the point of order, Madam Speaker, I believe the Member for Johnston used the words 'misleading parliament'; she did not use the word 'lie'.

Mr Paech: She was asking for clarification if that was the case.

Ms UIBO: She was asking if that was the case. Did she mislead?

Madam SPEAKER: I will allow the question.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we want the Territory to be the best place to raise a family. That is why we are focusing on reducing crime, rebuilding the economy and restoring our lifestyle. Child safety and prevention is at the centre of that work.

As a part of a review, we are looking at the boards under my agency. I made a decision to no longer pursue the Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee because that is the work of the Coroner. The Coroner has been doing that job for a number of months. She does a coronial on every child death, and that work will continue. I have written to the members of the child deaths review committee to explain that.

My department will now work with the Coroner to make sure that all other mechanisms are addressed so that we have child safety at the centre of what we do to make sure that the Territory is the best place to raise a child.

Farrar West Development

Mr KERLE to MINISTER for LANDS, PLANNING and ENVIRONMENT

Since coming to government you have taken action to ensure new development gets off the ground in the Territory. New development is essential to delivering on the CLP government's commitment to rebuild the Territory economy. It drives investment, creates local jobs and puts more houses on the ground, supporting population growth and giving families the confidence to build their future in the Northern Territory.

It was a pleasure to join you at the recent announcement of the Farrar West development in Palmerston. Can you update the Assembly on how this will help make the Territory an even better place to live, work and raise a family?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, they say that west is best, and in Farrar West I can confirm that is the case. It was wonderful to shake hands with people from the Larrakia Development Corporation as we inked that deal, which will see 222 new residential lots added to the Palmerston area.

Mr Paech: You could not see the suburb because your hat was too big.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gwoja!

Mr BURGOYNE: It is fantastic to see that our government is getting on with delivering once again for the Territory. We have heard from my good mate the Treasurer about what this means.

We have heard about the HomeGrown Territory Grant of $50,000, which will mean that people can get into their first home, but they need land. That is where I come in; we are delivering that land through signing this agreement with Larrakia Development Corporation. It was wonderful to see the incoming CEO, Anthony Whitfield, and Chair, Mark Motlop, who are eager to work with this government to deliver this project. This is what growth, certainty and security are about: working with Territory corporations and businesses to see these things delivered.

This morning I met Georgia, who is building her first home in the new suburb of Asche, thanks to the Holtze development, which is another development that our government 100% supports. She spoke of what that HomeGrown Territory Grant will mean. It is $50,000; just think about that for a minute. It means that Georgia can invest in her first home, have her family there and ensure they are finally in the housing market. We hear all too often how hard it is to crack into the housing market. Our government is backing Territorians.

I will talk about how Farrar West came to be. Just as the Chief Minister has been going to Canberra and fighting to get the best deal for the Territory—we have seen that through the recent health agreement—I have also been fighting to make sure we get our fair share. I thank the federal government for injecting $11m into the Farrar West program for enabling infrastructure. These developments do not happen without the enabling infrastructure, and that $11m from the federal government—working hand in hand with us—will deliver those 222 lots.

It is fantastic to see this government delivering. These are not just slogans; when we say them, we mean them. This is well and truly the year of growth, certainty and security for the Northern Territory.

School Attendance – Truancy Program

Mr BROWN to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING

You claim that your government is strengthening school attendance and that your $12m truancy program is working. In fact, attendance fell across every region in the Northern Territory last year—a big fat ‘F’. Can you explain to parents and teachers whether you intend to continue funding this failed policy instead of putting that funding towards engaging kids with their schooling or better supporting students with additional needs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I remind the opposition that we have been in government for 16 months. You cannot turn around eight years …

Members interjecting.

Mrs HERSEY: I will remind them if they can stop talking over me for a moment.

Madam SPEAKER: Cease the interjections.

Mrs HERSEY: In fact, 19 of the last 23 years that they have been in government, they have failed children in education. Literacy and numeracy levels were at their lowest. Attendance levels were shocking. We have boosted literacy and numeracy and are bringing attendance officers back to the schools.

In fact, Mataranka in the Opposition Leader’s electorate, which she spoke of last night in her adjournment speech, increased attendance by 10%. In Timber Creek, in the Member for Gwoja’s electorate, attendance increased by 21%.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: I can hardly hear the minister because of interjections. Please remain silent. We only have a few minutes of Question Time to go.

Mrs HERSEY: The Member for Arafura might like to check his facts and look at the levels. You cannot turn around eight years of failure in 16 months. We will not fail the future generation of our Territory. Every child matters. It does not matter if they are in Timber Creek, Papunya or Galiwinku.

Ms UIBO: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 110; the question specifically asked if the CLP would continue its failed policy.

Mrs HERSEY: It is not failed policy. I have given a couple of indications that attendance has risen. I remind the opposition that we came to government to find 1,600 kids on a secret list that it hid and that did not add to attendance levels. We have clawed back 500 of those students who are in school today.

We need to make sure that those 500 children …

Ms Uibo: Are you saying that your department numbers are wrong?

Mrs HERSEY: Opposition Leader, if you could pipe down for just a moment, you might learn a thing or two.

Whilst they were failing kids in education, the 500 children who are now back at school and off their secret list have wraparound services …

Ms Uibo: Ask your Chief Minister. That list existed when you were …

Madam SPEAKER: Opposition Leader, you are on a warning. If you interject again, you can spend some time outside the Chamber.

Mrs HERSEY: We will continue to address needs with the attendance and engagement teams across the Territory because every child matters to this government.

Frontline Workers – Support

Dr RAHMAN to MINISTER for HEALTH

For years under the former Labor government, the NT struggled to attract and retain doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Partly this was due to the global demand for healthcare workers; however, it was also attributable to working conditions for frontline workers and levels of crime in the NT.

Our government has recognised the need to protect healthcare workers and acted decisively last year to reduce crime and create specific offences for assaults on frontline workers. Can you advise how this and other strong action on crime and antisocial behaviour has helped to develop our health workforce and support our hospital system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I know how passionate the Member for Fong Lim is about these issues.

I am thrilled to say that the Finocchiaro CLP government is boosting the Territory health workforce with 222 new doctors this year and recording a strong uplift in trainee doctor retention. Our focus is simple: grow the health workforce so that Territorians get better care and stronger frontline services, whether they live in Darwin, Katherine, Gove, Alice Springs or Tennant Creek. The new intake will support hospitals across the Territory, including Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Gove, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

NT Health is also seeing encouraging signs that more doctors in training are choosing to continue their careers in the Territory. I am pleased that a large proportion of NT Health's doctor-in-training workforce at Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional Hospitals is continuing from 2025 into 2026, with a retention rate of 78%, which is a significant increase from last year. In Central Australia I understand that more than 40 trainee doctors have chosen to stay on at Alice Springs Hospital in 2026.

Of the 200 new doctors across Darwin and Palmerston, 50 intern doctors commenced recently, and 36 resident medical officers commenced alongside them. A further 100 registrars commenced on Tuesday 27 January 2026. Rotations from this cohort will also strengthen regional services and go to work in Katherine and Gove.

At Alice Springs Hospital 10 doctors commenced on 7 January 2026, and 26 resident medical officers commenced on 20 January 2026. I am particularly pleased that five from this cohort will complete a rotation in my home town at Tennant Creek Hospital.

Interns and resident officers have relocated from across Australia and overseas to take up roles with NT Health, bringing valuable skills and capacity to Territory hospitals.

NT Health's doctor training pathway includes structured orientation, on-the-job education and postgraduate development, preparing doctors for the unique demands and rewards of working in regional and remote settings. This great recruitment and retention effort is about strengthening access to quality healthcare and providing the certainty essential workers need to stay, settle and put down roots in the Territory.

The CLP is delivering on our promises to Territorians.

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

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Maternity Ward Royal Darwin Hospital – Air Conditioning

Mr EDGINGTON (Health): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 115, I will provide clarity regarding a question from the Member for Gwoja.

Suggesting that the air conditioning is not working in the maternity ward, that mums are having to strip down to bras and undies to give birth and that they are having to rig fans is nonsense.

Mr Paech: Tell the mothers that.

Madam SPEAKER: Silence!

Mr EDGINGTON: I have been advised by NT Health that the air conditioning is working in the maternity ward. Yes, there have been a couple of issues in the outpatient area on level 8, but the maternity ward air conditioning is functioning. The allegation that women are stripping down to bras and undies is nonsense.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS
Process of Appointments

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, I move to suspend so much of standing orders that would prevent free discussion of the community concerns relating to the appointment of the Administrator when discussing the motion on appointment processes today.

It is vital that members of this parliament, who have been elected by their communities, have the opportunity to have free, frank and honest discussions and represent the views of our communities, asking the questions that we have been directly asked, about the processes undertaken to appoint the Administrator. This is not about the individual; this is about the process or the failure of the CLP government's processes and leadership—or is it both?

This will allow honest and free discussion …

Mr BURGOYNE: A point of order, Madam Speaker! The member has moved to suspend standing orders. We need to vote on whether that is happening; we cannot have a debate on it.

Madam SPEAKER: He gets to explain why he wishes to suspend standing orders. Please continue, Member for Gwoja.

Mr PAECH: That highlights that after four years the Member for Braitling still does not know how parliament works. The Territory Labor opposition and crossbench are entitled to ask questions on behalf of Territorians about whether the Chief Minister properly consulted and made sure that those values, experiences and understanding required to undertake the role were important.

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Under Standing Order 30, you have already made a decision about this. I think this debate is contravening the decision you made in relation to His Honour the Honourable David Connolly. Standing orders say that no member can refer to the head of state's representative in a

disrespectful manner. The mere fact that the Member for Gwoja is talking about it implies disrespect. In my view, that contravenes the ruling that you already made.

Madam SPEAKER: I take your point. The Member for Gwoja is attempting to suspend standing orders. He is within his rights to explain why he wants to suspend standing orders to debate a motion along these lines, and I allow that.

Mr MALEY: Madam Speaker, we have not suspended standing orders. Your decision …

Madam SPEAKER: He has not completed his speech supporting his motion to suspend standing orders. I suggest you sit down, Deputy Chief Minister. You can respond to his motion to suspend standing orders when he completes his speech. He still has three minutes and 28 seconds. Member for Gwoja, you will continue your speech with no more interjections.

Mr PAECH: I support the functions, roles and the position of the Administrator in the Northern Territory. This motion to suspend standing orders is to allow honourable members to have honest, open discussions and bring forward concerns that have been raised by our communities about the appointment process.

We are all members of parliament. We can engage in a respectful manner to ensure …

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, Deputy Chief Minister; you can talk when he has completed his speech. If there is a problem with his speech, I will pull him up.

Mr PAECH: The interjections highlight that this is of a controversial nature. I believe in good faith that this parliament can be respectful of one another, but we should not be restricted and unable to speak openly and honestly. This is about making sure that future Administrators of the Northern Territory have a clear appointment process and that we can raise concerns that have been brought up about that process, not the individuals. This is about making sure that future positions are appointed properly so that the Chief Minister does not fail in her role to make sure that there is a clear vetting process.

Mr BURGOYNE: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mr PAECH: He is on fire and sooky today.

Mr BURGOYNE: That is twice that the Member for Gwoja has incorrectly inferred—in line with Standing Order 44, I move that the question be put.

Members: Division!

Mr Paech: The Member for Braitling is a coward!

Madam SPEAKER: Can you stop the interjections, Member for Gwoja? There is a division. There is no more discussion or debate.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 17	Noes 6
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Guyula
Mrs Carlson	Mr Paech
Mr Charls	Ms Uibo
Mr Edgington	Mr Young
Mrs Finocchiaro	
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 standing orders be suspended.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6	Noes 17
Mr Brown	Ms Boothby
J Davis	Mr Burgoyne
Mr Guyula	Ms Cahill
Mr Paech	Mrs Carlson
Ms Uibo	Mr Charls
Mr Young	Mr Edgington
	Mrs Finocchiaro
	Mrs Hersey
	Mr Howe
	Mr Kerle
	Mr Mackay
	Mr Maley
	Mr O'Gallagher
	Mr Patel
	Dr Rahman
	Mr Yan
	Mrs Zio

Motion not agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
Member for Daly

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Madam Speaker, I rise to make a personal explanation in relation to media comments I made earlier this week about the Chief Minister's appointment of the new Administrator.

I make clear that what I said was not intended to reflect on you, Madam Speaker, or your office. I apologise for any suggestions otherwise and place that clarification on the record. My comments were directed at the Chief Minister and the CLP government's appointment process.

Members of this Assembly engage with the media on matters of public interest. That engagement is fundamental to the freedom of the press. Although we cannot control how comments are interpreted or reported, my intention was as I have outlined.

Parliament exists for scrutiny. Senior appointments must withstand examination. The media has a right to question parliamentary processes, and we have a right to answer those questions.

Madam Speaker, you have acted appropriately throughout this matter, and I thank you for the clarifications you have provided.

I make this explanation to place my position clearly on the record.

Mr EDGINGTON: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 31; before we divided, the Member for Gwoja yelled across the Chamber that the Member for Braitling was a coward. That is offensive, and he should be asked to withdraw that.

Madam SPEAKER: I did not hear that, but if that is the case I will ask the Member for Gwoja to withdraw that statement, and we will revisit this at a later point in the proceedings.

MOTION
Appointment Process for the Administrator of the Northern Territory

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I move that this Assembly refers the appointment process for future Administrators of the Northern Territory to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for inquiry and report, including consideration of:

1. best-practice standards for vetting and due diligence

2. clear responsibility and accountability for each stage of the appointment process

3. how relevant information should be identified, assessed and documented

4. the adequacy of existing safeguards, checks and balances

5. options to strengthen the appointment process to ensure transparency, integrity and sustained public confidence in future appointments.

I will use some of the Member for Daly's words. Our Labor opposition team has multiple questions about the appointment process of the Northern Territory Administrator. I have requested from the Chief Minister to understand, through a briefing process, the exact process of an Administrator's appointment. I have not received a response from the Chief Minister or her office; therefore, I have not received a briefing, which is why this motion is before the House.

I am not sure of the practicalities or the reasons for the Chief Minister to ignore my request. Indeed, normally I get a response on different things, but there are certain issues that the Chief Minister chooses not to respond to. I am bringing forward questions on behalf of Territorians, so she is not just ignoring me in my role; she is ignoring the questions that Territorians have tasked my team and I to ask.

It is important that everyone understands why the motion is before the House. This debate is not happening in a vacuum; it has been requested of the parliament to consider this through my General Business motion because the Chief Minister has failed to discharge that core responsibility of her office to provide information, accountability and transparency on the government's decision-making and an explanation of the process.

If the process of the appointment had been competent, transparent and rigorous there would be no necessity for this motion. Parliament has now been asked to clean up an avoidable mess created by an executive leadership failure. To make sure we never find ourselves in another situation like this in parliament, which is quite unusual, the appointment process and protocols need to be cleared up now.

The Chief Minister said that she was unaware of serious and relevant issues at the time of the appointment. That statement alone proves the case for this motion. A Chief Minister who is unaware during a senior appointment process is not exercising oversight; she is …

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 30; you made a ruling that the mere speaking about the Administrator in a disrespectful manner goes against your decision. The standing order is clear: you cannot speak about the head of state's representative, His Honour the Honourable David Connolly, in a disrespectful manner. Even inferring that there has been an issue or a problem is disrespectful in my view. She is breaching your determination.

You cannot speak about a head of state or their representative in a disrespectful manner or intend to influence members during debate; we have to vote on this later, so she is trying to influence people in her speech. There are two heads here where she is clearly contravening the determination you made yesterday.

Madam SPEAKER: I agree. We will keep any mention of the new Administrator out of this debate. The comments you made just prior to the point of order from the Deputy Chief Minister were making a disrespectful inference about the Administrator.

Let us keep this separate. I have asked people to separate the personal from the process. With this motion you can do that. Any reference to the current Administrator is personal.

Mr MALEY: Does that include the appointment of the Administrator?

Madam SPEAKER: No, the process used to appoint the Administrator is not personal. That is why I allowed this motion to be debated. Separate that, and please continue with that in mind.

Ms UIBO: It is an important motion because the process is still cloudy. We want to focus on the appointment process for any Administrator, particularly future appointments, not on an individual. We want to ensure that there is a proper vetting process for any Northern Territory Administrator; that there are full briefings provided to any decision-makers for future appointments; and that informed decision-making is open, clear and transparent for Territorians to understand the appointment process.

Failing to do so flies in the face of respect for fellow Territorians when the Administrator role is charged with administrating the whole of the Northern Territory and, therefore, representing all Territorians. It is an important issue for the community …

Mr MALEY: A point of order, Madam Speaker! Standing Order 30; she has gone back to the Administrator. We know who the Administrator is now. The Administrator has been appointed …

Ms Uibo: I never talked about …

Mr MALEY: This is clearly disrespectful about the Administrator. The Administrator has been appointed and is the Administrator as of 1 February. Any inference at all to disrespect that—even the mere fact that we are talking about the process, in my view, is disrespectful to the Administrator who has been appointed and sworn in.

Clearly, in my view, this contravenes your decision. She has gone away from the process and is talking about the Administrator. We are talking about the appointment of the Administrator, which is clearly disrespectful to a head of state's representative, which is His Honour the Honourable David Connolly.

Madam SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, I did not hear anything from the last point of order that was disrespectful to the current Administrator. This debate is worthwhile having in the Chamber. If we have to stagger through it with a point of order every 60 to 90 seconds, then so be it. I have allowed this motion, and as long as people do not talk about the current Administrator for any sort of example or reference, we can get there. The Opposition Leader did not breach anything in the last segment of her speech.

Mr YOUNG: Madam Speaker, I am just noting that the clock has been running for roughly two minutes and is still going.

Madam SPEAKER: We stop the clock only for contributions within a 10-minute speech.

I think we need to proceed. I would prefer that we do not have a point of order every couple of minutes, but if that is the way it has to proceed, then so be it. I am satisfied that the Opposition Leader has not breached standing orders in that last section.

Ms UIBO: I appreciate and accept your ruling. It is clear that the Member for Nelson has been put in as a diversion because, clearly, understanding any type of process is well beyond his capability. That is a huge shame because you would expect a Deputy Chief Minister to respect process and accountability for parliament and governance.

Mr Maley: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Madam SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms UIBO: He is just trying to waste my time on an important issue.

Mr Maley: Madam Speaker, I find that offensive. We are having a debate here …

Madam SPEAKER: No, sit down. There is no point of order. You are being disruptive, and if anyone in this Chamber starts to be deliberately disruptive, I will not tolerate it. If you have a genuine point of order, so be it, but that is vexatious.

Ms UIBO: Madam Speaker, I know you are conscious of the debate and making sure there is fair flow. I appreciate that.

I do not think the Member for Nelson even bothered to read the motion. I want to see:

- best-practice standards for vetting and due diligence
- clear responsibility and accountability for each stage of an appointment process
- relevant information identified, assessed and documented
- adequate existing safeguards, checks and balances
- options to strengthen the appointment process to ensure transparency, integrity and sustained public confidence in future appointments.

I remind those opposite that the first part of the motion is specifically about an appointment process and to charge the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee with an inquiry so we can ensure best practice in the Northern Territory.

We love doing things on our own and making decisions on behalf of Territorians. No-one in the Territory likes overreach from the Commonwealth; we do not ever want to get to the point again like when we had the intervention. There are points in time, milestones in history, that require a bit of grit and uncomfortable conversations but ultimately require a solution and way to move forward together. I introduced the motion because I believe that process.

We are members of parliament and are guided by process. We have a standing orders book and sessional orders, and we need to learn those. If we do not operate within those guiding frameworks, we are not doing our jobs as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

I am calling for the same type of process through this motion so that the general public—Territorians we represent in our 25 electorates—knows that we have a clear and concise process to ensure confidence that, regardless of who is in government or the political stripes any Chief Minister may wear, we have a guiding process.

An Administrator of the Northern Territory is selected, vetted and processed in a certain way. A submission from the Northern Territory Chief Minister is provided to the federal government, and it is signed off by the Governor-General, the King's representative in Australia, as a vice-regal delegate to then become the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

We want to make sure that our jobs, as members of parliament, are not focused on political tit-for-tat about an important position of the Northern Territory, like the Administrator role.

We have failed to see an explanation from Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro or any type of process to be open, accountable and transparent. In good faith, the motion is to have a bipartisan and crossbench approach to make sure that the process is robust, clear, open and transparent, and there are clear guidelines that each member of parliament can explain to their communities that a process has been followed and an outcome, resolution or decision has been made from that process.

We currently cannot provide those answers. I do not know if the government has been providing the answers, but it has not done so to us. We have written and asked questions, but we have received nothing concrete to see if criteria have been made, a process has been vetted and that appointments can be made with confidence. That is what I am asking the parliament to get behind: open, transparent and accountable decision-making for such an important role in the Northern Territory.

It is a pattern of the Chief Minister. Decisions are made and defended, but no explanation is provided. There is no confidence in decision-making and how that has come to fruition. Lack of confidence in the Chief Minister's leadership is starting to build because she makes a quick statement—one or two fleeting sentences—then runs away and does not speak about it for a couple of days and does not explain decisions to the community.

When I was a teacher, one thing I learned was that even if people are not happy with your decisions, they still will understand or respect—they may not agree—why the decision was made. I have carried that with me in this role. When decisions are not explained or talked through, frustration grows.

The opportunity for the Chief Minister to set a tone of confidence in her decision-making is completely lost when she does not explain key decisions. This is why it is up to all 25 members to come together, get through

the politics and make sure we have the confidence of the public for a role as important as a future Administrator.

The impact on community trust, respect, understanding and inclusion are key things that we should take with us as local members. I am an optimist and like to think that most do and some do not. As members of parliament we should apply those key attributes and values to the things we engage in and represent our community.

As we know—maybe some do not, as I heard comments from the Chief Minister and do not know if she understands the role—the Administrator is not just a ceremonial afterthought; it is an important position for the Territory's democracy. The Administrator role covers many different aspects: it represents the Crown of our country, the King; it engages with diverse communities across the Northern Territory; and it symbolises the values of the Northern Territory. We should be proud of that.

The standard must be exceptionally high for the Northern Territory Administrator, and anything less could undermine the integrity of the office in the public's eye, which goes back to our responsibility as members of the Northern Territory parliament.

When an executive process is viewed as failing, the parliament's job is to act. Referring a matter to the committee is a measured, appropriate and necessary response to ensure transparency, with not just parliamentary scrutiny but also community scrutiny. If there is an opportunity to provide a better way forward for decision-making in the future, the committee may see fit to recommend reform to ensure public confidence and no secrecy from executive decisions.

The inquiry must achieve:

- clear accountability at every stage of an appointment process
- robust and documented due diligence for not just the public's sake but also that of the Chief Minister and the executive leadership of the day to ensure they are protected
- strong safeguards to prevent future failures of this process—and we do not know whether there are any consequences because we have not seen a process
- high public confidence that when senior appointments are made it is with the utmost care, carefully and not casually.

Protecting the integrity of one of the Territory's most important offices is a responsibility bestowed on all 25 members of this parliament, not just the Chief Minister as the leader of the government. I feel cautious and concerned if the CLP does not hold itself to account. This is why I believe that the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee is the right committee to refer this work to.

Bringing this motion to the House is unusual. I do not want to be in a position like this again. I do not want there to be stories about the Northern Territory being divided, because that does nothing for our social cohesion. There is a time and a place for politics—I hope that everyone here knows that—but there is also a time to make a better change for Territorians. The time for that change is now.

This motion is to look at the process. There are no politics in it, so I hope that people will read it. If you need me to circulate it again, you can look on the Notice Paper; please do your homework. There is no political pointscoring in this motion; it is a clear motion about process. There is all the fluff that goes out when we talk about something, but the words of this motion are not political; they are clear, concise, constructive and offer a resolution and a way for the parliament to work together going forward.

I am not a member of the LCAC, so I am not trying to give myself any extra kudos or work in that space. This would be an interesting piece of work for the members of that committee. It would create an opportunity to see what is best practice, whether in other Australian jurisdictions or Commonwealth countries that share our head of state. It would be exciting to see what interstate and international jurisdictions do and use those learnings to borrow the bits that may apply or feel good for the Northern Territory's context or create something new in order to make that process robust.

We are in this situation because of the Chief Minister's refusal to be open and transparent with community members and—God forbid—other members of parliament about a process. That is what I am seeking to have resolved.

We want to make sure our Labor opposition is constructive—we have said that from the start of my leadership—so this is us being constructive, offering an olive branch to enable parliament to move forward and have a shared responsibility and accountability together. LCAC is the right committee to provide input, public hearings or site visits et cetera. This motion goes to the heart of addressing any concerns people may have about a lack of process. Let us make sure we have a strong and robust process that we all, regardless of political colours, can get behind.

When leaders fail to explain decision-making, that becomes a huge problem for the Northern Territory. It becomes a huge problem for the accountability of government, but it also creates division in the Northern Territory which we do not need to see.

We see division in other parts of the world. It may be creeping up or openly being let through in the Northern Territory, but I believe if we are to do our jobs as members of parliament, this is the opportunity to focus on a way forward. I think this was all avoidable if there was a clear explanation of process by the Chief Minister. That has been asked about for several weeks, and it has been disregarded and hidden from the public.

The Chief Minister has not even responded to me—leader to leader—as the Opposition Leader. There is disdain and disrespect when the goal is to find out processes of appointments to support, not undermine, the integrity of the Administrator's office. That has been lost with the tit-for-tat mentality that the government has that if you do not agree with it, then that is it; the government will ignore you and not write back to you. You may be another member of parliament, but those opposite will not even bother to write back because you do not deserve their respect even though you are representing the same number of people as each government member. It is disrespectful not to provide a basic response. Having no accountability or explanation reflects leadership.

This is the opportunity for the Chief Minister to turn over a new page and show that she will respect the voices of fellow Territorians. I know she will not respect us as Labor opposition, and that is fine, but we come to this place representing not just our electorates but also other concerns that people raise who are not constituents. Government members' constituents are probably a vast majority of the voices we have heard on any concerns.

I believe the LCAC is the appropriate avenue to send this work. I am not stressed about the timeframe if members would like to decide through the committee. There could be extra time spent on this, so it is not rushed. There is another four years until the next Administrator appointment. I think there is good time to sink our teeth in, particularly the work of the committee, to get this job done.

This is an avoidable mess created by the Chief Minister and her lack of explanation, but also a way forward for parliament to unify and try to lessen the divide that is starting to grow in the community because answers are not being given. Responses and explanations are not being provided. Those three simple things could be avoided if the Chief Minister chose to do that and, unfortunately, she chooses not to.

I understand and respect that it would have been tricky to make sure there is a good balance for not just you, Madam Speaker, but also the parliament to ensure we conform with Standing Order 30. I hope that I have exemplified that to all members, including you, Madam Speaker, so that we can get through the politics and the tit-for-tat. To be honest, members of the public pretty much hate every time they hear the debate because it is Labor versus the CLP et cetera. This is an opportunity to show that we are all grown-ups and big kids in here, not little kids screaming and having tantrums all the time, which is probably what a lot of people think parliamentarians are. This is the opportunity to come together, be grown-ups and have robust debates in a process-driven way.

It is an opportunity to have the LCAC delve into this work, make recommendations, see what best practice is, ensure that there are set criteria and accountability for appointment processes and have things documented in a way that can be safeguarded. Again, this is not just for the trust of the public but also to ensure that members of parliament, particularly government members, are protected because there is a clear and robust process at play that can be pointed to and explained when there are any questions, failures or downfalls; it will all be within the framework of a guided process.

I urge all members to support this motion, consider the apolitical wording in the motion and contribute to this debate in a respectful, robust and process-driven manner.

I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Mr EDGINGTON (Leader of Government Business): Madam Speaker, the first paragraph and key point of the motion says that this Assembly should refer the appointment process for future Administrators to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for inquiry and report.

The appointment of vice-regal representatives, whether Governors-General or Administrators, has for decades been treated as a matter above day-to-day political contest. That convention exists to protect the independence of the office, preserve institutional stability and maintain public confidence in our democratic framework.

This motion, however framed, would draw this Assembly into an area traditionally and properly reserved for the Commonwealth. The government's position is that we do not believe the motion is within the competency of this Assembly.

Ms Uibo: Are you saying that LCAC members are not competent?

Madam SPEAKER: Do not interject, Opposition Leader.

Mr EDGINGTON: It is important to be clear about a fundamental point of law and constitutional responsibility. The appointment process of the Administrator of the Northern Territory is clearly outlined in Commonwealth legislation, not Northern Territory legislation. Section 32 of the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* details the Office of Administrator and their appointment by commission under the Great Seal of Australia by the Governor-General of Australia, and they serve at the pleasure of the Governor-General.

If members hold views about the Commonwealth appointment framework there are appropriate avenues available. It is not appropriate for this Assembly to assert a role that it does not legally possess. I sought advice on this matter, and I was advised that to the extent that the Assembly sought to inquire into matters within the exclusive control of the federal government, it could have significant challenges obtaining evidence without the concurrence of that government. The extent to which the matters the motion proposes to refer are outside the legislative or administrative competence of the Territory is relevant to the Assembly's consideration of whether the motion should be agreed or amended.

Accordingly, I indicate that the government will not support the motion. I move that the question now be put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 17	Noes 6
Ms Boothby	Mr Brown
Mr Burgoyne	J Davis
Ms Cahill	Mr Guyula
Mrs Carlson	Mr Paech
Mr Charls	Ms Uibo
Mr Edgington	Mr Young
Mrs Finocchiaro	
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 motion be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6	Noes 17
Mr Brown	Ms Boothby
J Davis	Mr Burgoyne

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

Motion not agreed to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Member for Gwoja – Disorderly Comment

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, while there is a pause in proceedings, the Leader of Government Business raised a point of order after an earlier division, claiming that the Member for Gwoja made an offensive comment. Would you please withdraw that comment, Member for Gwoja?

Mr PAECH: What was the comment?

Madam SPEAKER: You called someone across the Chamber a coward.

Mr PAECH: Who did I call a coward?

Members interjecting.

Mr PAECH: I cannot withdraw something I do not remember.

Mrs Hersey: It was the Member for Braitling.

Mr PAECH: I am sorry if I have caused deep offence to the Member for Braitling with the injection of 'a coward'. I withdraw.

Madam SPEAKER: It is accepted.

MOTION
Shared Decision-making with Aboriginal Communities

Mr GUYULA (Mulka): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Legislative Assembly recognise the urgent need for the government to begin the work of creating genuine partnerships and shared decision-making with all Aboriginal communities on all issues that affect Aboriginal people. This work must begin by supporting the development of community groups that represent all clan and family groups within a community and have authority to make decisions for the people of the community in accordance with Aboriginal law.

I have been in this Chamber for 10 years and watched minister after minister talk about wonderful things that they were doing, like this morning with the Chief Minister's ministerial statement.

When I am in my electorate looking at our hopelessness, I do not see empowerment. It has always been and still is, 'We know best for you'. That is always the comment from the governments.

I did not want to be a politician. I came here because elders and leaders were being ignored in the bush. Our rights were being trampled on. We were not recognised as having authority on our own country, so I came to this parliament, to the balanda system, to see what was happening. I came here to fix the problems as a Yolngu leader to work with balanda leaders and others with respect and diplomacy. I have come to understand that this parliament is about winning and losing instead of improving the Territory to work together. There are always losers in this system.

I have watched my family members, country members and constituents die early, avoidable deaths throughout the time I have been in parliament. I am still watching how many people are dying. In our small communities we are seeing three funerals happening, and sometimes it is two people from the same house. When these funerals end, more begin at another camp. They are continuous.

We are constantly burying our people since the intervention. Now, with this government, we have seen issues grow in our communities. Our young people have seen elders being disrespected by the balanda system, and they are now disrespecting elders as well. This government's solution is to lock up everyone when we have been calling for community-led solutions so we can address the underlying issues, but we have been ignored.

By locking up everyone and not listening to Aboriginal leaders, the government is causing great harm to our people. The Chief Minister spoke today about the root causes of crime, but will she talk to us about these problems? Do we get a say in how to address the root causes of crime in the system?

In this Chamber I see a football game between two parties, and it is about trying to win at the next election. I am not in parliament to try to win the next election and game; I am here to represent my constituents. That is what we should all be doing. This is what I have learned for the last 10 years. It does not matter who is in government; the outcome has been the same. There has been ongoing disempowerment of Aboriginal communities, but I have never seen it as bad as it is now.

Today the suffering of our communities is so great, and the response by the government is so poor. Our elders and leaders have been dismissed by this government. The breakdown of our Aboriginal authority by the balanda system is cultural genocide. It is killing our culture and our people. The erosion of our culture is clear and evident. At Christmas there was fighting in our communities, and that showed me that our culture is breaking down. Our community and local Aboriginal laws have been undermined and overridden by balanda laws, but it is law that keeps our culture strong and maintains community harmony, so the ongoing ignorance of our law by the balanda system has created chaos in our communities.

When the intervention came in 2007 and pointed the finger at all adults and said that we are all abusers, it was an outright lie. When the Army came in and the bureaucrats came for our children, we became fearful. When they took our jobs and ignored our training, we lost our ability to work for our people and be the primary people employed in our communities, running our communities. When the government policies and funding pushed everyone out of homelands and into hub towns, we lost the ability to live autonomously on country. We lost our connection to ceremony for our young people that keeps them strong and gives them self-discipline.

In hub towns we see an inability for many people to hunt, so they have turned to takeaway food that increases health issues. We see many people every day without traditional or balanda jobs. We see adults and young people disengage. Instead, there is gambling, alcohol, drugs and significant mental and physical health problems.

No-one in our communities is untouched by these problems. We are all struggling to survive and create better, stronger communities, but one thing that is clear to me is that nothing has happened in this Chamber or in these Darwin government buildings. No policies or laws have been truly about supporting and working with Aboriginal nations of the Northern Territory with equal decision-making status. I see some good people who want to achieve good outcomes, but there is nothing genuine in the system.

Over Christmas I was working with good police officers to manage the community disputes. I can do this because I have a government car, an office and staff who can support me. I can be a peacekeeper because I have resources, but we need more leaders in our communities to have more resources so we can work together with police on equal footing.

I have called for resources for peacekeepers and for programs for our young people on country. Our law and justice group in Ramingining is the only group like it in my electorate. My thanks go to the Member for Gwoja that this group exists, but we need one in every community, with a commitment to ongoing funding that creates certainty. Do the law and justice groups have funding beyond June this year? Do they even have adequate funding now?

I do not want to hear two parties blame each other for what has not happened. We can all look at the budget and see how little money has been put into resourcing shared decision-making. I want to say, 'Stop looking backwards and start looking forward'. I have been sitting in the middle, watching these parties blame each other for 10 years, but if we do not properly start working together on this, more people will die. More elders

and leaders will die. How will we save our communities if we do not invest in shared decision-making? We need genuine control over things that are happening in our communities, on our country and to our people.

One example of this is the building of new housing on homelands. Hub towns are not safe places for everyone, and while some new houses are needed in hub towns to address overcrowding, we must see more houses in our homelands that create safer places for our people where we are connected to country and can hunt and perform ceremony for our young people, which teaches self-discipline and pride.

We have the answers and know what works, but governments are failing to properly engage with our communities and share decision-making power. They think that they know what is best for us and are failing in a way that causes widespread destruction and death. That is what this motion is about. There is no more time for excuses or to pretend, lie and play games with our lives. We need genuine action, and I call on this Assembly to begin that.

Aboriginal nations across the NT are different. We have different forms of governance, and this must be respected. The Yolngu are clan-based people, but not each clan is the same. Our clans do not operate by themselves. We are interconnected. We marry a person of another clan and our mothers come from another clan, yet these people are all our family. We work together. We are from one clan but interconnected in many clans, and balanda systems have been pulling these harmonious systems apart. Systems that existed for tens of thousands of years have been pulled apart since colonisation.

When the land councils say that land belongs to one of the clans and give final decision-making power to one clan, they are pushing the balanda system over the top of us. For example, the future of the Gove Peninsula must be determined by all clans of the Gove Peninsula working together according to Yolngu *rom*. True ownership of the Gove Peninsula must be determined by all clans.

When this government locks up our people instead of working with us to fund programs on country it is destroying our people and our future. We need to create a governance body according to our governance system which represents all clans that have men and women present and have true power to make decisions for our people.

I urge the Assembly to vote for this motion. More than that, I urge the government to take action with us—not for us but with us in partnership.

Mr EDGINGTON (Aboriginal Affairs): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Mulka for bringing this motion to the Assembly. It gives us a good opportunity to look at ways forward and the things that, for whatever reason, have been scrapped over the years. As I see it, particularly in Aboriginal Affairs, a number of things have been put in place and worked over the years but, for whatever reason—changes of government, policy or legislation—have all impacted on Aboriginal people.

As I travel across the breadth of our beautiful Northern Territory and engage with many people in the regions, communities and the remote homelands, I am constantly reminded why our government is pushing an agenda for real change in the bush.

The Finocchiaro CLP government recognises that there is increasing momentum across communities and Aboriginal organisations to participate in authentic shared decision-making, greater self-determination, culturally legitimate governance and improved accountability in local service delivery.

Structural consolidation of local government brought in under Labor forced a one-size-fits-all system that, in some areas, has led to a weakened community voice, limited service responsiveness and a disconnect between governance and cultural authority. I have heard this message clearly during my travels. Many community members remember the days before super shires when communities were thriving, proud and progressive. These were days when local jobs were plenty and communities had a means to have their voices heard, with cultural authority at the centre of true local decision-making.

The Member for Mulka is passionate about restoring cultural authority and progressing genuine partnership with the government to restore shared decision-making with Aboriginal communities on issues that affect Aboriginal people. The Member for Mulka and I have discussed these matters on many occasions, particularly regarding providing support to groups that represent all clan and family groups within a community and have authority to make decisions for the people of the community in accordance with Aboriginal law.

Our government policy is empowering the bush. Those reforms and the priority of restoring the economy is inclusive of supporting remote communities to strengthen self-determination through place-based

governance models that reflect cultural authority, improve access to services and build local leadership. Our local government reform—based on our agenda to empower the bush—is being pursued at a time when there is broad recognition that existing local structures in some regions of the Northern Territory are not delivering equitable outcomes for all communities, particularly remote Aboriginal communities.

Empowering the bush will ensure the voices of communities, traditional owners, local authorities, Aboriginal corporations and other regional stakeholders are embedded from the outset. Engagement in community will re-examine the governance and structural foundations of local government and NT Government remote service delivery in the Territory without disrupting service continuity or undermining regional development objectives.

Structural changes under this reform will be progressed only when they are requested by communities and supported by robust consultation processes. All governance arrangements must demonstrate financial stability to ensure long-term viability and service continuity.

Over the past 12 months I have consulted with a broad range of community representatives and organisations across the Territory. As a result of this consultation, I have received many expressions of interest from community leaders and organisations that want to be part of our agenda to empower the bush. I tasked the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development to conduct structured consultation with community leaders and organisations that have expressed an interest in participating.

This will not be a one-size-fits-all approach. The establishment of community councils is not the only option on the table. We will move at the pace of communities to define the right arrangements in each place.

Through Health we are working closely with Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations to empower remote communities with healthcare services, including the transfer of the Gunbalanya Health Centre to the Red Lily Health Board on 1 July.

I am also pleased to advise that the NT Government has entered into a new Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment partnership agreement (NTRAI), which was signed by the Commonwealth and NT Governments and Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory. The overarching objective of the agreement is to enable substantive and enduring opportunities for self-determination for remote Aboriginal communities to close the gap in life outcomes between those communities and other Australians. This includes contributing to measurable progress towards socioeconomic targets.

More than three-quarters of the NT's Aboriginal population live in remote or very remote areas. Their ability to access services which meet diverse needs and are culturally responsive requires significant additional investment across regional and remote Northern Territory. Under the agreement, the Commonwealth Government has committed $842.6m over six years from 2025–26 to 2030–31 to strengthen the delivery of critical services for Aboriginal people in remote communities.

The NT Government is working with the agreement partners to determine the specific details of the program deliverables that will build on the principles for investment and the four foundational pillars, which include being place based, transition to community control, building local workforce and capital investment.

For too long the former Labor government pushed an agenda of local decision-making, hitting the media release quota but little else. As I have said previously, we will honour the 20 existing local decision-making agreements with community organisations across the Territory in their varying stages of implementation. In addition, our reforms will enable communities and Aboriginal organisations to participate in authentic shared decision-making, greater self-determination, culturally legitimate governance and improved accountability in local service delivery, aligning with government priorities to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our Territory lifestyle.

There has been a long history of failures when working with Aboriginal communities. In 1995 the CLP government of the day established the Aboriginal Law and Justice Strategy. It was looked at as part of the Little Children are Sacred report in 2007. The sad part is that the strategy was discontinued in 2005 by the Labor government. The inquiry identified that was a sore point for many people in communities. Many people were confused about why the government stopped a successful Aboriginal law and justice program, which covered Ali Curung, Yuendumu and Lajamanu.

The inquiry was told that the Aboriginal Law and Justice Strategy established men's and women's night patrols, safe houses, dispute resolution practices, role and peer modelling programs, diversionary programs

and protocol agreements between the relevant communities and government and non-government agencies and organisations.

Research into Aboriginal views, understandings and perspectives of government structures, policies and actions provided vital information for the government to recognise areas that needed to be addressed. I was fortunate to be in Ali Curung in 1995, working with Eileen Cummings to establish the first safe house from the Aboriginal Law and Justice Strategy.

The inquiry found it difficult to ascertain precisely why the Aboriginal Law and Justice Strategy ceased. Of particular concern was that it appeared to have ceased without any notice, independent evaluation of its success or consultation with the communities concerned. For whatever reason, the result has been further disempowerment and disillusionment for those communities.

The overwhelming evidence in the 2007 report was that the Aboriginal Law and Justice Strategy was working well. It was embraced by the community, on target to deliver many positive outcomes and wanted in many other communities. It is baffling why the Labor government scrapped the strategy after it had been working for 10 years from 1995 to 2005. It was scrapped without any reason or consultation with Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Justice Agreement was established in 2021, and one of its priorities was to establish law and justice committees in communities. Sixteen years after law and justice committees were scrapped in communities, the Aboriginal Justice Agreement recommended that they finally be re-established.

It is concerning that the Labor government set Aboriginal communities back 16 years when it failed to deliver Aboriginal law and justice groups. It has been 16 years of disempowerment, loss of leadership and purpose. It has had a massive impact on communities.

It is important that we look at the history of regional councils, because history will help guide what we do in the future. On 1 July 2008 the Labor government scrapped community government councils and established regional shires; I think they called them shire councils. People would say that scrapping the community government councils just meant that the councils were gone and had been replaced, but it took away an established leadership group in every community. I have discussed this with the Member for Mulka. An elected leadership group in every community was told, ‘Your services are no longer required in your community because we will establish super shires’.

At the same time that super shires were established, the old CDP program was scrapped as well. We saw many services’ plant and equipment centralised into the larger centres and taken out of communities. The services that were delivered by the communities back then included looking after roads, doing the municipal work, looking after housing repairs and maintenance and tenancy work. These are all key areas that created jobs, participation and opportunities for young people in those communities.

Since 2008 many of those services have been centralised into larger centres such as Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin. They are the services that used to be delivered by people living in communities. That is when there was participation, jobs and leadership in communities. That had the biggest impact on communities in the Northern Territory, and that is why we find ourselves in this position.

There was the intervention in 2007. Communities were occupied by public servants, and Defence went to some of those communities. The Stronger Futures legislation compounded the issues in 2012. The 2012 Stronger Futures legislation was introduced by Jenny Macklin, another Labor politician. We know the history of that because it sunsetted in 2022, and it was a disaster when the Labor government let it lapse without proper liquor laws in place. We saw the chaos, the number of women affected and that Labor continually called it ‘racist legislation’, even though Labor put it in place.

It is critical that we get back to basics and work with community leaders, because there has been some forward movement in shared decision-making.

There are some agreements in place; I spoke about the NTRAI, which is $842m. That agreement will provide opportunities to restore some of these services in remote areas. There is the $4bn agreement to build 2,700 houses over the next 10 years, and we are on track to build those homes. That is an example of shared decision-making.

The joint steering committee is made up of the Northern Territory Government, the federal government, all the land councils and Aboriginal Housing NT. That is a good example of shared decision-making to deliver

remote housing in the Northern Territory. We are working with the Aboriginal-controlled health sector to transition more health clinics to the Aboriginal-controlled sector.

The other point I make is that we established law and justice committees, which are operating. The law was changed one or two years ago so that law and justice committees would have a specific function in their community to provide an Aboriginal experience report to assist Community Court to make decisions when sentencing. That is a good example of shared decision-making.

Our policy to empower the bush is a significant change. I will briefly touch on the Groote Archipelago where a breakaway council from the East Arnhem Regional Council has been established. I recognise that Labor worked on that. I think the Member for Gwoja was involved. The problem was that when we came to government we found that Labor had not even done that properly. The community wanted wards on Groote Eylandt. We immediately deferred the election so we could have conversations with the community and participate in shared decision-making. We listened to the people on Groote, which is why wards have been established there.

Is there more work to do? Of course. Our election commitment was to empower communities. We have people on the ground consulting with those communities. I have received a number of representations from communities that want to look after themselves. They want leadership established in their communities to make decisions on their behalf regarding service delivery and seeking funding. We are consulting and engaging with communities.

There are good examples of communities that have been doing this for a while. I always talk about Canteen Creek in my electorate. Eighteen months ago I went to the celebration marking 40 years since it established the community from the ground up. The Canteen Creek Owairtilla Aboriginal Corporation continues to operate. That is 40 years of people running their own community.

The naysayers say, ‘It can never be done. We cannot go back to small communities.’ My advice is to talk to people on the ground, because they tell me that they want to see structures brought back to their community—whether that is a local government council or an Aboriginal corporation delivering services as they do in Canteen Creek. These communities want the leadership structure that was taken away in 2008. The critical thing is that Labor took away a leadership structure and the pathway for young people to aspire to leadership positions in their community.

We need to work with the community, rebuild those structures, create opportunities for people living in those communities and create pathways for young people who want to aspire to a leadership position in their community.

Community government councils can deliver a range of services. Why can they not look after housing in their community? There are all these big broad tenders out there where somebody in a larger centre might drive in and out. Why can we not work with communities and build their capacity and capability to create jobs; look after housing, tenancies, repairs and maintenance and the roads; and take on all those municipal jobs like looking after sport and rec, safe houses and night patrol? There is plenty of capacity. That is why we are working with communities to create the opportunities that were taken away in 2008. That is what our policy is about.

There is a range of community structures; some are uncoordinated. There are housing reference groups, community safety groups and communities where someone oversees the alcohol management plan. In some of these communities a local elected leadership group can take control of these issues, including law and justice issues, and can work with the community. We need to bring back opportunities for Aboriginal people living in remote communities, which were taken away by the Labor government in 2008.

Member for Mulka, we have people on the ground having those conversations. We want to ensure that Aboriginal people are empowered to take control of not only their community but also services in their community because we want people in jobs, in school and with leadership opportunities that have been taken away and missing for so long. That is what our policy is about.

There are examples of shared decision-making, including the housing agreement of $4bn over 10 years, but not much of that involves people on the ground in communities. There are opportunities to strengthen involvement of people in the communities. There are bits and pieces of money for homelands, but some larger communities want to look after nearby homelands. However, a lot of the big contracts are being delivered from larger centres in the Northern Territory.

We need to get back to basics and build capacity and capability, working directly hand in hand with Aboriginal people. That is my vision for the Northern Territory. The opportunities are there. We need to do the work and engage with Aboriginal people to ensure that those opportunities are realised.

VISITOR
Reverend Viliami Mila

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise of the presence in the gallery of Reverend Viliami Mila from Casuarina Uniting Church. Welcome to parliament.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, this motion is important, and I agree with the Member for Mulka's sentiments. It is an important reminder for all of us to cut the shit. Stop making excuses for what did or did not happen.

Mr KERLE: A point of order, Madam Speaker!

Mr PAECH: It is not out of order …

Madam SPEAKER: Please pause.

Mr KERLE: Standing Order 31; He said—I will not repeat it.

Mr Paech: Shit?

Mr KERLE: Yes, that word.

Madam SPEAKER: I will let it go through to the keeper. In conventional society that is a word that a lot of people use, as desirable or undesirable as it is.

Mr PAECH: I am not attributing that word to any individual; I am saying that we need to cut the shit and stop making excuses for why any of us did not do anything. We just heard a speech that was, 'Why, why, why, why?' The CLP has been in government for 528 days; we should see action in the bush like it promised.

I make it clear that both parties, as the Member for Mulka rightly pointed out, committed to 20 law and justice groups by 2027. Labor got to only five of those before the election. The Attorney-General, for 528 days, has said that it is under review. That is a bloody long review. It has been 528 days, and she still cannot tell us when the next round of law and justice groups will be. It is not good enough. Both major parties need to do better, but let us acknowledge the five law and justice groups across the Northern Territory and the work they have been doing.

There are law and justice groups in Groote Eylandt, Maningrida, Ramingining, Barunga and Kintore. Yuendumu had a law and justice group that was ready to be signed off, but it appears that it is not ready because this government does not think so.

Elevating the voices of Aboriginal Territorians is crucial. If we want change, we have to drive it. We need to make sure that people are involved in that change. Self-determination should not ever be seen as a policy. It is not a policy; it is a core essential to the fundamental wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. We need to see more people respecting that level of self-determination so we can see a better, brighter future for all Territorians.

We do not want decisions being made without the community. We want no more decisions being made about us without us. We want bush parliaments, which make sure that people in local communities can actually be recognised, be elected and be the local politician of their community so that community has its own Assembly. When governments go to those communities they would not just pick and choose who and when they meet with; they would rock up to that bush parliament and say to them, 'What is going on? What are we here for?'—it could be housing reference group decisions or decisions on health, education, environment or any policy. We need bush parliaments.

The Member for Mulka spoke about a lot of important decision-making abilities. I echo what I said last night in this parliament. One of the greatest bodies we had as blackfellas in this country was ATSIC, but it was played politics by a bunch of whitefellas who said that it was corrupt. Rather than addressing allegations, they completely shut down an entire tier of governance and self-determination for Aboriginal people—gone—which had significant and lasting impacts.

We heard from the Member for Barkly about Stronger Futures legislation. I have said before that the Northern Territory intervention was shit legislation. Mal Brough was an ordinary minister, and Jenny Macklin was probably the same. Nothing came out of the Northern Territory intervention—led by John Howard—that delivered anything substantial for remote Aboriginal Territorians other than trauma, dispossession and heartbreak. We cannot come in here under any illusion that it was the best thing that ever happened, because it was not.

Yes, there are aspects of certain policy settings that have addressed areas of need or concern, but they did not need to come in under the Northern Territory intervention. Let us get that on the record and be clear what that means. I want to hear from the Attorney-General because we are supposed to have 20 law and justice groups by 2027. We are in 2026; where are those law and justice groups? I have been out with the Member for Mulka when he championed Ramingining. I met with him and spoke with the elders and local people wanting to be involved in driving local decisions. They are the best decisions because they are from the ground up, driven by lived experience.

That is why we passed legislation to create Community Courts and law and justice groups so that Aboriginal people could sit with the judge to give them advice, feedback and an Aboriginal experience report so that at the time of sentencing the judge could take into account what that community thought was an appropriate measure of sentence.

We work in this world, and it is a white world for Aboriginal people, but outside of here the customs, cultures and traditions are strong and important. They need to continue to thrive and survive. Places like this need to recognise that there are cultural obligations and ceremonial practices that should rightly be supported.

The minister spoke in response to the Member for Mulka about housing. Aboriginal people should be involved in housing decisions. The Northern Territory Government has at times tried to do that. Has it done it well? No. Has any government in the Northern Territory got it right? No.

We should be working with the bloody good housing mob across the Northern Territory, like Wilya Janta in Tennant Creek. Jimmy and Norman Frank are leading an amazing housing project. They designed their own house, funded it and had it built in Tennant Creek. These are Aboriginal people leading, growing and showing; it is amazing. Everyone should be celebrating this, and we need more of it.

We need the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments to involve Aboriginal people more in housing designs, so we can get better-quality houses in the bush that will be looked after, cared for, culturally appropriate and considerate of the weather conditions. We are coming out of some of the hottest summers the Territory has ever experienced. We need our homes to be more energy efficient and practical.

Rather than cutting funding to rangers, we need to give more funding to them because they care for country and culture and provide economic opportunities that lift my mob out of poverty in the bush. These are all important things. Rangers are amazing. They have local knowledge that has been handed down for thousands of years and generations. They know how to read country. When people get lost, who do you call? You usually call a ranger in a community, and they help.

We should fund rangers, housing, law and justice groups and health groups. If we bring people together, we can do it well. The minister for Local Government keeps talking about local government reform, smaller councils and doing this and that. I want to see what he is doing. In 528 days we do not have a draft of what it will look like, where it will be or how much it will cost. It will cost Territory taxpayers more money to do this, but I am open to it. Show me the money and the plan, and I will gladly support you where I can, but 528 days later we still do not see anything.

We need no more decisions about us without us. We need bush parliaments. This is an opportunity to create a front door for remote communities. It is a chance for people to work together and move forward together. That is important. I understand the Member for Mulka's frustrations, as I rightly understood the Member for Barkly's frustrations when he was on this side of the Chamber.

Being a bush member is hard, and I will not pretend that it is party driven. Anyone who is a bush member works twice as hard as any other member in this parliament, because every other member usually gets to go home to their electorate every night. As a bush member, you represent a huge district. You have to stand up and man up for everyone in your community, and that is hard work.

I acknowledge that the Members for Mulka, Barkly, Daly, Arnhem and Arafura do an incredible job—and Namatjira to some degree; it is a remote seat. We need to recognise and elevate the voices of remote communities. We cannot continue to go down a path where they are ignored. That means action. We have to do that job.

As the Member for Mulka rightly pointed out, for too long, decisions have been made about Aboriginal people without Aboriginal people. The policies have been designed in offices, and often the people making the decisions in the Cabinet room here or across the road on Mitchell, Woods or Cavenagh Streets do not understand the lived experience of what is going on in the bush.

I will try to be positive. There is probably one member of the government who works their guts out, the Member for Barkly, because he travels. I might rubbish him, but I see him out and about, doing the hard work, trying his best with the Cabinet that he has.

I highlight that the Member for Sanderson talked about valuing Aboriginal people; this is an Arts minister who has not driven on a single dirt road. He charters in on a big jet and visits one or two art centres. That is not living. Get out on the dirt road and experience the roads that Aboriginal people have to drive on every day—the industry, beef and mining roads. You talk about caring about business and economic opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians, so upgrade the infrastructure that is required to make business viable.

The Arts minister is struggling to push himself to go to remote communities. Minister, do not be scared of black people. They are not scary; they are some of the most amazing Territorians you will ever come across. Get out to those remote communities in the Western Desert and the Barkly. Experience how amazing the art centres are; do not just fly in.

The Attorney-General has been to Groote Eylandt and Yirrkala. How many other law and justice groups has she bothered to meet in a remote community? Very few. How many dirt roads has the Attorney-General experienced? Very few.

Those opposite have been in government for 528 days and not been to half the Territory. Govern for all the Territory; stop governing for a small group. You were elected to represent all Territorians, and you need to start acting like you are governing for all Territorians. The only place you go that is not in the city is the fringes of the cities and towns. Get to the regions and meet with people. I will gladly take you to some of the most remote places in the Northern Territory so you can see, hear and experience firsthand the challenges that many people in our remote regions face every day.

We all need to do better to elevate the voices of Aboriginal people. It is a shame that the Voice to Parliament did not get up. This government laughs about that, but if you break down the numbers and look at the Northern Territory, you will see that every Aboriginal community voted for the Voice, because they voted for change. They voted to be empowered, and we need to honour and respect that. We need to do everything in our power to make sure we provide better governance structures for their voices to be heard and respected and to show us the way.

You need to go to parts of the Northern Territory. I went to Willowra—my great community. I love that community. Has it had some unrest? Absolutely. Did that community fix that? Absolutely. They led the charge with peacekeeping and mediating. They came together the true Warlpiri way; there were lots of conversations. It was animated and hot. There were heated words to the brink and then they pulled it back, unpacked it, worked together and mediated.

I give a shout-out to all of my deadly Aboriginal community police officers and ALOs who were there working with the Southern Tanami Kurdiji group, doing the hard work. They are leading the charge because they are connected to everyone in that community. They have kinship relationships with everyone in that community. They know how to drive the right pathways to get the right responses. They were supported through Southern Tanami Kurdiji to do that work.

I acknowledge that work is possible because the leadership groups come together. They are often given funding by the Commonwealth and Territory governments, but we need more funding rolled out across the Territory so we can do peacekeeping and mediation in all communities. It should not be left up to the

community justice centre to do it in isolation. Law and justice groups across all of the Northern Territory help us with mediation; peacekeeping; keeping our community safe and secure; and keeping the balance of harmony in communities. We can cut half of the antisocial behaviour issues that arise in our communities through conversations and through people leading, doing the work and de-escalating the conflict before it happens. That is what happens when you respect Aboriginal voices and when Aboriginal people are respected to lead and to design the pathway forward.

I was in Yuendumu, one of the amazing communities in my electorate, a few weeks ago. It has had some unrest in recent times. I met with the leadership group, who sat me down and said, '*Japanangka*, this is what we are doing and how we will approach it. We will ask all the *kardiya* (whitefellas) not to come to this part of the community today, and we will lead it our way.' That is the best way. It is the Aboriginal way in an Aboriginal community respecting Aboriginal leadership.

If we need *kardiya* we will bring them in. The *kardiya* in our community are good, and that is the position we need to get in. However, we need to provide these opportunities because we also need to grow the next generation when it comes to governance structures. We need to bring people in, and we need programs to help facilitate and grow the next generation of leadership in our communities. When all my grandfathers, uncles and fathers have passed away, the next generations—my cousins—will need to come up. They need to feel empowered to lead and to make those decisions.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr PAECH: I could talk about this all night; I am passionate about it. I am a proud blackfella, and I have seen local decision-making work. It works when it is left alone with no interference; when it is resourced properly by all three levels of government—local, Territory and federal governments; and when organisations back local decision-making. That is where we see the Territory moving forward and we build strength in our communities.

I do not disagree with a lot of things that the Members for Barkly and Mulka talk about. I have been out on the Member for Mulka's country talking to elders. We owe it to all Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory to come forward in a manner that shows people that we can work together with a bipartisan approach to elevating and listening to Aboriginal people's voices.

A common theme that we all talk about is, 'How do we get our people to have a greater say and be involved in things?' We need good policies in place and things that resonate with the hearts and minds of people in the Territory. If we want our democracy to be strong, then we need remote communities to believe that we have a bright future and that they a part of it.

The future of the Northern Territory's economic prosperity depends on Aboriginal people being involved in the participatory workforce; Aboriginal people must be involved in that growth. We need Aboriginal people in the workforce, and we need to work with them because 43% of the Northern Territory's landmass is Aboriginal land. We need to work with them on what that future looks like. We need to listen to them, be guided by their decisions and respect the Anindilyakwa Land Council, Tiwi Land Council, Northern Land Council and the mighty Central Land Council. We need to listen to their leadership and delegates who want to see the Territory move ahead. They want to see Aboriginal people lifted out of poverty. They want country to be cared for, their kids to be cared for and good houses. These are all things that we need to work on.

I grew up as a small snotty-nosed kid running around with my aunties at land council meetings, ATSIC meetings and Aboriginal organisation meetings and at kitchen cabinets when we were talking about who would get rolled from what board. I am still hearing the same conversations 30 years later. We cannot allow that to happen for the next 30 years. We must come up with something different, and I am hopeful that this parliament can do that.

People like the Members for Mulka, Arafura, Daly and Arnhem are standing up strong as Aboriginal people representing their communities. When other bush members from this parliament do the same and when we elevate and respect voices, real change happens.

It is important that local decision-making means supporting families. The Member for Port Darwin had a puff piece in the *Australian* recently about Aboriginal kids. I am not sure whether she was trying to secure her interstate support base for a leadership challenge. I make the point clear that Aboriginal families love their kids more than anyone else; they love their kids as much as everyone in this parliament loves their kids. The

child placement principle is not to be used as an excuse to say that Aboriginal people do not care about or love their kids.

Do more to encourage kinship care; do not be a disgrace and use culture to justify removing an Aboriginal kid from a loving family, because that is disgusting. Invest in kinship care so that our kids can be placed with their kin. There are people out there ready to take up that challenge, so let us work together to make sure that Aboriginal kids can stay with Aboriginal families so that they know who they are, who their family is and where they come from.

Any assertion that an Aboriginal kid is being abused because of culture is untrue, disgraceful and pure politicking with an Aboriginal child's life. If you have an issue with it, get out on the ground and talk with Aboriginal families and make sure you understand. Aboriginal culture should never be used as an excuse. There are aspects of our culture that you may see as brutal; there are aspects such as how we work together or how people process grief, but not a single aspect of our culture says that domestic violence is part of Aboriginal culture, because it is not.

Child abuse is not part of Aboriginal culture. The *Australian* article by the Member for Port Darwin highlights her own failures in the Northern Territory Government department. She says that in her own article, so do better and reform that system. The child protection system across the country is broken. No child protection system in this country is working, so bring it all together. Bring the aunties, nanas, mums, dads and grandads, and work on that. The child placement principle is crucial to an Aboriginal child's safety and wellbeing; it should be fundamental.

Before anyone interjects and says that I have said something, the safety of kids—black or white—is paramount and always should be. No-one is denying that.

There are so many loving Aboriginal families that I have met across the Northern Territory, whether I am related to them through kin or not, who are ready to be kinship carers. If they were asked, they would step up to the challenge and do it. Safety is paramount.

When an Aboriginal child is removed for whatever reason—which is confidential and I will not disclose—they must go through the department intake team for an assessment and then kinship carers can be found so that the child can be placed with an Aboriginal family and maintain those practices. I acknowledge that cannot happen in some cases—I am not stupid—but the department will then look at foster care. I give a shout-out to all the foster carers across the Northern Territory who do a great job.

I have travelled the Northern Territory far and wide and been to the most remote places. I have been to places of this great Territory that members of this parliament will never get to in their life. In every corner of the Northern Territory, in every remote community, I have seen places where there is so much love, respect and culture. Until the day I am not here, I will stand up for Aboriginal people who sometimes do not have a voice in this government to make sure theirs is heard. We cannot continue to demonise Aboriginal people.

As the Member for Mulka said, we are not all the same. The Top End is different from the south, and the east is different from the west. The common theme in all four corners of the Northern Territory is love, language and law. We need to respect that and embrace it. If we want a Territory that is inclusive and respects one another, we need to embed and respect those practices.

We should come up with a gold-star standard for remote communities. Communities of a certain population should have a certain level of infrastructure. Places like Yuendumu, Maningrida or Wadeye should have bakeries, hairdressers and butcher shops. Let us work together to make sure they can and lobby the Commonwealth to create a baseline of what these communities should have. That is how you do it.

We must restore hope; every time something happens, hope is taken away. We must listen to those voices and stop coming in from the top saying, 'We know how to do better'. All sides are guilty of doing that sometimes. Let us pause and reflect so that we do not do that. Let us ask, 'How can we do that together?' The best way to do that is to say, 'No more decisions about us without us'. Let us create bush parliaments which would be front doors for remote communities—regional assemblies. If anyone goes to a community they should have to meet that group. They should need a clearance or an ID card to go to that community to say that they have cultural competence, they are safe to be in that community around small children and that they are respectful. These are all things we should be doing.

VISITOR
Kris Civitarese

Madam SPEAKER: In the gallery is Litchfield Council's Kris Civitarese. Welcome to Parliament House. I had three members draw my attention to your presence, so you are obviously a popular guest.

Members: Hear, hear!

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, before turning to the substance of this motion I acknowledge and thank the Member for Mulka for bringing it to this House. The Member for Mulka has worked tirelessly in this Chamber for more than nine years. He comes here as an Aboriginal elder, leader and senior lawman with deep knowledge of Aboriginal law. Repeatedly—with integrity, patience, and grace—he extends a genuine invitation to work alongside him and the people he represents. He extends this across parties and perspectives because he understands that this work is bigger than politics.

This motion reflects that approach, and I thank him for it. Many people in this Chamber talk about respecting the Member for Mulka, and I know that the Member for Mulka values that, but true respect comes also in listening deeply to what he is saying and acting on it.

I support this motion because it goes to the heart of one of the Northern Territory's longest-standing failures: the persistent gap between decisions made about Aboriginal people and decisions made with Aboriginal people. For decades, governments of all persuasions have spoken about consultation, engagement and partnership, yet too often Aboriginal communities experience something different: policies designed elsewhere; timelines imposed from above; and decisions finalised before communities have had any opportunities to shape them.

The result is not just frustration or distrust; it is policy failure. We see it in housing programs that do not match family structures; in youth justice responses that ignore kinship obligations and community authority; and in education, health, child protection, local government and community authority, alcohol policy, land use and economic development. Time and again well-resourced, well-intentioned government interventions fail because they are not grounded in Aboriginal law, governance or lived reality.

This motion is clear and deliberate. It calls for genuine partnerships and shared decision-making, not symbolic consultation, advisory bodies with no power or hand-picked voices that suit government convenience. Genuine partnership means shared authority. It means Aboriginal people having a real say and power over decisions that affect their lives, families and land.

The Member for Mulka's motion recognises that such partnerships cannot exist without legitimate community-authorised governance structures. If government wants to share decisions it must know who it is sharing them with. Those representatives must be chosen and authorised by their communities, not appointed or endorsed by government.

Territory Aboriginal communities—as we all know—are not homogenous. They are made up of multiple clans, language groups and extended family networks, each with distinct roles, responsibilities and authority under Aboriginal law. However, far too often government engagement collapses this complexity into a single voice, organisation or meeting—even a single conversation sometimes—sidelining some groups while elevating others and creating division where none previously existed. This is not respectful engagement or effective governance. All of us have seen the problems that this causes.

This motion rightly states that the work must begin by supporting the development of community groups that represent all clan and family groups within a community and have authority to make decisions in accordance with Aboriginal law.

Community governance does not emerge on demand; it is not a tap that you turn on. It requires time, trust, resources and recognition. Many communities want to strengthen their decision-making structures but lack the stable funding, resourcing, administrative support and long-term commitment needed to do so.

If the government is serious about partnership it must be willing to invest up-front in not just service delivery but also governance itself. This includes funding for community-led processes to determine representation, decision-making rules, dispute resolution mechanisms and allowing accountability back to community

members. It also includes respecting that these processes may not align neatly with electoral cycles or departmental reporting frameworks.

Shared decision-making requires the government to relinquish some control. It requires departments to accept that community decisions may not always align with pre-existing policy preferences. Aboriginal law and authority must be treated as legitimate, not as cultural input to be weighed and go in or out but as a governing framework to be respected.

This is not a radical proposition; it is practical and works. We talk constantly in this place about the problems of youth crime, family violence, community safety and child protection failures. We commission inquiries, debate legislation and tighten laws, yet we keep doing things the same old failed way over and again. We centralise power, take authority from communities, sideline Aboriginal decision-making and then, when outcomes do not improve, express frustration and place blame on the people whose power we have taken away. That approach does not make sense or work. Sharing authority with the people who hold it works.

This motion is consistent with international human rights standards, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their rights through representatives chosen by themselves. It is also consistent with the hard-earned lessons of Territory history. Programs imposed without consent fail. Decisions made without authority do not hold. Policies delivered without trust do not endure.

We have heard in this Chamber about law and justice. This is an area where the consequences of failed decision-making are felt acutely and where genuine partnerships matter most. Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory have consistently called for properly resourced, community-led law and justice groups. We have heard from the Members for Gwoja and Barkly about the importance of this. I was grateful to hear the Member for Barkly's clear commitment to Aboriginal self-determination; that was good to hear.

Community-led law and justice groups are grounded in clan authority, family responsibility and Aboriginal law; they are not governance models designed for administrative convenience. When these structures are ignored or sidelined the results are entirely predictable: courts cycle the same families through the system; police are asked to manage harm that should have been addressed far earlier through community authority, peacemaking and mediation; and children are criminalised where early intervention, cultural accountability and local decision-making could have prevented escalation. When community law and justice structures are respected and supported, the outcomes are different.

I follow on from what the Member for Gwoja said. People in every Aboriginal community I have worked with—and I have a long background working in law and justice with Aboriginal communities—are fundamentally committed to the safety of their children. Any implication that is not true is deeply harmful and inappropriate, and it takes us nowhere towards the future that we all want to build.

We do not need to speculate about whether supporting community law and justice structures works; we have evidence in the Northern Territory. On Groote Eylandt, the Anindilyakwa communities' law and justice arrangements demonstrate what is possible when the government recognises legitimate authority rather than bypassing or overriding it. Decisions are grounded in kinship, responsibility is shared, disputes are resolved earlier and accountability is meaningful because it is culturally legitimate.

These groups do far more than provide gammon advice to the government. They resolve conflict, guide responses to offending, support victims, strengthen families, keep children safe and hold people to account under Aboriginal law in ways that the mainstream system cannot replicate, yet law and justice groups are under-resourced, consulted too late or are stripped of real decision-making power. The government then points to poor outcomes and asks why nothing is changing while repeating the same centralised top-down approach.

I have been lucky to be involved with the amazing Mawul Rom Project for many years, which is an incredible and unique intercultural program. It is a partnership with the Dhurili clan nation and other Yolngu leaders, Charles Darwin University, the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police, the Northern Territory Police, judges and judicial officers, senior government officials and many others from across Australia. This unique program led by Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra OAM—who we sadly lost two years ago—provides a model for how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal institutions can work together to create meaningful and effective change by respecting authority and law in both worlds. We do not need to look far to see what works.

It does not make sense to keep doing things the same old failed way and then complain when it does not work. It does not make sense to remove authority from communities to centralised power in Darwin and then blame Aboriginal people for the consequences of decisions that they did not make. The solutions are not hidden; they are right in front of us.

This motion gives parliament a clear direction. It says that if we want different outcomes, we must work differently. We must invest in community governance, recognise Aboriginal law and share decision-making power with the people who live with the consequences of the polices and laws that we make in this Chamber.

Genuine partnership is not a risk; it is the only evidence-based path to safer communities, better justice outcomes and lasting change. Genuine partnership is not slower government; it is smarter government. Shared decision-making is not a risk to authority; it is a foundation for legitimacy. This motion does not ask the government to step back; it asks the government to step with communities to recognise Aboriginal law, respect community authority and build governance structures that can sustain real long-term change.

Territorians are rightly demanding better outcomes in safety, health, education, housing and justice, but better outcomes will not be achieved by repeating the same failed top-down approaches and expecting different results. If we are serious about closing gaps, rebuilding trust and creating policies that work, this work cannot be optional or delayed. It is time for the government to move beyond rhetoric and begin the work of genuine partnership on every issue that affects Aboriginal people and every community across the Northern Territory. It is time to stop repeating failures and blaming communities whose authority has been stripped away and to start doing what we know works.

I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Mr BROWN (Arafura): Madam Speaker, I support the Member for Mulka's motion. The Member for Mulka has been in this place for 10 years, as he outlined today. He has come from a traditional background to the Westminster system to try to get a shared approach on how to fix issues for Aboriginal people. He is one of only a few members who have been in this place for a decade, and he has put out an olive branch. He can speak a couple of languages, and he has come from a different cultural setting to work with the Westminster system to get scores on the board and leeway in regard to shared decision-making because he understands that Aboriginal people need to be at the table in the decision-making process.

The Labor opposition will always support self-determination for Aboriginal people. When they take ownership of issues and their own affairs there are better outcomes. There are a lot of obstacles and blockages in the way, including poverty and overcrowding in their communities, but they still balance it. Aboriginal people come to community meetings and participate even though they come from an overcrowded environment. School attendance in some remote communities is low because that social life is affecting them.

We believe that for the Northern Territory to reach its full potential there must be a strong growing economy with plenty of jobs for local and remote people. When one or both parents are in a job the child will have better leadership, someone to look up to and will get up and participate by going to school or getting a job.

Reducing the number of Territorians going through the justice system is a key thing to be discussed, but community members are not involved. We are making laws for Indigenous people without Indigenous people at the table.

We want our healthcare system to look at catering for Aboriginal people and for Aboriginal people to have a say. When an elder is flown in, it is a full-circle moment. Because of cultural obligations family members are required to be in close proximity. I believe this is why some places in the suburbs have people who spill out into the long grass and become itinerants. It frustrates me; they are here, but they cannot stay at the complex where the person with chronic illness is. More than 10 or 20 family members will come to try to be with that elder because historically it can be a one-way trip; sometimes when an elder comes back it is for a funeral. That is why a lot of people come to be there to support elders; it is a cultural obligation.

Each community is different. We want people to stay in their communities and have access to healthcare and everything. I have heard the Indigenous Affairs minister say that. It keeps people out of regional centres where they can get in trouble and spill out to the car parks or parks. I have a family house in Palmerston I visit every now and then, and I feel for the lads, especially when it rains, because all those buildings are filled with people getting out of the rain.

Aboriginal Territorians are over-represented in almost every aspect, including health and the justice system, so get us to the table. It is no matter if it is a disagreement; it will create an understanding of where we stand.

Even if it is a disagreement, at least that knowledge is passed on to people so they can go away and come back with a different approach. That is communication, and it is how we should do it.

I correct the perception that comes to mind when we hear that Aboriginal people need support. Support is not just about funding; it is a holistic wraparound approach. You can throw all the money you want at programs and communities, but if they do not have ownership of it and have not been part of the discussion, there is no point in them mob participating. They will participate to a certain point. We want people to change their mentality. It is an endless cycle we are just throwing money at.

The most important component from the government and people who want to get Aboriginal people involved is listening to them and understanding that Aboriginal people have a different angle on life. Listen to the experiences being shared and make decisions with those individuals. These communities want change and positive outcomes.

The Member for Mulka comes from a different environment and cultural structure. He wants to work with this balanda system and try to share his ideas with you mob.

I heard a couple of speeches when we first started parliament 16 months ago about itinerants being on footpaths and sleeping rough in complexes. Guys, pull up and have a chat. Ask them where they come from. Encourage them to go back home. Why are they here? Find those little hints of why they are here. The majority of the time they will say that they are here because a family member came for health reasons or one of their sons is in jail or going through the courts. Ask those questions, get a better understanding and encourage them to move on.

I want to see a safer Darwin. My kids go to school here; my sister catches the bus at the Palmerston depot. I do not know whether you mob have been there, but I pick her up because I want her to be safe. Just pull up and have a chat. They will give you hints and then we can bring it back and ask, ‘How can we talk about this as a collective?’

As members of parliament, leaders and public-facing figures we need to take each scenario differently, because everyone has a different story. The government must listen to the history of the person. We have come from different communities, and there is reasoning behind it, so you need to hear the whole story. That is why the old man keeps talking about history and culture, because he has come from a point, is here now and wants to follow through.

When I first started a couple of years ago, we had local decision-making in Maningrida. It had the regional council, the land council and all these different orgs—the main orgs and boards in the community—participating in what the community is moving towards. Out of that, they made a women’s cultural hub because the women in the community needed somewhere to go and access to services such as courts, children’s services and Centrelink to fix their identification in the community.

The other one is the Nja-marleya group, which I always talk about. It created a judiciary board that sits alongside the judge in determining the case for the child. That is amazing. Different aspects of children’s lives are being represented in that court room. That way, the kid can talk about culture and obstacles such as speaking English as a second, third or fourth language. They might need to do a course to elevate them to get a job. That can be discussed there.

We are trying to tackle the remote housing issue because we believe that coming from a safe household that is not overcrowded will play a lot into getting people active in the community and contributing. People want to work and get money, but if there are more than 20 in a household and only two people working, that is an issue. Poverty comes from overcrowding. All that is occurring in my electorate, and I am glad the CLP is continuing work on housing.

One of the local decision-making boards created was Mantiyupwi, which is from the Tiwi Islands. It is doing oysters and trying to create its own business economy. There is also the Nja-marleya law and justice group, which I spoke about, and the Gunbalanya law and justice group. It is all helping to reduce crime and keep youths in communities instead of coming to town and wreaking havoc. We all want that to stop.

Real impact and change is happening in remote regions that we have asked the remote communities about and assisted. I just want the government to start listening to Aboriginal communities so that we can come to a decision together or get information. Like I said before, you do not have to agree on things, but just know where each other stands and negotiate from there. Pick a point that everyone agrees on.

I spoke to different industry organisations such as AFANT and the NT Seafood Council. More than 80% of the waterways are Aboriginal. In regard to the Blue Mud Bay decision, I said, 'Are there Aboriginal people having a chat with you mob on boards?' They said, 'That is a different way to look at it'. It does not matter if it is a disagreement, as long as somebody is there to take that story back and that discussion can happen amongst themselves, then they will come back with a different angle.

Listening to truth-telling and doing decision-making together is the key to action. That is needed to ensure there is good social and economic prosperity for everyone in the Territory, including all regions and remote communities.

I commend this motion to the Assembly.

Ms UIBO (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I support the motion by the Member for Mulka.

Our Labor team is proud—during our opposition days and while in government—of shared decision-making. We are also proud of the history of the great Australian Labor Party in supporting Aboriginal decisions; Aboriginal land rights; communities and partnerships leading solutions for issues and challenges; and people having a seat at the decision-making table. Labor has been proud to do that over many decades, and we continue that legacy in the Northern Territory parliament.

The Member for Mulka's motion speaks to the heart of what we believe and value in our principles, which is making sure that decisions that affect Aboriginal Territorians and communities are made in partnership with them. Some of the proud work we did in government was the local decision-making policy, which was created based on all the work, feedback and learnings Labor had whilst in opposition to create real change.

We hear the CLP government talk about seeing tangible things and practical outcomes, and that is what local decision-making is about. It is about handing back decision-making to and supporting communities, homelands and regions so that the impact on Aboriginal Territorians is in their hands. It should be decided in the hearts and minds of Aboriginal Territorians and supported by the government.

I was proud to lead work in various ministerial roles. Some of that work managed to survive the CLP since it came to power in August 2024. I commend particularly the leaders—many of them elders—in my electorate of Arnhem for the work they did; some of them have spent many decades advocating. They worked in the local decision-making space to channel all that effort, legacy and experience into real changes for their community for the better. As the Member for Arnhem I have supported a lot of that work and championed for communities that are still fortunate to hold onto their local decision-making agreements until they expire.

We know that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has no appetite to support an extension of those local decision-making agreements. I believe that is a true mistake. There is a lack of commitment, care and respect by the CLP government for the strong voices of the decision-makers in communities and regions who want to see real change for the better. It is a cop-out that the CLP has not committed to continuing that work just because Labor started it. That is petty. It annoys me because people have been championing this process for decades.

The Member for Gwoja said it well: sometimes people do not get it right when they are in government, but we have to learn from past mistakes to make sure they are not repeated. The opportunity has been lost for the CLP to rise above its pettiness in not supporting decision-making by Aboriginal Territorians and communities. CLP members, over the big heads of their egos, cannot see, listen and learn from the leaders and traditional owners who have led this work. Some of them have done so over their lifetime and professional career. Some have retired and are still working to improve their community, so hats off to them for trying to survive the unfortunate political cycles of the system that we are in.

I learned early as a local member during community consultation in my electorate that decision-making and leadership, in the Western sense, change. People change roles, titles and positions, but in Aboriginal culture the leadership, responsibility, accountability for community and family decisions and obligations do not change. To see that written up after a week-long consultation with community members in my electorate was eye opening. It is concept that I know and have grown up with, but I saw the difference between the many hats that organisations and governments carry.

It is true that leadership and decisions change all the time in the Western system, but leadership in the Aboriginal cultural way does not change. You do not shirk or change your responsibility as a family member because of your job title; it stays with you regardless. It was a stark but important contrast to acknowledge.

The Member for Mulka's motion regarding partnerships is important. He has spoken about it in this place for more than nine years.

I am proud to have championed the Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation agreement, which covers the communities of Barunga, Wugularr, Manyallaluk and the Jawoyn homelands. The signing of the local decision-making agreement in 2018 was to implement a 10-year plan focused on culture, people, country and housing, including jobs and training as well as community control. It was about the transition of services to community control and the preservation of culture and country.

The welcoming spirit of the Jawoyn people is something I have been fortunate to experience as the local member, including their history and strength regarding the Nitmiluk handback more than 30 years ago. There were a lot of horrible mistruths and racism back in the day regarding the handback of Nitmiluk Gorge and Jawoyn country to the Jawoyn people. There was a lot of scaremongering; unfortunately, 'rights for whites' came strong and hard. I have heard that it was a horrible time for that region because of the division in the Northern Territory.

The Jawoyn people said that they would continue to share that country, and they have for decades. They are multi Gold Plate Award winners with all the amazing work they have done, including the five-star Cicada Lodge on country, offering jobs, opportunity and cultural and tourism experiences. There are great infrastructure and campground upgrades across from the lodge. They have continued to strengthen opportunities for their people. The local decision-making agreement added value to what was already a strength for Jawoyn. It is an area I am proud, as the local member, to represent. The work they do and have done, not just recently but for many decades, continues to be a strong driver in that part of the Arnhem electorate.

The Bagala Traditional Owners Decision Making Agreement was signed in 2022. That specifically covers the two communities of Barunga and Wugularr (Beswick) in my electorate. The key focus for this agreement was a law, culture and justice committee. Thankfully, the work of the traditional owners is driving that desire for justice to be done in a better way.

We heard from the Member for Arafura about the fantastic example of Nja-marleya based in Maningrida in his electorate, which is servicing homeland communities and families. Bagala TOs also have the drive to have justice delivered better and stronger, with more positive outcomes for the Bagala people in Barunga and Wugularr.

I wrote to the Attorney-General asking for a briefing about the latest work with the Bagala TOs and the LDM that was signed. There are concerns that there may be stalling or issues with supporting the Bagala law and justice committee. I got a wishy-washy response and still no offer for a briefing, unfortunately, from the Attorney-General and her department. I will continue to pursue that this year. Let us hope they have more information. Maybe they have the information. Let us hope they do not drop the ball in supporting locally led solutions to improve justice outcomes in the Northern Territory and that I will get to understand the priorities of the Attorney-General who, I believe, still has not visited one law and justice committee. There are only six in the Territory out of 72 Aboriginal communities. It is appalling, to be honest, that the Attorney-General has not bothered to meet one of the six law and justice groups.

I move on to the Werenbun Homeland Local Decision Making Agreement. It is a beautiful homeland on the opposite side of Nitmiluk National Park from Nitmiluk Gorge. It is lovely. It has the key objectives of economic development, health and community wellbeing, infrastructure, housing, culture and heritage. I understand that there is a bit of scattered support for those objectives, but it is my commitment for this year to make sure that the work that has not been done gets done so that the people of Werenbun do not feel like they have been left behind again. That agreement should be the driving force and guiding principle of how to improve that homeland for the better with a focus on better living, quality of services and job opportunities.

The Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation Local Decision Making Agreement was the first one signed in the Northern Territory. I was fortunate to be there. I was extremely proud as the local member and a family member to many of the people in the Ngukurr community and surrounding homelands. Some of the work has been led to focus on outcomes within the large community of Ngukurr, particularly government service delivery. There is a mutual respect agreement with the Northern Territory Police Force. Some extra work will be done on that this year. I look forward to supporting that as the local member.

The Yugul Mangi board members, community members and traditional owners are making sure that outcomes continue to be delivered. That agreement was interesting because it involved all tiers of government. I look forward to continuing my support for the community.

The Numburindi Development Aboriginal Corporation Local Decision Making Agreement in Numbulwar was signed in 2024. Some of the key objectives are about cultural governance, social wellbeing, community development, economic enterprise and local jobs for local people. That is another one I have been proud of as local member, but it is a special one for me; that is the community where my mum is originally from and is also the community I taught in. I have a keen interest on a personal level as well as a professional level as the local member.

The Numburindi Development Aboriginal Corporation has grown from strength to strength, and I thank the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation in Ngukurr. It spent a lot of time supporting and mentoring Numburindi. It shared resources, skills and learnings so that the Numburindi mob did not have to do it all on their own and start from scratch.

Some exciting news for them is that in 2024 they applied for land tenure over the old clinic site. That was phenomenal for a new organisation; Numburindi is in the process of creating new accommodation options there. It will be like a little motel, which is amazing. I have been alive nearly 41 years and have grown up in and out of that community my whole life with my family, so it is good to see real catalysts for economic opportunity for Numbulwar.

It is one of the most isolated communities in the Northern Territory, and unfortunately it is more isolated now that the CLP has cut funding for the Phelp River bridge. I will continue to advocate for that for as long as I am alive, not just in this job. Numbulwar is now cut off from the rest of the Northern Territory for about three to five months, depending how big or small the Wet Season is. I will continue to voice my advocacy for that, as will the people of Numbulwar, Ngukurr and Urapunga because there is a lot of movement between families in that region. Unfortunately no-one can drive in or out because there is no high-level bridge covering the Phelp.

Urapunga is the smaller community not far from Ngukurr on the other side of the Roper. People there used to get caught between the Wilton and Roper Rivers. Now there are two big bridges on both sides, so it is rare for them to be cut off for longer than a few days or a week at max because of those two high-level bridges. It makes a huge difference when you invest in infrastructure in the bush. It improves the living conditions and safety on roads.

In Urapunga people worked on economic development, health, cultural and community wellbeing, infrastructure and assets, organisational governance and sustainability. One of the amazing stories about Urapunga is that every house was knocked down and rebuilt, because some of them were shitty little tin houses. Proudly, under the remote housing work the former Labor government led, every house was replaced and new housing stock was put in place in that small, beautiful community.

They have great stories. The Urapunga Aboriginal Corporation has had its ups and downs, but it is now steady and runs an amazing op shop, which provides opportunity for jobs. They have great economic and microbusiness ideas to rebuild. I continue to support whatever I can in that great part of the Arnhem electorate.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ms UIBO: There are quite a few other local decision-making agreements in the Arnhem electorate that I want to give a shout-out to.

Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria are beautiful parts of the Northern Territory. Most people would know that Groote Eylandt is one of the biggest economic drivers of the Northern Territory, with the magnesium mine. It is one of the richest islands in Australia. It has a lot going on, with a lot of opportunities for its pillars of housing, health, the economy, law and justice, education and local government.

We have seen recent changes and the processes and perseverance of the Anindilyakwa people. The Groote Eylandt Archipelago Local Decision Making Agreement was signed by the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC). It put in significant resources and funding for each of the five pillars that were driven by the desires and aspirations of Anindilyakwa families, community members and people living in and out of the region.

I have been proud to champion LDM as the local member, but it is also special to my heart as my grandmother is an Anindilyakwa woman from Groote and Bickerton. It is again a place that I was familiar with as a young

child and now as an adult and a professional who, fortunately, is humbly and privileged to represent my family members as the Member for Arnhem.

That LDM was signed in November 2018, and I was fortunate to be there for the signing. It is a 10-year agreement that should go to 2028. That is just enough time if the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs wants to extend it. If not, that is okay, because there is an election in August 2028, so we might get a chance to sign it as a future Labor government.

The work of Anindilyakwa families, particularly on education, is impressive. All the young people on Groote and Bickerton speak Anindilyakwa as their first language. They may speak Kriol, Yolngu Matha, English or other languages after that, but they have never had a bilingual education program. One of the key areas identified by community members, family members and service providers was to create Anindilyakwa language resources for an official bilingual program on Groote and Bickerton Island.

It struck me because across the water in Numbulwar students speak Kriol as their first language as well as Wubuy, Anindilyakwa, Yolngu Matha and English. Numbulwar is a revitalisation school with a language program. It was interesting for me to see that on Groote, although all the young people speak Anindilyakwa, there was no bilingual program officially in place. A lot of work was done on that.

The community also has a big vision for a boarding school for primary students on Bickerton Island. There is a lot of cost to build on any island, let alone a smaller island off a bigger island, but the ALC and family members have been working for a few years to get that off the ground. I will continue to support that initiative.

The Djalkiripuyngu (Blue Mud Bay) LDM covers Baniyala, Gangan and Wandawuy. The Blue Mud Bay area is in a beautiful part of the Northern Territory. It is an area that the Member for Mulka is familiar with, not just because he used to be the local member before the boundaries changed but also because he has a lot of strong family ties there. Our electorates shifted a bit; mine moved north, and the Member for Mulka's moved a bit south, but we have a lot of crossover in that region with family and community members as well as cultural and songline ties that go all the way to Groote Eylandt.

Since August 2024 I have been proud to represent that area and see the strong economic drive the family and community members in the Blue Mud Bay region have. For example, Baniyala is doing a huge amount of work on a community or homeland art centre, and its partnership with the Australian Navy is impressive. If anyone wants to see how we can learn from two-way learning at the cultural and professional adult level, please talk to me or, if you get an opportunity, visit, understand, listen and learn about the partnership they have. In the Member for Mulka's electorate there are other projects in and around Yirrkala that are partnerships with the Australian Navy. It is interesting.

People may also be aware that the landmark High Court Blue Mud Bay decision was forged by the advocacy of people in that region who fought for many years. The 18th anniversary of that High Court decision is this year. It is a special place because the advocacy of people from that region changed Australian law.

Some key objectives from the Blue Mud Bay agreement were to transition service delivery to local control, focus on employment and economic development—that encapsulates the art centre I spoke about—strengthen local government and improve telecommunications and essential services. It is hard to do business in a community or homeland when you do not have wi-fi or stable reception.

Places that are very remote are advocating to ensure connectivity—not just survival connectivity, but connectivity that will create economic opportunity. Connectivity enables doing business, booking accommodation or cultural tours, having the opportunity to share land and country, providing a partnership and experience and creating local jobs. A lot of work is happening in homelands.

There are other local decision-making agreements in the Northern Territory. I believe that shared decision-making with Aboriginal communities must continue to be a focus of every Northern Territory Government. We do not hear a lot from the CLP about supporting true local or shared decision-making.

This is about making sure families, clans and community groups have autonomy on every facet that affects their lives, just like everyone in this Chamber. We should expect that each member advocates or fights for the ability for every Territorian to have the same decision-making.

In communities and homelands a lot of that decision-making is shared amongst families and clan groups, and the expectation is it should be shared with government services and non-government organisations as a respectful way to move forward together.

I commend the Member for Mulka for this important motion. I thank him for the opportunity to provide insight into things that are and are not working well in my electorate. I place on the record our Labor team's strong commitment to shared local decision-making now and into the future so that we can see positive impacts for all Territorians and so Aboriginal Territorians are not left behind.

Mr YOUNG (Daly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Mulka for putting this forward. It is an important topic that we should all speak about.

It is disappointing that only one government member, Steve Edgington, has spoken about it, and he should as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I am surprised that members on the government side are yet to speak on this important motion. The Member for Namatjira represents a bush electorate, and I am sure his constituents would like to hear what his position is on shared decision-making with Aboriginal people and communities. It is an important topic that I would have thought he would speak about to represent the communities of his electorate.

I could not agree with the Member for Mulka's motion more. He said earlier that he has been here for 10 years and sees over time systemic failures from all governments on both sides regarding shared decision-making with Aboriginal people.

The Member for Barkly spoke earlier about policy changes when governments come to power. Unfortunately, we see that if it is not the policy of the government that comes to power, it will usually scrap it. There are huge policy changes that directly impact Aboriginal people. We then see the impact it has on communities on the ground, because there is no consistency in policy for Aboriginal people. It chops and changes; people get confused. I see it firsthand in Wadeye, Peppimenarti, Palumpa and in Darwin with the Larrakia people.

We must come at this with humility and understand that when we make those changes, because it might not sit with our government's priorities of that time, it has ongoing impacts for Aboriginal people because there is no consistency in the policy to get things established and well placed in their communities.

An example of that is local decision-making agreements, which some communities need strengthened. Many communities, especially those I represent, are proud of shared decision-making and local decision-making agreements—for example, between the Northern Territory Government and the Mulyung Aboriginal Corporation in Emu Point. They have put in a lot of work, time and effort to put forward their priorities and aspirations and then formulated that into a document so that it is clearly set out how Aboriginal corporations and the Northern Territory Government can work together. That took a lot of time and effort.

I was the local member when it was first signed and implemented; it initially started from the community Cabinet. For those who do not know what a community Cabinet is, all the ministers went to Wadeye. A few people in the communities along Port Keats Road and in some homelands like Palumpa, Peppimenarti and Daly River said to me, 'Why is it always Wadeye?' I understand that. I suggested to the Cabinet at the time, 'Let's go to Wadeye and drive up Port Keats Road, go into the homelands and have all the ministers there'. The Member for Gwoja was there for those meetings. We met with Aboriginal corporations in Wadeye, then went along the road and stopped at Palumpa to hear the issues and concerns from those communities, as well as their aspirations about what they wanted for the future of their community. We developed an LDM agreement for them.

We then stopped at Emu Point, which is one of the proudest LDM agreements I have been part of. I will never forget it, as it was a powerful moment. The whole community showed up, and we were all jam-packed into the creche at Emu Point. There was a young person—she would have been around 15 or 16 years old—and Terry Sams, who is the senior traditional owner, asked his granddaughter to get up and speak to all the ministers and the Chief Minister on their aspirations and what they wanted.

It was powerful. I will never forget that we had a young traditional owner—at 16 years old—put forward what the community wanted. That is leadership from the elders of that community, looking at the young people and saying, 'We want you to speak to the ministers on our priorities'. They are showing our young people not to be afraid to speak to elected members because that is our job. Sometimes members of parliament think that they can sit above other people; that is not right. I am not suggesting that of anyone in here, but we see it from time to time in politics. We should reflect on that because we are no better than the person next to us.

When putting forward their priorities, she said, 'We have not seen upgrades to housing since I have been alive'. I later found out that they had not had upgrades to housing since the early 1990s. The Member for Gwoja was the Housing minister at the time, and they walked us around to each house to show us the deterioration in those homelands and the repairs and maintenance required. I remember looking at one of

the bathrooms and seeing a leak where the shower was; it was leaking through the wall, creating a massive hole in the floorboards and in the wall. That was because, even though they were paying rent, no-one had gone there to repair their houses.

We got an agreement in place that would upgrade every house in that homeland, which has been done. The community was happy with that, as every house had been upgraded. Next we went around, found out how many people were in the community and looked at the overcrowding. We identified that we needed about four new houses for Emu Point. Recently those four new houses have been completed, and they were handed over to the community for four families to move in.

It means that people have a house that is liveable, safe and ensures their kids can get to school; we have seen great school attendance at Emu Point, which I have spoken about many times. It gives people dignity, means people are proud of their community and means people can stay on their traditional lands.

I heard the Member for Mulka talk about cultural genocide happening in the Northern Territory. I can touch on that with a practical example. When we do not fund homelands, people cannot stay there, so they have to either move to Darwin or a larger community such as Wadeye, which is not their traditional homeland, which means people are no longer practising their traditional language. They could then no longer practise their traditional cultures and ceremonies, so over time that is lost.

When governments do not invest in homelands, a practical way of looking at it is cultural genocide. When we see the issues in Darwin it is because we are not investing in our homelands. I see many people from the Thamarrurr region in Darwin, and they tell me that they do not want to live in Wadeye, so they need to live in Darwin. They cannot go back to their homelands because the infrastructure has depleted so badly. It has been run down and abandoned by all levels of government.

I am not here to blame the CLP government. I understand that this is a systemic issue that has been going on for many decades, and there is responsibility from all sides of federal, Northern Territory and local governments. We need to come together to collaborate and come to an agreement for long-term plans. At the end of the day, it is impacting our Aboriginal people.

We see punitive debate in here, blaming Aboriginal people for what is going on rather than looking at the underlying issues I have just spoken about.

I am happy to take people to Emu Point or any homeland or community to physically see what is going on. Go in with an open mind and understand where people are coming from and what they want for their community, because we can make a difference. I am seeing that difference in Emu Point. I am seeing differences in other homelands, but I am also seeing some go backwards—a lot, actually.

I talked about upgrades to housing and the four new houses. I also looked at education, which is a huge priority for the Emu Point community, especially Terry Sams, the traditional owner who advocates heavily that everyone needs a good education. He also understands the foundation of having a good home to ensure kids can get to school.

Included in that LDM agreement was constructing additional educational facilities. Some of that has been done. There have been upgrades to the playground and an extra building built because the teacher was living next to the classroom. Now that there is accommodation we can get a full-time teacher who is not driving in and out. It means consistency with the schooling in Emu Point. Teachers are not coming and going because they do not have accommodation. They were staying at Peppimenarti and having to drive in and out; that is about 30 to 40 minutes. During the Wet Season that drive can extend and, if there is enough rain, nobody can get in and out.

We had a new school council set up, with many of Terry's sisters on the school council. That is guiding the way the school could operate, giving advice and working hand in hand with the Northern Territory department of Education and the community to look at how best we can run educational programs in Emu Point.

The agreement is due to expire this year. I have not heard anything from the Aboriginal Affairs minister, but I know, speaking to people of Emu Point, that they are eager to extend this agreement and look at how the Northern Territory Government can continue to support it and take away the politics of it.

It is important that we have local jobs there. One of those things was establishing a ranger service and a recreation hall to provide space for youths. The other important thing was about sustainable use of and

access to clean water. Many communities are water stressed, so we are working with Power and Water to ensure we have reliable and safe drinking water for those communities.

When community Cabinet went there—I am sure the Leader of the Opposition remembers heading to Emu Point with all the ministers—we later packaged that all together. I went to Emu Point in 2022 and signed the first LDM agreement with Nicole Manison and later with Selena Uibo, the then Aboriginal Affairs minister, to sign the implementation plan of those agreed aspirations. That has now been enacted, and some things have been implemented over time.

There are many LDM agreements across the Northern Territory. We committed to treaty in 2016. The way I look at that is it establishing a first step to treaty. It is about transitioning community control and community services back to Aboriginal people, which makes us all accountable on both sides. It is also ensuring that Aboriginal people have control over affairs in their community.

There are many other LDM agreements. There is a similar story at Daly River, where we were working with the Green River Aboriginal Corporation to transition some community control. Dr Miriam-Rose is the chairperson of the corporation, and I meet with her regularly.

I give a huge shout-out to the people of Daly River. I have been thinking of them. I have spoken to a few people in Daly River.

Mr BROWN: 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 YOUNG: I thank the government members for yelling out enthusiastically.

Mr Patel: Hear, hear!

Mr YOUNG: Thank you, Member for Casuarina.

My thoughts are with the people of Daly River at this time. We have seen the flooding status updated to potentially affect Daly River. It is a stressful time for them to evacuate, leaving their home and possessions. It can be stressful not knowing what you will come back to when it floods. I have seen photos of floods from the 1990s at the Daly River Inn. It can be up to the level of the roof. We have seen photos of crocodiles swimming through the community, because the river runs parallel.

I thank emergency services there, working around the clock to ensure that we get people from Daly River to the shelter in Darwin. I acknowledge the Chief Minister, as she called to give me an update. I appreciate that. It is important as the local member to know information and put the politics aside. That aligns with shared decision-making. It shows that we can work together in times of need.

Emergency services are working with the community. They understand well how that river works, especially when it floods. There has been plenty of rain around. I thank emergency services, the Green River Aboriginal Corporation and the community members for working with the authorities to make sure everyone is safe.

This is an ongoing matter that we and emergency services will monitor. Hopefully, it does not flood, but if it does, we will go and see what and if any damage has been done to people's houses and, more broadly, the community. I also thank the service providers.

I thank the Member for Mulka again. This is an important debate that we should have respectfully. The timing is perfect with the start of the new year. We should be talking about shared decision-making. We must work together because Aboriginal people know what is best for Aboriginal people and their communities. If we pretend otherwise, we are all failing in this role. We know what is best for us.

All levels of government need to work together to ensure that we have long-term plans in place and that we do not chop and change between policies, especially when policies are working. That is the most frustrating thing that I see when a policy is working and a new government comes in—from either side—and changes it because, 'It wasn't our idea, so we'll just change it'. People then become disheartened and disengaged in the system. We need some reckoning in terms of consistency between all parties and how we listen to Aboriginal people in communities.

Mr GUYULA (Mulka)(in reply): Madam Speaker, I thank everyone who participated and shared thoughts on how we can work together and support one another in every way we can. I particularly thank the Members for Gwoja and Johnston and those who made speeches, including the Member for Barkly. I believe we can understand each other.

It is a simple story that I want you to know about where I come from and why things are not working for me and my people. We come from different cultures, languages and the way we serve one another or what we think. I make it clear that we are looking at brokenness in culture or how the system works, but that will not work because, from our understanding, we see that you think you know what is best for us.

There are multilingual cultures. From north-east Arnhem Land, Yirrkala, Milingimbi to Elcho there are about 24 to 30 multilingual cultures. Further south or west it changes; there are connections through songlines and ancestral creation that move through and connect, but they start to speak different languages.

That is what we have been trying to say, like I said to whoever was running the government back then. It is not about that; we need the system to come closer. I have come closer here, and we expect you to come closer to us and find out. This is the only way we can create pathways and say, 'Okay, this is how it works. Make sure you discipline your children and teach them the way you have for many thousands of years on country.'

Sorry, but you have come from overseas, from another clan or country, and we still need to teach one another. The only way we can is to come together and share.

It is no problem if I say, 'Okay, I will serve you. Do your best work with your children.' When it comes to disciplining children and respect, our culture starts from when young children are growing up as they participate in ceremonies and learn language. One clan learns a language, and another learns a language, and they walk together. When they grow up to be an older child, boy or girl, they participate in discipline ceremonies. They go through paintings with elders who tell them, 'You do not do this, that and the other'.

I have been through a *bunggul* ceremony. This is how we go. I believe that is how we understand each other, but that is just me. I am not saying that I am bad or that you have a bad system; it is just that it works differently. All I need to do is sit down with my clan, and we learn from one another.

Ceremonies run across the Top End. When a lot of people came and looked at it, they asked, 'What kind of culture is that? Will that actually discipline people? Is it creating a pathway for people to work? What is it? Is it a bad culture?' We have always done this.

The Members for Gwoja, Daly and Barkly know that in the Barkly Tableland and all those areas, there could be two or three clan groups.

I will tell you what I learned when I was in New York and Washington DC. The Union Jack that was sent to Australia was made up of three crosses from different countries. This is what I am trying to say; they came from different countries with their own ways, joined up and made the strength of people who came here. This is what we do when we get people from down south towards the Barkly Tableland, the Centre, the Daly, East Arnhem and around here to meet, work and sit down together.

The way we do it is to sit down diplomatically together. We never had anything like a triangle where someone is higher than everybody else. Every clan group has done that. We work together. This is how we run it. This is how we discipline our children and young people. Now we have been confused with lots of people misunderstanding each other.

Indigenous people understand that there is a fight going on across the Top End. Young people are confused, and the parents and families are confused because we do not have any opportunity to come together so that we can sit down and work together. We support some people to do it their way and others to do it another way. That way we can work together on joint ventures.

Our culture—whether it is westwards, to the south-west, the Barkly Tableland, the Centre, Alice Springs or East Arnhem Land—is the law and governance that we have lived with. We learn from and support one another. Included in that is always education, discipline, showing leadership roles and showing how to stand as strong leaders so that when we see a stranger from another clan we meet them, bring them over and sort things out rather than thinking that they are coming to cause trouble and argue.

I have spoken mainly about my disappointment for the last 10 years. It has been a challenge. When I walked in, I did not know what was going on. I felt that I was a bit different and that people here were different, but after 10 years I have grown strong in my spirit and know, 'That's who Labor is, and that's who the CLP are' and vice versa.

I was expecting other parties or Independents to come and sit down diplomatically together in a Mulka space. My electorate is a *mulka*, which is a space where we sit down together, not saying, 'I'm telling you this, that and the other. Don't you ever come here'—no. Let us listen to one another and share how we can run this community. Let us share how we can meet and learn about one another.

Young people will grow season after season. As ages grow, young children—like in kindergarten, young boys and girls and other people—need to learn, and we keep discipline strong through culture. That is why we need to educate and support one another.

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS TABLED
Correspondence – Written Questions Not Answered

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table correspondence in relation to members' requests, pursuant to Standing Order 114, regarding written questions not answered within 30 days.

Quarterly Members' Fuel Transaction Report Quarter 4 – October to December 2025

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Quarterly Members' Fuel Transaction Report, Quarter 4, October to December 2025.

Satellite Phone Report 2025

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the Satellite Phone Report 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr MALEY (Agriculture and Fisheries): Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr MALEY (Nelson): Madam Speaker, we farewelled another proud Territorian yesterday, Mr Barry Walshe.

Barry arrived in Darwin in the late 1970s after growing up in Ballina and going on to work riding racehorses, chasing big waves, completing his boiler-making trade, a brief stint as a rodeo competitor and even working in New Guinea. His story is one of many Territorians. He came to Darwin, found work, fell in love and never left.

Barry's first employment in the Top End was with John Grice at Barge Express, then with McCourts Cranes, erecting large sheds in Winnellie.

In March 1977 he commenced work at Darwin Community College. Over 27 years and many name changes, Barry remained there until retiring from Charles Darwin University in 2004. I was fortunate to be one of his students during a welding module at trade school. Mr Walshe was my welding teacher.

He was a lifelong sportsman. Barry played or followed just about everything: surfing; horse riding; hockey; cricket; skiing; golf, which he maintained spoiled a good walk; squash; indoor cricket; polocrosse; and rodeo. Rugby league tested his patience—particularly the Tigers' recent struggles and NSW's inability to topple the Maroons—though his love-hate relationship with the game never faded. Alfie Langer remained both villain and hero, depending on the jersey.

With no surf in Darwin, Barry and diehards Rodney and Darryl made do with board riding at Girraween Lagoon, Manton Dam and on mats down the slide at the Berry Springs lakes.

Barry also became a polocrosse player, and it was one of his great obsessions. This is another place I met him as a kid. I remember when I was playing in the polocrosse sub-juniors and under-10s at Freds Pass where the Bears play rugby league now. Barry was a bit older than me, and he was a fierce and good player back in the day.

Barry started playing in 1977 along with a former minister, Barry Coulter. As the story goes, his first carnival saw him have to ride his horse there because he could not load it onto the float. He rode his horse there, played the tournament and rode back.

Like many of us horse people who start playing polocrosse, he was hooked for life. Barry served the sport tirelessly as player, president, coach, umpire, strapper and financier for his family. His dedication earned him life membership of the Humpty Doo Polocrosse Club, life membership of the NT Polocrosse Association and the Australian Sports Medal in 2000.

He represented the NT at multiple national titles, played at the Perth Royal Show, promoted the sport in Alice Springs, served on national coaching and umpiring committees and managed Australia's winning team against New Zealand in 1996.

Barry was a great family man. He was generous, loyal and supportive of everyone he loved. He was a friend to many across all ages and walks of life. Barry was, simply, one of the good ones. He was kind, fair and gentle. He was a true gentleman and one of the last handkerchief-carrying men.

I extend my sincere condolences to Barry's wife, Mary; children, Jolene, Monica, Ellen and Brendan; and extended family who celebrated Barry's life at the Livingstone Recreation Reserve on Sunday 18 January. I attended that ceremony with the Member for Goyder. Lots of people were there. In fact, the priest asked Mary why he did not have it at the church. When it turned out that there were so many people there, he said, 'I see why it was not at the church'. It simply was not big enough.

We will miss Barry on the sidelines. I have played against him. He supported us. I heard him yelling on the field when I am playing. He is passionate, and I am sure everyone in the polocrosse fraternity will miss him dearly.

Vale, Barry Walshe.

Mrs ZIO (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I pay my respects to someone who has passed away. It is with a heavy heart that I honour an extraordinary Territorian whose life was a testament to selfless service, unyielding determination and the kind of warmth that bound our community together. Sandra Robyn Hyde—Sandie, as she was known to many of us in Fannie Bay and across the Top End—left us far too soon. Her passing is a profound loss not just to her beautiful husband, Milton, her family, friends and the Darwin Stingers swimming family but to every corner of the Territory she touched with her compassion and grit.

Sandie was the embodiment of that rare spirit we cherish in the Territory. She was tough as teak, yet tender hearted. A fighter in the pool and a fierce advocate for the vulnerable on dry land, I had the privilege of knowing her through our shared Fannie Bay community, where her presence and smiling face in our community room every week was something we looked forward to. She lived just minutes from my electorate office in Parap.

Her story reminds us of why we serve here. It is for people like Sandie, who gave everything without asking anything in return. From her early days coordinating the Gove crisis accommodation service in the 1990s, Sandie stood as a beacon for women and children fleeing domestic violence. She did not just offer shelter; she offered hope, dignity and a path forward. Her work informed national reports like the Commonwealth's Domestic Violence in Regional Australia literature review.

Later, as director of the Salvation Army's Towards Independence program in the Top End from the early 2000s to 2011, she walked alongside families, helping them secure transitional housing, build skills and reclaim independence. Her hands-on approach in developing protocols and taking referrals from agencies across Darwin changed lives in ways that rippled through generations.

Sandie's leadership shone in boardrooms and council meetings too. She served as the secretary of NAPCAN's Northern Territory council from 2007 to 2009, championing child protection. She was elected to the NT Shelter board for three consecutive terms to 2011, fighting for housing justice.

Her wisdom shaped the 2011 review of the Northern Territory youth justice system. She lent her voice to the Positive Parenting Program at Wanguri Primary School and the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project in places like Milingimbi.

Even the Darwin Entertainment Centre counted her as a dedicated member in the mid-2000s. In 2001 her decades of service earned her the Northern Territory Government Women's Achievement Award—a proud moment that captured her quiet power.

If you wanted to see Sandie's eyes light up—you can still picture that spark—you had to watch her swim. A proud Darwin Stinger, she dove into masters swimming with the same joy and ferocity she brought to everything. Her teammates' heartfelt Facebook tribute after her passing captures it perfectly: 'Sandie was the heart of the pool deck, sharing laughs, tips and unwavering support'.

Her medal haul was remarkable: gold in the 50-metre backstroke and 50-metre breaststroke in the 2019 Singapore masters debut; three bronzes and relay golds at the 2023 Great Barrier Reef Masters Games in Cairns; top age group honours in the 2021 Masters Swimming National Swim Series for 200-metre breaststroke; strong results across the 2022 Australian Masters Games in Perth; and she even sponsored the 200-metre breaststroke at the 2024 Masters Swimming National Championships in Darwin.

Capping it all, at the 2025 World Aquatics Championships in Singapore, Sandie won two heats, hit top 10 in two events and claimed gold in the women's freestyle relay, revelling in the call room buzz, global camaraderie and her Stingers' backing, as the *NT News* reported.

In Fannie Bay Sandie was not just a resident; she was family—the kind who shows up, rolls up her sleeves and leaves you better for it. As a mother and now as the Member for Fannie Bay, I can see echoes of her in the families I meet daily. They are resilient, community-first Territorians fighting for safer streets, stronger kids and brighter futures.

Sandie's life challenges us to do more, care deeper, compete harder and connect wider. To Milton, Sandie's extended family and friends, the Stingers, the Salvation Army, her colleagues and everyone whom she uplifted, from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of all Fannie Bay constituents, please accept my deepest condolences. You are in my thoughts, and you know that my door at Parap Village is always open.

Let us honour Sandie by living her values. Sandra Robyn Hyde—a competitor, carer and Territorian through and through. We will miss her dearly, but her light endures.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, one of the bittersweet aspects of being a constituency MP is having the opportunity to share in the passing of community members. Tonight I also pay tribute to a great Territorian whose funeral I attended in January alongside colleagues: Susan Bridget Kelleher. She was a deeply respected constituent of mine from the Narrows whose life was marked by service, faith, kindness and unwavering commitment to community.

Sue Ahmat was born on 26 June 1951 in Cooma, New South Wales to Christopher Kelleher and Elizabeth Kelleher. She was the second eldest of 10 children raised in a large Catholic family with strong values of faith, responsibility and care for others instilled from an early age.

In 1969 she began her military service when she joined the Royal Australian Navy as a radio operator. In 1972 she was posted to Darwin, which would become her lifelong home. Although adapting to the Territory climate was not without its challenges, Sue embraced life in the Top End and fully committed herself to the community she would come to love.

After seven years of naval service, Sue continued her career of service with Telecom, now Telstra, where she worked across a number of roles, including as an operator, trainer, supervisor and manager. She was known for her professionalism and leadership. She built lasting relationships with all her colleagues throughout her career.

Many people came to know her from 2001 onwards when she commenced the next chapter of her service with the Darwin Magistrates Court where over nearly 15 years she was a fixture holding a number of positions before becoming a manager. Her work within the justice system reflected her strong sense of integrity, compassion and dedication to supporting others.

Sue's commitment to the NT extended well beyond her professional life. Alongside her husband, Frank 'Doodles' Ahmat—recently awarded an OAM—she played a vital role in supporting local sporting clubs, including the Darwin Brothers Rugby League Football Club and the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club.

Whilst Frank is the one who was often seen in leadership roles by many of us, Sue was a quiet driving force behind the scenes for an awful lot of this activity, organising, supporting families new to Darwin and ensuring that young players felt welcome, supported and cared for.

Family was at the heart of Sue's life. If you were at her memorial at St Mary's Cathedral that was evident by the abundance and preponderance of family across many generations. She was a devoted wife, a loving mother to three children and a proud grandmother to five grandchildren, each of whom, no doubt, also held a special place in her heart.

Sue was known for her generosity, hospitality and ability to make people feel included and valued, expressed often through her love of cooking and her warm, welcoming home. Many people referred to their fond memories of spending time in that home which, again, is an iconic spot in the Narrows.

In the last years Sue faced significant health challenges, including multiple cancer diagnoses. Throughout her long and courageous journey she displayed strength, grace and gratitude. Those who cared for her at the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre—who also attended the memorial service in large numbers—spoke of not only her resilience but also her kindness as a person who knew staff by name, asked after their families and expressed genuine appreciation for their care.

Even in her final days, Sue remained a thoughtful, sharp and deeply thankful person. She met everyone with great warmth and dignity, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who was fortunate to know her.

The life of Susan Kelleher, later Sue Ahmat, was one of service to her country, profession, community and, most of all, her family. Her contribution to the NT, though often quiet and behind the scenes, was significant and enduring. That is why I wanted to pay tribute to her.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Sue's family and loved ones. I hope they will find comfort in the knowledge that her life made a lasting difference and that the legacy of her kindness, service and community spirit will not be forgotten.

Vale, Sue Ahmat.

It would be remiss not to mention that on the same day I attended that funeral I also attended the funeral of Warren Bury, one of the Northern Territory's great educators. It is something of a disservice not to speak in detail forensically of his many achievements. He was not a constituent of mine, but he was in fact my first school principal and the foundational school principal at Sanderson High School between 1985 and 1992.

There are so many things that could be said for Warren Bury, but part of why I wanted to mention him was that he was a true innovator in education. He was hand-picked for that job at Sanderson High School, and I was the beneficiary of his innovation in that time. It was a school that performed out of its socks and was looked to by other schools not just locally but internationally for its vanguard approach to education.

I am delighted that our government is making strides to make sure middle schools go back to being meaningful comprehensive schools in this coming year. Likewise, I am delighted that we are, after many years, paying attention to fundamentals in education with a view to improving literacy, numeracy and attendance.

From time to time, we also should have a mind to innovation in education, because there was a great time in the Northern Territory when our public school system was the envy of the rest of the country in many regards. It was pound for pound proportionally better funded and punched above its weight relative to our interstate counterparts. People here got phenomenal educations for next to nothing in the past, and that came down to the hard graft, thinking and commitment of people like Warren Bury.

While I could have gone through his litany of achievements educationally, after his time at Sanderson High School he served in positions of higher stature and prominence here and in the United Kingdom throughout the greater London public school system. I wanted to draw attention to him specifically because innovation in education is something that we will need going forward if we want to see better educational outcomes and if we want more kids in senior secondary school finishing in the top 20 students at the end of the year again.

It is great that we have great private educational options in the Northern Territory now, but if we want great ones in public education we will need more Warren Burys going forward. When I say innovation, there are specific things I am talking about. Sanderson High School had a vertical timetable, which in the past essentially mirrored providing students with the kind of options and opportunity that people often only get in

elite private schools or later in university curriculum. It meant that people in Years 8, 9 and 10 were all in classes together, meeting each other at their skill levels and focusing on components of education that were most important to them. It meant that people could specialise within a system and an ecosystem that supported them to cut across grades, cut across people and, essentially, not be put in a box.

There was also the advent at that school of pastoral care groups creating permanent home rooms for people to move through the educational system so that people always had mentors, systems, buddies and peers throughout their educational life. To this day, I am friends with people who were in my pastoral care group and the teacher who looked after our group, who I still have dinner with once in a while. It was a great system.

Even within the school system Warren Bury had the novel idea to make all teachers use some of their dedicated time not as an optional extra but as a compulsion to participate in something called consultancy. Essentially people across all areas and faculties would be forced to use one of their lines to meet their peers, break bread and learn what was happening in the maths, PE or English departments rather than operating in tribal silos. It was a phenomenal time at that school, and it was an era of great educational innovation.

To Warren Bury's partner, Jennifer; his daughters, Sharyn, Melissa and Rachel; his sons-in-law, Andrew, Darren and Simon; and grandchildren, Jasmine, Jack, Summer and Chloe, I offer my sincere condolences. Warren Bury lived a life of great service and purpose, and it was indeed a privilege to share in his celebration of life and to know of his many achievements.

Vale, Warren Bury.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I will speak about the wonderful events in the electorate of Sanderson. The Member for Karama and I once again had the pleasure of hosting the Sanderson and Karama Seniors Christmas Party on 19 December 2025, with about 170 seniors joining us for a truly wonderful celebration.

We were delighted that the Chief Minister joined us on the day. Those in attendance thoroughly enjoyed her company as she took the time to visit every table at the Darwin Golf Club. I sincerely thank Jared France and his team for once again hosting this popular and much-loved community event. Special thanks must also go to newly anointed Medal of the Order of Australia recipient, Mr Dan Tellam OAM, and Mr Jason Peterson, who brought great joy to the room as Santa and his dutiful elf.

The gifts were lovingly prepared by Sanderson electorate interns Molly and Chiara, whose efforts were greatly appreciated. Guests were entertained by Peter, Paul & Jacko, with special guest performances by Bert Wickramanayake and Neighbourhood Watch's own Ally Slack.

I acknowledge Dan Tellam OAM, fondly known as 'Tank'. Since being the Member for Sanderson, I have had the privilege of getting to know Tank, a proud veteran who served our country with honour and pride. His service did not end when he took off the uniform; he continues to give selflessly through tireless volunteering and a strong commitment to supporting veterans and community events across the Northern Territory.

Tank is a familiar and welcome face at my electorate office, always seeking opportunities to serve others. Our conversations are always meaningful, and it is clear that the wellbeing of veterans is always front of mind. Congratulations, Tank, on being conferred the Medal of the Order of Australia, and thank you for your service, dedication and continued contribution to our community.

I extend my congratulations to all Northern Territory recipients recognised in the Australia Day Honours. In the Sanderson electorate, we have hit the ground running in 2026, doorknocking, planning events and consulting with local schools, community organisations and businesses to ensure a strong year ahead.

I am also pleased to announce the completion of important road safety upgrades delivered by the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure along Amy Johnson Avenue at the Boulter Road intersection. This project was jointly funded by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments and included the extension of the left-hand lane, drainage works, line marking, street lighting and landscaping. These upgrades will significantly improve safety and traffic flow for local residents and road users. I thank Minister Yan for prioritising and delivering this project.

I look forward to working alongside Ministers Yan and Edgington and their departments to further improve conditions along Boulter Road. This stretch of road remains hazardous, particularly during the Wet Season, with ongoing flooding and excessive potholes. Many pedestrians access community services in the area,

and instead of the footpath they are forced to walk on the road, creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians and motorists.

I acknowledge the incredible community spirit shown following Cyclone Fina. I particularly recognise Sanderson constituent Rohan Badenhop, who contacted my office to ask if constituents required assistance with green waste removal, generously offering his time, strength and equipment, including his chainsaw. My office coordinated requests from elderly constituents needing assistance, and Rohan helped several residents who were extremely grateful for his support. His actions demonstrated compassion, generosity and true community spirit.

I also thank the following members who helped remove green waste and support elderly people and those with disability: Mathews Mattam; Bibin Kuriakose; Dijo Sebastian; Jomon Mathew; Robin Mathew; Jeffin Jose; and Abraham Varghese. Thank you for sharing your time in the Sanderson electorate on a weekend and supporting the elderly and people with disability. These are the selfless, community-minded people I am proud to represent in the electorate.

I reflect on the passing of Walter 'Benny' Lew Fatt, who passed away peacefully last Wednesday. For those who know Benny, his passing has seen hundreds of tributes pouring in from around the country, such was his legacy.

Benny was a legendary figure in Territory sport, best known for his outstanding Australian Rules football career with the Nightcliff Football Club. He made his senior debut at 16 years old and was a key player during Nightcliff's most successful eras in the 1950s and 1960s, including multiple premierships. He won the Nichols Medal, the NTFL's highest individual award, and stayed involved in his sport and his club for his entire life. For his contributions, he was inducted into the AFL Northern Territory Hall of Fame and awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2019 for service to sport and community.

Beyond football, Benny represented the Northern Territory in basketball at national championships and was active in other sports like golf and lawn bowls. He was also deeply involved in community service, including roles with the Australia Day Council and contributions to the Red Cross.

As many might be aware, Benny is now reunited with his wife of 65 years. Sandra sadly passed away only a few short weeks ago. I am sure his funeral next Tuesday will be one of sadness but also a celebration of a life well lived, honouring his generosity of spirit, leadership and lasting impact on sports and people in the Territory. I pass my condolences onto his family and friends.

Rest in peace, Benny Lew Fatt.

Mr PATEL (Casuarina): Madam Speaker, I begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the educators and staff at daycare centres across the Casuarina electorate.

In the week before Christmas, I had the pleasure of visiting several centres and meeting with directors and staff. Caring for our youngest Territorians requires immense patience, dedication and responsibility, and the impact these educators have on children and families cannot be overstated. Education in all forms shapes our future, and it was wonderful to see firsthand the passion and commitment of those nurturing our next generation.

At Dripstone Secondary College I was proud to attend graduation ceremonies and the end-of-term assembly to recognise several outstanding students. Zaharias Koulakis-Zaharias received the Khoda Patel All-rounder Award in recognition of his commitment to community service, academic excellence and personal development. Through the Community Ambassadors program, Zaharias supported Foodbank, delivered donations to families in need and helped select gifts for students through the Christmas Wishing Tree initiative.

He also demonstrated outstanding discipline through his swimming club involvement and completion of the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. He excelled academically, winning first place in Scientific Communication – Multimedia at the Territory Young Scientist Awards. Zaharias' leadership, dedication and enthusiasm for learning make him a highly deserving recipient.

Vhanna Fernandez was also recognised for her outstanding dedication. Vhanna spreads positivity throughout the Dripstone community with her kindness and thoughtfulness. She assisted with the Christmas Wishing Tree initiative, completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award, achieved excellence in science at the

Territory Young Scientist Awards and delivered an outstanding musical performance at the Year 9 awards night. Her commitment and generosity of spirit deserve recognition.

I was proud to present the Khoda Patel Achievement Award to Kevin Banh, recognising his strong academic effort and achievement, and the Khoda Patel Positive Role Model Award to Claire Hornsby for her mentorship and positive influence on her peers. I also had the honour of presenting the Minister for Education and Training Literacy Excellence Award to Jack Francis, recognising outstanding excellence in writing and oral language.

At Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School I was pleased to recognise Newton Leong for his hard work and care for others and Elga Aaiju for her enthusiasm for learning and her role as a supportive friend and role model.

At Henbury School, Hadassah Sandy and Gerard Sullivan were recognised for their commitment to learning and outstanding community spirit. I thank everyone involved in the Henbury Corporate Luncheon, which was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the school's innovative programs. The generosity and support shown by the community were greatly appreciated.

At Nakara Primary School several students were celebrated for their achievements. Stella Kyaw Oo was recognised for her consistent dedication to improving her learning, excellent effort across all tasks and kindness as a classmate. Kanishka Sharma was celebrated as a true all-rounder, demonstrating curiosity, dedication, leadership and a positive spirit in academic and co-curricular activities. Arabella Sinclair was recognised for her joy, inclusivity and unwavering commitment to integrity, fairness and social justice. Arabella's compassion and leadership reflect the best values and make a meaningful difference to her school community.

The students, educators and staff across the Casuarina electorate exemplify the talent, dedication and passion within our community. From early learning centres to high schools, they inspire young Territorians and shape the future of the Territory.

I acknowledge the incredible achievements of the Tracy Village Football Club NT. I congratulate Frankie Ennor—president, inaugural women's premiership captain and the backbone of the club—on reaching her 100th game in January. Frankie's leadership and contribution to women's sport are outstanding. Matt Cameron reached 200 senior games and continues to lead as a player and coach, and Jai Anderson also achieved 200 senior games. Mitch Townsend has reached an incredible 300 senior games, including 200 with Tracy Village. A proud member of the pig pen for more than 15 years, Mitch is a committed volunteer who has earned his life membership.

I also congratulate KJ Jones on being shortlisted for the BHP Community Coach of the Year. This national recognition reflects her exceptional contribution to women's football and the broader community.

In 2025 the University Pirates women's team claimed the premiership cup after a season defined by grit, commitment and heart. Congratulations to these remarkable athletes. The University Pirates men's team also began the Challenge Cup strongly with a 32–12 victory over the Swampdogs, and I wish them continued success for the season ahead.

From schools to sporting clubs, the Casuarina electorate is rich with talented, dedicated and inspiring people. It is an honour to recognise their achievements and the positive difference they make in our community every day.

Mr MACKAY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I pay my respects to the late and great Barry Walshe. The Territory has lost another great Territorian contributor, proud father of three daughters, loving husband of Mary and legend on the polocrosse field.

His contributions to the development of polocrosse in the NT are felt greatly at the Humpty Doo Polocrosse Club and the entire Northern Territory Polocrosse Association family. He inspired, mentored and coached. He was the heart and president of the Humpty Doo club, and he was a true ambassador for polocrosse in the Territory. He represented the Territory with pride.

I was privileged to attend his celebration of life at Livingstone Recreation Reserve with the Member for Nelson. As he said, there is no church big enough in the rural area that would have fit all those who wanted to join to pay their respects.

I want to share some comments that have been made since Barry's passing that reflect the type of man he was.

Marcia Wilson said:

> *He was an inspiration to me during my polocrosse days, and I'll always be grateful for the impact he had.*

Kyla Innes said:

> *So glad we had the privilege of getting to play alongside and be coached by Barry …*

Wilna Myburgh, who happens to be one of my old teachers, said:

> *Barry was a wonderful, wise and passionate member of the polocrosse family. His legacy will live on in the many young players he coached.*

Lee Martell said:

> *Best bloke you could ever meet.*

Christie Thompson said:

> *Barry was an icon and a huge influence in Territory polocrosse.*

Maddi Harley said:

> *A true privilege to be coached and to play next to an incredible man.*

Gianna Douglas said:

> *Such a sad loss of such a beautiful person. Always kind, caring, giving and selfless. You could not find a better man or person. Barry, I will forever remember your kindness and all the support you gave me at polocrosse. You are without a doubt one of the best stars to your beautiful wife and daughters. What an honour it has been to know your amazing dad, husband and grandfather. You are all so lucky and blessed to have him. He was such a special person.*

Russell Marks said:

> *The Territory is certainly at a great loss as a result of Barry's passing. Sincerest commiserations and condolences to all family and friends … You will be remembered by all the people who had the good fortune of knowing you.*

Rusty Henderson said:

> *Many a great game played with Walshy in years gone by. RIP my friend.*

He also said:

> *One of the greatest blokes I have ever had the pleasure of calling my friend.*

Leanne Cook said:

> *… a true gentleman and his passion for polocrosse was inspiring to all who knew him.*

Linda Carroll said:

> *Condolences to Mary and family. Barry was a big influence in our family joining the Humpty polocrosse club. Always held in high regard and will be missed.*
>
> *Love, Carroll family.*

Natalie Longman said:

Sending love and condolences to Mary and family. I'll remember Barry riding past the bottle shop and saying hi. RIP Barry.

Angela Harrison said:

An absolute legend of a man who will never be forgotten and will be missed by many. Played a huge part in developing many peoples love of polocrosse.

…

Best pickup man ever …

Rachel Clayto said:

… I always looked forward to chatting with Barry on a weekend. I will miss him. He was an absolutely lovely man. My condolences to his family.

Annette Rixon said:

Barry was one in a million. He was a legend and touched so many hearts.

Sonia Malady said:

Such a large part of our polocrosse family. Always there with a smile and willing to help anyone. Our love and thoughts with his family.

Sandy Greenoff described Barry as a real, true blue, 100% legend.

Rebecca Brady said:

Completely genuine, lovely guy. Condolences from the Brady family.

Trish Gearing said:

Good, honest friend and neighbour. RIP Barry.

Norman Anderson said:

Barry we had a few good A-grade games against each other and a lot of laughs. What a champion bloke. Will be in my memories …

Sean and Corina Reed said:

So sad to hear of the passing of Barry. Was a great mentor and coach, truly a wonderful man.

Jonathan Clarke said:

Barry was a genuinely good man with only the best intentions. Barry was the first person to take a genuine interest in helping me improve my riding and polocrosse skills. A true hero to all youngsters and people alike. The NT has lost a true son, father and mentor. He should be celebrated and remembered for his integrity, pride, passion and commitment to making polocrosse an all for one and one for all sport. Thank you Barry.

Alanna Oppermann said:

This is such sad news. Barry had an incredible impact on so many people. His presence in the NT community and his dedication to guiding children in this great sport—no matter which club they came from—helped shape them into the adults they are today. We will all miss him dearly.

May he now ride in the finest green fields and enjoy the very best ponies.

Rest in peace, Barry Walshe.

There are thousands of apprentices that he helped train during his time at CDU who owe a lot to Barry.

From his time as the first husband of Litchfield, his impact on the field to those he helped get started in their trade and the many friends he made along the way, his contribution and legacy will continue.

Rest in peace, Barry.

J DAVIS (Johnston): Madam Speaker, I will give a brief speech on the situation in Iran in response to friends and community from Iran; this is for them.

The images and reports emerging from Iran are heartbreaking and deeply disturbing. Nationwide internet shutdowns; the use of live ammunition against peaceful protesters; and the charging of civilians with *moharebeh* (enmity against God), a crime carrying the death penalty, are not isolated incidents. They are systemic violations of fundamental human rights.

Some people say that we should not discuss issues outside the Northern Territory in this Chamber, but this conflict, like so many others, is causing real harm to people in our community in Darwin. Members of our Iranian community are living in fear and grief, unable to contact family and friends, anxious for their safety and deeply worried for their future.

I was honoured to speak at a rally for Iran in Darwin last week alongside the Members for Fannie Bay, Solomon and others. I have been privileged to meet and work alongside Iranians in Darwin over many years, including those our government detained when they came here seeking safety and those who fought for justice and freedom for those who were locked up. It was wonderful to reconnect with old friends at the rally. The last time I was with many of them, we were at the detention centre fence fighting for the release of children our government had locked up. Today we stand together for peace, justice and safety for all in Iran.

Living in a small town such as Darwin does not diminish our responsibility or connection to what happens in the world. If anything, it deepens it. The courage and determination of our Iranian neighbours reminds us all of the universal right to speak, assemble, live in freedom and demand justice.

I condemn these abuses in the strongest terms. I call for an immediate halt to the executions, and I support calls for the international community to work together to sanction and hold those responsible accountable. Human rights are not negotiable, and standing up for them is a responsibility that we all share in our local communities across the Territory and Australia or in solidarity with people fighting for their freedom around the world.

To our Iranian neighbours and friends, your voices are heard, your struggle matters, and you are not alone. We stand with you.

Mrs CARLSON (Wanguri): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge and congratulate an outstanding Territorian, Donald Lockley OAM, who is 94 years of age—94 years young, as he would put it—and was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his longstanding and exceptional service to the Northern Territory community.

This national honour is richly deserved and recognises decades of commitment, leadership and quiet service across a wide range of community, health, sporting and civic organisations. Donald Lockley's contribution has been sustained, voluntary and deeply impactful, improving the lives of countless Territorians.

For more than two decades Mr Lockley has been a tireless advocate for men and families affected by prostate cancer. He has played a central role in the Darwin Prostate Support Awareness Group, serving as a longstanding committee member, leader and editor of its newsletter. Through this work, he has ensured that individuals and families facing serious health challenges have access to information, peer support and compassion during some of the most difficult periods of their lives.

His leadership extended beyond Darwin with the co-founding of the Katherine Prostate Cancer Support Group, where he served as president and helped establish vital support networks for regional and remote communities. His work in this space has been marked by empathy, persistence and a strong belief in the importance of community-based care.

Mr Lockley has also made significant contributions to youth development and ageing advocacy. He has volunteered with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; supported young Territorians through education and leadership programs; and served with the Council on the Ageing Northern Territory advocating for dignity, inclusion and respect for older members of our community.

Sport has been another important avenue of service. Mr Lockley has given many years to hockey in the Northern Territory, including as President of the Palmerston Saints Hockey Club, where he was instrumental in establishing junior development pathways. His ongoing involvement as a co-patron of Hockey NT reflects his enduring commitment to participation, teamwork and community connection through sport.

Beyond these formal roles, Donald Lockley has contributed to church and parish councils, scouting organisations, veterans' groups and a range of community committees, always with the same sense of duty and generosity.

Beyond his extensive record of service, Donald Lockley OAM is a deeply respected and much-loved father, grandfather and great-grandfather and a valued community member in the Wanguri electorate. His contribution to the Territory is also reflected in the strength of his family, the relationships he has built and the quiet example he sets through his everyday conduct.

Mr Lockley is a familiar and welcome presence in our local community. He is often seen enjoying lunch or a coffee at the cafe in front of my electorate office, where he takes time to engage thoroughly with those around him. These simple interactions speak volumes about his humility, approachability and genuine interest in others.

I am personally inspired by Mr Lockley's lifelong advocacy for young people and senior Territorians. His belief in intergenerational respect and inclusion has been a defining feature of his service and continues to positively influence community life across the Northern Territory.

True to his character, Mr Lockley has never sought recognition, but last Thursday at a combined morning tea with the Member for Casuarina I was privileged to present Mr Lockley with community recognition, and he was modest in accepting. While modest in form, it was an acknowledgement warmly and graciously received, which reflected the deep esteem in which he is held.

Donald Lockley OAM is unquestionably worthy of this recognition. In truth, it is decades overdue. His enduring service, compassion and leadership have left a lasting contribution to our Territory. I conclude in congratulating Donald Lockley OAM on this significant national honour and by thanking him for his longstanding and selfless service to the Northern Territory. His example embodies the best of community service and civic responsibilities.

Mr KERLE (Blain): Madam Speaker, I pay tribute to some legends in Palmerston. On 20 December 2025 Alex and Courtney Florance from Florance Electrical were legends, bringing heaps of presents for kids and giving them away to people in need just before Christmas. They set up a stall at Sanctuary Lakes in Gunn and gave away presents to whoever came along who was in need.

Thanks to their generosity, a single father in my electorate who has a young daughter with special needs and who was caught without his regular Centrelink loan could give his daughter a present that he would not have been able to buy. I think that was her only present for Christmas.

Thank you, Alex and Courtney. I hope more business owners follow your generous example. You are legends.

I honour Darrell and Janette Ashby, who recently ticked off 60 years of wedded bliss. They received a letter from the King, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory to mark the special occasion.

Janette is a stalwart of the Palmerston 50+ Tuesday Club and an honorary life member of the Palmerston and Litchfield Seniors Association.

I will read a newspaper clipping from when they were married all those years ago. The headline is 'Moss Vale Wedding':

> *St Johns Church of England Moss Vale was chosen by Miss Janette Deppeler for her marriage to Mr Darrell John Ashby on 18 December 1965, with the Reverend R W J Fraser officiating.*

The bride, first twin of Mrs J Richardson of Melbourne Street, New Berrimah, chose a gown of Chantilly lace over satin. The groom, first son of Mr and Mrs A J Ashby of North Street, Moss Vale, was attended by Mr Barry James Sercombe as best man.

The bridesmaid, Mrs R G Sheather of Moss Vale, wore an aqua lace frock with long lace sleeves, white gloves, white shoes and a bouquet of white roses. The bride was given away by her stepfather Mr G Richardson. Her mother chose a pale blue frock with white accessories, while the groom's mother wore a pink linen suit and bone accessories.

The church was beautifully decorated by Mrs Barret and Mrs Garth, while Mr Larsen supplied the delightful music. The soloist was Mrs AT Moule, who sang Because. The reception was held at the bride's home and Mr B Sercombe officiated as chairman.

The bride's travelling outfit consisted of a mauve suit and white accessories, and they left the reception for a honeymoon in Queensland, before returning to make their home in Moss Vale.

Congratulations, Darrell and Janette. You guys are amazing and a model for all of us.

On Australia Day the Litchfield Council honoured several citizens. Since the Member for Daly was at Invasion Day events on Australia Day and could not attend the awards, I would like to honour some citizens from his electorate.

Bev Shuker was recognised with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) as part of the 2026 Australia Day Honours in recognition of her exceptional service as a Bushfires NT volunteer, spanning 47 years. This is an amazing contribution.

Bev commenced volunteering in 1978 as a founding member of the Berry Springs and Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigade and has since served in numerous roles, including as captain, secretary, treasurer and committee member. Bev has attended more than 4,000 fires, contributing an estimated 30,000 hours of volunteer service, including extensive involvement in large-scale grassfires during prolonged fire seasons. Bev was instrumental in establishing the Darwin River Volunteer Bushfire Brigade as a standalone brigade in 1979. Well done, and thank you for your service.

I honour Garry Fischer who received the 2026 Litchfield Council Citizen of the Year for his longstanding leadership and service with the Berry Springs Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. Garry is a longstanding public servant with a long history of helping in the Berry Springs area. Garry, we thank you for your service and honour you.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.